3.2.2.3.2.70 Destructive freedom of the press

They say that the pen is mightier than the sword. And they are right.

At the same time, it is accepted wisdom in many parts of the world, except the US, that gun control goes a long way to improve the quality of a society.

But if disseminating words to a large audience is a more powerful weapon than firing bullets, why is their so little media control in the world today?

Actually, much of the communal or ethnic violence anywhere in the world is preceded by media coverage, which, often in between the lines, ferments communal and ethic hatred.

Tito contained it in Yugoslavia, and Suharto in Indonesia, and in both cases, controlling the media was instrumental.

Governments anywhere around the world better be not mislead by US rhetoric about press freedom.

The US promotes press freedom anywhere around the world not for lofty ethical concerns, but because it is intrinsically in their interest. Because press freedom, in most countries where it is implemented, destabilizes that country, and weakens it, it always favors the one country that wants to preserve its superpower status.

But the freedom of the press is not only negative on the political level where it is responsibility for mass murder and ethnic cleansing.

When the media takes interest in a person's private life, this often equates a violent assault. And while in many Western European countries (except the UK), the media refrains from intruding too shamelessly into the private lives of public personalities, there is no such restraint in Third World countries with press freedom. Even unsubstantiated rumors about a person's sexual conduct are exploited at large. The only protection public figures can avail of consists in making payments to reporters so they keep quiet.

The role that the free press played in the death of Lady Diana is well documented. The role the media plays in the suffering of others who are targeted is little known, as the media typically doesn't report on itself.

From many other angles, to allow the free use of a weapon such as the media to anybody who fancies wielding it, is damaging to society.

And because a free media also functions as a sexual police (hypocritical to the extreme), it has a detrimental effect on sexual liberation.

So, what can be done to rid the world of the negative effects of a free media?

Because many rich and prominent people in the West have been suffering from uncontrolled media coverage, trusts or citizens groups could be established in many Western countries, which could request financial help from rich and prominent people.

In NGO-style, Third World governments could be advised of the many negative effects, an uncontrolled press has on their countries. And potential large investors in Third World countries should be informed of the danger they face from a Third World country's free media.

And other authors could help in the endeavor to debunk the many myths about press freedom having a positive effect on societies. After all, we know that the other weapons-related freedom, the freedom to bear arms, is almost always entirely negative.