

# LOOKING AT THE ESSENCE OF AMERICAN MEDIA'S RIGHT TO PRESS FREEDOM FROM FILM DOCUMENTARIES

J. Krupnik  
*Jagiellonian University, Poland.*

**Abstract:** This article aims to explore the true connotation and purpose of the right to press freedom in the United States through typical American film documentaries; to clarify the practice of American news media The impact of professional reports and media works on the American "two-party system" and American society; clarifying the interests protection between the American news media industry and capitalist politics relationship and provide some inspiration for the development of China's news media industry.

**Keywords:** Film documentaries; American party system; Press freedom; AMERICAN capitalism

## 1. FILM DOCUMENTARIES AND THE RIGHT TO PRESS FREEDOM OF THE AMERICAN MEDIA

American film documentaries are famous for their documentary shooting techniques and smooth film narrative structure, but the achievements of these works are not only artistic, but more importantly They played an important role in the social and political life of the United States. On the surface. These film documentaries focus on very sensitive topics in American society. However, upon further investigation, we found that these works reflect the freedom of the press in the United States to a certain extent. The true meaning of power and the impact of the American news media industry on the fundamental system of American capitalism degree of maintenance. Regarding the nature and truth of the right to press freedom in the United States, although these film documentaries reveal part of the reasons, they themselves cannot avoid this shackles. This phenomenon is not only related to the social reality of the United States, but also to its complex national closely related to the main political development process.

### 1.1 The Development of Press Freedom in the United States

The first United States Congress enacted the First Amendment to the Constitution in 1791, which is The first press bill in American history protected press freedom in the United States in the form of law and occupies a pivotal position in the press legislation process in the United States and around the world[1].

However, the First Amendment has not brought full freedom of press to the American press. To this day, it only exists in the form of an amendment and has not been included in the main text of the U.S. Constitution. The various back-and-forth struggles in the American press over the right to press freedom actually illustrate the development of American capitalist politics: before the promulgation of the Declaration of Independence, the political stance of the American bourgeoisie was to pursue independence and stand on the front of the overwhelming majority of the people., fought against the British colonial government to safeguard their development rights. At this stage, freedom of speech and press were their revolutionary weapons and a necessary condition for them to unite the people. However, with the gradual development of capitalism and the increasing need of the bourgeoisie to safeguard their interests, excessive press freedom has become a threat to the stability of rule. Capitalists began to restrict freedom of speech, began to regulate press and publication, and began to control public opinion. Although today the American news media is known as second only to the President of the United States, The "Fourth Estate" of Congress and the courts, but in fact the press and freedom of speech are strictly controlled and are still far from true "freedom of the press." [2]

### 1.2 The Essence of Press Freedom in the United States

For the American people, the media plays a huge role in guiding public opinion, but all this is only one-sided: the American news media acts as a "monitor" on the surface. He plays the role of "supervisor" and shouts for the people, but in essence he is the "supervisor" of the capitalist system. "Night Man", safeguarding the interests of the bourgeois monopoly consortium and covering up the people's eyes.

## 2. DE FACTO CONTROLLED NEWS MEDIA AND "SELF-CENSORSHIP."

America today Major newspapers, such as the New York Times and the Washington Post, are monopolistic developments in the newspaper industry. leaders in the process, they are not only large news media organizations but also economic A powerful capitalist enterprise. Today, these large news media organizations Behind them are all supported by one or several powerful capitalist monopolies. this While some media accept support from consortiums,

they must also serve the interests of these consortiums. service, which is also related to the "self-censorship" of the American news media. [2]

American news media have always claimed that they have no news censorship system, but in fact, American news media are very strict in "self-censorship" of the content they disseminate. Take the famous American foreign radio station "Voice of America" as an example. It has set up a "policy room" specifically for reviewing manuscripts. Due to its strict censorship system, all speeches promoting socialist positions and ideas cannot be broadcast. In this way, the freedom of socialist ideas to be promoted through the "Voice of America" is actually deprived. [2] Media that serve monopoly consortia naturally have to report through their own To achieve the same purpose as a monopoly consortium.

