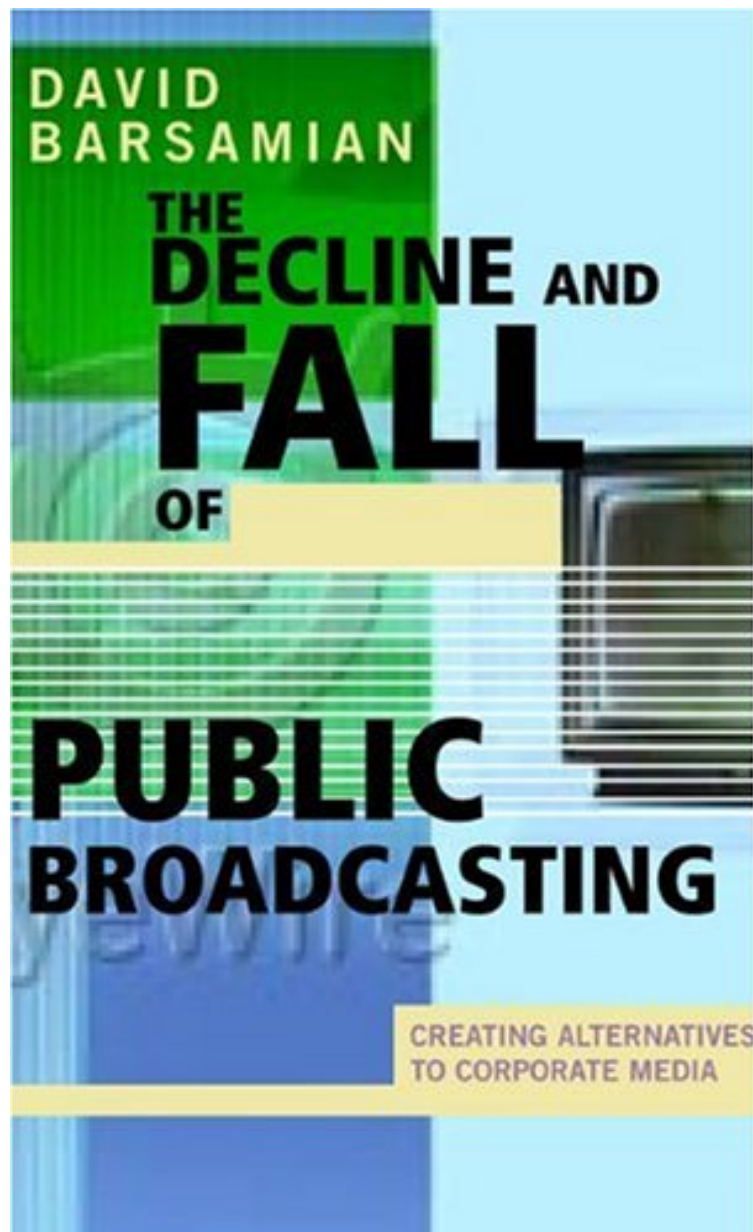


(Free download) The Decline and Fall of Public Broadcasting: Creating Alternative Media

The Decline and Fall of Public Broadcasting: Creating Alternative Media

David Barsamian

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David Barsamian : The Decline and Fall of Public Broadcasting: Creating Alternative Media before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Decline and Fall of Public Broadcasting: Creating Alternative Media:

20 of 22 people found the following review helpful. A brief but compelling argument