### **3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE NEWS MEDIA AND THE PRESIDENT AND THE GOVERNMENT**

From the founding president of the United States, Joe Since the administration of Washington, every president of the United States has been inseparable from "comparisons" with the press. "Quantity". On the surface, the president and the press seem to be in a relationship of supervision and supervision. relationship; but from the nature of capitalist society, this statement actually exaggerates the beauty The supervisory role of the national news media on the president and the government is not consistent with the facts.

Although the government and the press may appear to be incompatible, they are not each other's enemy. The news media in the United States are in the hands of the American capitalist monopoly groups , the development of these consortiums is directly related to the economic and political trends of the United States. Towards. The president and government of the United States not only have interests in these monopoly consortiums, but also The important thing is that they have the same purpose - to maintain the rule of the bourgeoisie. When a social crisis occurs in capitalist society and shakes the foundation of bourgeois rule, News media reports tend to direct public opinion pressure onto the president and the government, causing It led people to blame all social problems on the incompetence of the government; then, under pressure from the public In terms of pressure, the government is likely to respond by laying off personnel or changing policies. People who only scratch the surface of the problem will think that the problem has been solved. But in fact, Capitalism has its own incurable chronic diseases in the process of development. These chronic diseases Symbiotic with capitalism, these problems will remain as long as capital rules society. exist. Therefore, the bourgeoisie, which cannot find a solution, can only shift the focus of contradictions to Weaken the negative impact of these problems on society in a focused way and delay these problems It's time for the big explosion to come. The American news media has played an accomplice in this process, using public opinion to build momentum and helping the ruling class divert the public's attention.

### **4. "NIGHTWATCH DOG" AND "SHEEPDOG"**

On many social issues, the news media Understand how to hold the government accountable from the standpoint of the people, in order to promote the resolution of these issues be effectively resolved to maintain the stability of the country and society. But in some questions On this issue, the American media did not give the people the answers they wanted. If some social incidents are held accountable, they will inevitably affect the stability of the rule of the American monopoly capitalist class, so the media Instead, the blame is placed on objects that do not touch upon the underlying issues. In Mai In Kerr Moore's film documentaries, he always seems to be responsible for The public restores the truth of the incident and finds out who is responsible for the incident. At first glance, these events appear to be have been solved, but in fact the real reasons behind these incidents are not that, and those who are really responsible are not those told to the public in the film. truly made The American oil monopoly, arms monopoly and financial tycoons that made all this possible, Their interests are directly related to the stability and stability of the capital-based society in the United States. No, so they cannot be exposed to the public.

#### **4.1 The Role of Film Documentaries**

After the "9·11" incident, the United States was shocked and the whole country was thinking about who should be responsible for this terrorist attack involving national security. After "Fahrenheit 9/11" was released, the American people seemed to have found this answer. audience from In the film documentaries, we can intuitively see the response of President Bush and the Democratic government. Conclusive evidence of who is responsible for this disaster, audio and video materials plus narration, more than Pure reporting is more convincing and credible. Therefore, after the film was released, the United States There was a huge wave of public opinion criticizing the government and the president in the country.

And the film documentary "Columbine", also directed by Michael Moore, This is especially true for "En's Bowling". Columbine shooting killer is in people's eyes The child, who was supposed to be innocent, attracted a lot of attention. Michael Moore on this The perspective of event attribution is very unique. He explores them from the perspective of children. What kind of impact was it passively affected? This film documentary took part in the 2002 Cannes Film Festival in May, although it is different from any section of the Cannes Film Festival The categories are not consistent,

but the jury still specially set up a "Cannes 55th Anniversary" "Read the award" to it. The film got the audience's attention for 13 minutes when it was screened in Cannes. A standing ovation is enough to show how wonderful and deeply rooted it is. This shows that film documentaries It plays a huge role in influencing public opinion and guiding public sentiment.

#### **4.2 Discussion on Whether Film Documentaries Should be Included in the Right to Press Freedom**

The essence of the right to press freedom in the United States is to serve the interests of the American bourgeoisie. The media system within the scope of press freedom will be subject to constitutional amendments when their reporting and dissemination do not affect the fundamental interests of capitalist society. Sufficient protection for formal cases; however, once the content reported by the news media is related to the media and the monopoly consortium behind political parties, the news media will completely lose their freedom, and speech and reporting will be strictly controlled. The reason why there are questions about whether film documentaries should be included in the right to press freedom The discussion is also related to the strong social influence of film documentaries. protected or not The problem is essentially whether it is subject to supervision or not. believes that film documentaries should receive new The party that protects the right to freedom of press actually hopes that film documentaries can be protected control. When you enjoy the freedom and protection afforded by the right to a free press, you must To provide you with this freedom the monopoly bourgeois effectiveness.

Those who believe that film documentaries should not be included in the right to press freedom actually want to allow film documentaries to develop more freely. They have clearly seen the essence of the right to press freedom in the United States and do not want film documentaries to become a monopoly bourgeoisie With the propaganda tools in hand, I don't want the production of film documentaries to be subject to various restrictions. Although it is difficult in many aspects without the protection of press freedom, it is actually freer than being protected. Therefore, whether film documentaries are protected or not is actually a game between the monopoly capitalist class and its opponents.

#### **4.3 Media Supervision and the American "Two-Party System" Democratic Political Tradition**

The American "two-party system" democratic political tradition. In the process of building democracy and the rule of law in the United States, the "two-party system" is one of the most representative political systems. Although the status of political parties is not stipulated in the U.S. Constitution, in practice In the process of the development of American capitalist politics, the "two-party system" has gradually become stable and has become an extremely important but unwritten constitutional system in the United States. American political parties It emerged with the American Constitution. With the decline of colonial rule and the rise of the emerging bourgeoisie, the American people established a constitution to protect their own interests and standardize democracy and the rule of law. At the same time, in order to safeguard their own interests, they formed political parties and sought development. Today, the "two-party system" in the United States has been deeply imprinted on the American democratic constitution. [3]

#### **4.4 The Essence of the "Two-Party System" in the United States**

The "two parties" in the United States today are not legal Capitalist parties that are legally stipulated and have the power to govern. They are the capitalist parties in the long history of American capitalism. In the development process of capitalism, it was chosen by the bourgeoisie based on its own interests. [4]

Under the instructions of capital groups, the news media leads the public to blame all current social problems on the incompetence of the ruling government. If the ruling party is replaced at this time, it will give the people new hope and make them think that the problem has been solved. This will weaken domestic conflicts and the real causes of social problems will never be exposed to the public. This is also one of the meanings of the existence of bourgeois parties in the United States - to "take the blame" for these deep-seated causes. This is the American "two-party system" essence. Bryce once said bluntly: "The capitalist party system is the best tool that democratic politics can devise to suppress dissident minorities."

#### **4.5 Political Factors Behind Film Documentaries**

In Fahrenheit 9/11, Michael Moore directly reveals the Democratic president What George Bush did, he stung Americans with the horror of 9/11 attacks and the war in Afghanistan as the entry point, using a large number of documentary footage to try The picture explains to the public: It was the selfishness and incompetence of George Bush and his party that destroyed the United States. The country has been put on the verge of danger again and again.

The purpose of Michael Moore's revelation is undoubtedly to let the public understand Bush and the face of the Democratic Party government. However, what is interesting is that when we focus on When this film was directed by Michael Moore himself, we found out: He himself is a Republican radical. This fact allows us to re-understand "Hua" The central idea expressed in this work "911" seems to be from seeking truth for the people. True democracy and security turned into a fierce struggle between the two parties. Michael Moore borrowed from With his expertise as a

director and the means of film documentaries, he has successfully put political weapons on the They use it to attack political opponents and fully achieve their political goals.