By Chris G

In this book David Barsamian quotes Ben Bagdikian as saying that in 1983 there 50 corporations dominating the media. In 2000 there were six. We have an ever shrinking handful of interlocking massive conglomerates controlling media outlets which people are forced to turn to for news. In the beginning of the book Barsamian covers the accession of Michael Powell, son of our eminent imperial foreign minister, appointed by George W. Bush, after he got the presidency to head the FCC. Now Mr. Powell wastes no platitudes about serving the "public interest." He says that his job is to serve his "clients" i.e. the major media conglomerates. And this means accelerating the process of removing anti-monopoly provisions, the type which say that one network can't purchase another network or that no company can own a tv station and a newspaper in the same region. The philosophy of folks like Powell, extended to the other sectors of the economy as well, is that companies can buy up all the newspapers and tv and radio stations that they want, no matter how large a part of the market they might control. Barsamian quotes from the commission that established American public broadcasting back in 1967. The stated goal, in brief, was to offer public media that would give a voice to marginalized groups in society, to those other than corporations and their representatives, intellectual or otherwise. After all the public owns the radio and television airwaves. The media, as Thomas Jefferson recognized, as the primary source of information for the citizenry, are maybe the most crucial component of a true democracy. If only a few conglomerates can buy space on the radio and TV airwaves to disseminate information then something is wrong. In the United States, the way it was set up, Public broadcasting was doomed from the start. Its funding is at the whim of annual appropriations from our congresspeople. It must significantly fund itself by looking for money from the corporate world. And it has been under attack from under right wing flacks particularly since the 80's who have called, for instance NPR a gathering place for the "discredited pro-Soviet left" (David Horowitz), the American mouthpiece for the Sandanistas during the 80's and other such incredibly stupid and silly labels. Recently NPR was denounced by the idiots at CAMERA for waging a hellish campaign of defamation of Israel, despite having reporters on the issue like Linda Gradstein being very supportive of the Israeli government. Barsamian goes through the litany of documentaries and other productions--on issue ranging from genocide in East Timor and Iraq and corporate domination to domestic abuse and homosexuality. PBS often rejects them, for instance, on the grounds of conflict of interest between the position being advocated in the productions and the underwriters who are using the money to support that position. Of course they never have any qualms about showing advocacy films produced by corporations and other status quo interests. Barsamian says that the government run public broadcasting occasionally does some good stuff like putting on Bill Moyers. But they are overwhelming slanted towards the center--right. William F. Buckley had "Fireline" on PBS for decades, as had Ben Wattenberg, John McClaughlin as well as the numerous shows dealing with Wall Street. And then there's The Lehrer News hour. All of this stuff gets plenty of corporate funding or "underwriting." And then there's Charlie Rose who, Barsamian notes, benignly hosts establishment guests like Henry Kissinger or Thomas Friedman and lets them repeat their balderdash, but when an occasional dissenter comes on, like Edward Said, he subjects them to relentless cross-examination. Dealing with NPR, he notes that they are hardly cemented in the Political center and beyond. For instance dealing with Iraq last year, Barsamian quotes them as letting Colin Powell say that humanitarian supplies are able to be delivered to Iraq when he and his fellow criminals have been blocking billions of dollars of supplies from getting through the UN sanctions committee. He relates the time Noam Chomsky who is the leading intellectual of the Left had his one interview with NPR in 1988. If one accepts the theory of Horowitz and other such gifted analysts that NPR is home to anti-american subversives than you would expect Noam Chomsky to be all over NPR but of course the exact opposite is true as the story relates. I don't quite know when some of the writing in here was produced. It was supposedly published in August 2001 but Barsamian says at one point that Chomsky has only appeared once in 1990 on The News Hour on PBS. He actually appeared again in early 1998 and then, I believe in early 99'. But of the point Barsamian makes is still very valid. Then he refers to Howard Zinn with producers Ben Affleck and Matt Damon trying to produce a series based on Zinn's book "A People's History of the U.S." for HBO but HBO actually canned the effort around two years ago. He ends noting the courageous efforts, fortunately just recently fulfilled of Amy Goodman and the people at Pacifica, the oldest listener supported network in the U.S., to wrestle control back from the corporate thugs who hijacked it. He also says somethings about Microradio, Free speech TV, Indymedia and other such efforts. Goodman writes the foreward to this book and Mumia Abu Jamal writes the afterward.

4 of 6 people found the following review helpful. How Many Little Indians Are Left?

By Kenneth R. Kahn

First there were...then they were...now they is...The numbers tell the story of the decline and fall of the American media. While others struggle to tell their story in the face of secret polie and oppressive governments, the American media and decided to much easier to beat themselves up and censor what sluices out down the trough to the American people. "The Decline and Fall of Public Broadcasting" is a small, yet powerful volume that traces the end of PBS juxtaposing the mandate of Congress in passing the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 with the reality of a PBS whose programming has gone from "imagination, creativity and diversity" to a plethora of cooking shows, nature programs and Britcoms. The "news," so called, consists of Jim Lehrer's blown dry stenographing of the opinions of the rulers and their corporate controllers. Journalists, so called, simply pass onto the viewer the opinions and slants of present and past representatives of the ruling class. Nowhere to be seen or heard are

workers and those who suffer under the policies emanating from Washington and endorsed by these 'overpaid stenographers' who do not challenge the assumptions underlying public policy. While there are literally thousands of students, workers, free lance journalists and writers free of the corporate yoke who can present "creativity, imagination and diversity" these individuals are rarely, if ever, invited onto PBS, a taxpayer supported, government controlled network. To understand where PBS is and where it is going, Barsimian provides a small, powerful, well written volume that strips away the pretense and provides the reader with the essential information needed to challenge the comfortable, ruling class assumptions about American policy. If your tired of being feed PBS pabulum, read what you can do to change that in "The Decline and Fall of Public Broadcasting."

Concentration of the media has reached new heights, making it harder for alternative and critical voices to gain a hearing. The recent \$86 billion merger of Time Warner and AOL is just one of many signs of the narrowing of information sources. Market pressures have also encroached on the original mission of public broadcasting, which was to "provide a voice for groups that may otherwise be unheard." Yet around the country, creative journalists and activists are creating more democratic, informative, and engaging media. Whether they are working to defend and expand democratic access to existing media or building their own media alternatives through the radio, television, or the World Wide Web, they are pioneering new ways of sharing information. In the Decline and Fall of Public Broadcasting, David Barsamian gives an insider's account of these new media activists and the challenges they confront, drawing on his years of experience in public radio. Since 1986, Barsamian has been the producer of the highly acclaimed Alternative Radio, a weekly one-hour public affairs program broadcast in North America, Europe, South Africa, and Australia, as well as short-wave radio and the Internet. David Barsamian is the producer of the award-winning syndicated radio program Alternative Radio. His interview books with luminaries such as Noam Chomsky, Howard Zinn, and Edward W. Said have sold in the hundreds of thousands. His most recent interview book is Propaganda and the Public Mind: Conversations with Noam Chomsky (South End Press, 2001). He is also the author of Eqbal Ahmad: Confronting Empire (South End Press, 2000). Also Available by David Barsamian Propaganda and the Public Mind: Conversations with Noam Chomsky TP \$16.00 0-89608-634-8 CUSA Eqbal Ahmad: Confronting Empire TP \$16.00 ISBN 0-89608-615-1 CUSA

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