In the work "Bowling at Columbine", Michael Moore targeted It's a school shooting that stings people's nerves. Michael is prominently featured in the film pointed out that the long-standing unreasonable incitement of the National Gun Owners Association makes it so that when a 15-year-old boy buys up all the bullets in a convenience store, no one Will feel uneasy about this. [5]

However, this work, like "Fahrenheit 911", has wrong interests behind it. Complex. On the surface, Michael Moore seems to have given the audience an answer sheet. The National Gun Owners Association blamed for the Columbine school shooting It was found out, but if you follow the history and current situation of the United States, you will find that the shootings in the United States The reason why these incidents cannot be eliminated is the huge arms market in the United States. The capital chains of these arms dealers have already spread to all aspects of the U.S. economy. Therefore, the U.S. The government will never order a ban on guns because it will directly affect the interests of major American arms dealers. interests, thereby shaking the capital foundation of American society. for these most important people objects, but Michael brushed them off. A work like "Bowling at Columbine" was created because it responded to the public's desire to support these events. The demand to find a responsible person also protects the capital foundation of American society and transfers identify the focus of conflicts and prevent social unrest caused by intensification of conflicts. After all, it Still serving capitalism.

## **5. PRESS FREEDOM IS A MECHANISM FOR SAFEGUARDING THE INTERESTS OF THE AMERICAN BOURGEOISIE**

### **5.1 "Two-Party System" is the Main Form**

The "two-party system" is a political method independently chosen by the United States based on its national conditions, and The long-term existence of the "two-party system" has indeed contributed to the maintenance of American capitalist rule. important contribution, and even for a long time to come, the two parties took turns in power. The pattern will not be broken. But this political system that shifts the focus of conflicts does not can truly make up for the shortcomings of capitalist rule, although it can maintain the It maintains the superficial stability of society, but it cannot solve the fundamental problems, the shortcomings of capitalism. end still exists. Therefore, although it is the mainstay of the American bourgeoisie to safeguard its own interests, form, but it cannot completely avoid the crisis of capitalism.

### **5.2 All News Products are Important Media**

News media industries in the United States and news media industries in all countries around the world They all act as the "mouthpiece of the government." As long as the media products they produce do not If the fundamental shortcomings of capitalism are touched upon, the government will allow them to be made public. This kind of Openness can also help the "two-party system" shift the focus of domestic social conflicts to a certain extent. point, guiding the public to attribute social problems to the corruption and incompetence of the ruling party, rather than Doubt the capitalist system itself. Under the influence of this "freedom", U.S. News Media reports have even been inaccurate and distorted, contrary to news reports The most basic principle of objectivity. Regarding the words and ideas of hostile forces, the American media They will not report it objectively, but will cover it up and cover it up. intentionally discredit and misrepresent the other party. Such "freedom of the press" is undoubtedly beneficial to other civilizations and a disservice to perspective. Therefore, news products (including movies, documentaries and other media Products) are an important medium through which capitalism maintains its dominance.

The phrase "there is no absolute freedom of the press" is widely used in American society and even around the world. All have been widely verified. Under any ideology, the news media industry will be highly consistent with the political system. The American news media industry is known as " free " In name, it actually gives us some inspiration for the maintenance of the capitalist system. Objective At present, our country's news legislation is not yet complete, and the formulation of system standards for the news media industry needs to be further deepened, but this does not mean that our press freedom is restricted. Actively advocating the main theme and vigorously promoting positive energy are the principles of the news media industry. On the basis of understanding the principles, combined with our country's national conditions, we should actively expand and explore creativity, so that the news media industry has more themes to develop and more issues to pay attention to. This is what we should do. There is no need to blindly follow the so-called " press freedom" of other countries. Only by finding our own style and breakthrough points, paying attention to more valuable issues, adapting to the international situation and changes, innovating communication forms, and enriching communication content will help our country gain more international voice and win the recognition of more people and approval.

## **COMPETING INTERESTS**

The authors have no relevant financial or non-financial interests to disclose.

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