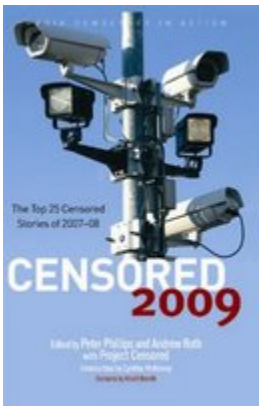
TOP 25 MOST CENSORED STORIES OF 2007-2008

Project Censored Annual Ranking Released for its 2009 edition

Commentary by Laura Dawn Lewis



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EXETER, UK--22 SEPT: The eagerly anticipated annual list of the top twenty-five most censored stories in the mainstream media was released this morning by Project Censored. Censorship is defined by the project as ' The subtle, constant and sophisticated manipulation of reality. On a daily basis, censorship refers to the intentional non-inclusion of a news story – or piece of a news story – based on anything other than a desire to tell the truth'.

Censorship is a form of propaganda. Common applications are obfuscation, the intentional muddying of the waters or causing confusion, omission in which of key facts that if known, would change the perception of the presented information. And euphemism, the insertion of benign words to lessen the impact of the information is also heavily used. For example, 'Colonies', illegal and defined as war crimes under the Geneva conventions, are called settlements or neighborhoods, thus eliminating the primary fact that would change the argument. Another example: a law eliminating constitutional rights is called Patriot Act. Yet the very definition of a patriot is one who supports the rights taken and exposes those in the government attempting to destroy them. Often censorship hits us between the eyes and we don't even see it. George Orwell mastered exposing it.

Another method of censorship falls under the heading, 'Politically Correct' which is a combination of obfuscation, omission and euphemism. For example: An obese child, (30% or more overweight) cannot be referred to as obese because it might hurt his feelings. Never mind that such a label might get him to do something about it and save him from a life of diabetes or worse.

With censorship truth must be disguised lest someone complain with their pocketbook, political clout, a lawsuit or worse, guns. This protects those seeking to hide their intentions but does nothing for society. Without truth, people cannot make good decisions. Therefore problems continue unabated and society wonders why.

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http://www.couplescompany.com/Features/Politics/2008/25MostCensored.htm

It is this masking of truth intentionally and unintentional within the conduits of influence Project Censored exposes. Now in its thirty-third year, the foundation has combed through over 2000 submissions from journalists, educators, advocates and others to name its top picks for the most important under-reported and censored stories of the past twelve months. If you rely on the mainstream media for your news, the information presented will in most cases be new, thus punctuating the chasm spanning perceived wisdom and reality.

CENSORSHIP OF THE CURRENT FINANCIAL MELTDOWN

Ironically given the events of the week of September 15, 2008, another major story festers in censorship.

Last week's AIG bailout failed to mention a few critical facts. To begin with, the Federal Reserve is not an agency off the US Government, *(nor is the Internal Revenue Service, which is its enforcement arm).*

The Federal Reserve is a private organization owned by an estimated 300 individuals, individuals with no government oversight, no accountability and with the power to print and create money at will. It is neither federal, nor does it carry but minimal 'reserves'. Its powers lie in its ability to create money out of thin air. What it pays for acquisition is irrelevant because the cost of creating one dollar or one hundred dollars is the same, approximately ten cents.

HEADLINES FOR THE TOP 25 MOST CENSORED STORIES OF 2008

Summaries of the Top Ten included

1. Over One Million Iraqi Deaths Caused by US Occupation
2. Security and Prosperity Partnership: Militarized NAFTA
3. InfraGard: The FBI Deputizes Business
4. ILEA: Is the US Restarting Dirty Wars in Latin America?
5. Seizing War Protesters' Assets
6. The Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act
7. Guest Workers Inc.: Fraud and Human Trafficking
8. Executive Orders Can Be Changed Secretly
9. Iraq and Afghanistan Vets Testify
10. APA Complicit in CIA Torture

Offsite

11. El Salvador's Water Privatization and the Global War on Terror
12. Bush Profiteers Collect Billions From No Child Left Behind
13. Tracking Billions of Dollars Lost in Iraq
14. Mainstreaming Nuclear Waste
15. Worldwide Slavery
16. Annual Survey on Trade Union Rights
17. UN's Empty Declaration of Indigenous Rights
18. Cruelty and Death in Juvenile Detention Centers
19. Indigenous Herders and Small Farmers Fight Livestock Extinction
20. Marijuana Arrests Set New Record
21. NATO Considers "First Strike" Nuclear Option
22. CARE Rejects US Food Aid
23. FDA Complicit in Pushing Pharmaceutical Drugs
24. Japan Questions 9/11 and the Global War on Terror
25. Bush's Real Problem with Eliot Spitzer **TOP**

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The 'bailout' burden will be borne by the US Taxpayers, British Taxpayers and others throughout the world whose wealth is tied to some element of the US Economy. Every dollar without backing printed by The Federal Reserve leaves at full value. By the time it reaches the economy, its value is diminished. What is commonly called inflation, is simply a fancy word for hidden tax and it is caused by central banking and on occasion scarcity, which is temporary. Inflation is not the result of time or a 'natural' occurrence, as we are led to believe. It is wholly manufactured. The fact is the value of goods has not changed in thousands of years. An ounce of gold today will buy the same thing as an ounce of gold two-thousand years ago.

The real story surrounding the 'bailouts' is the overt yet surreptitious transfer of wealth from the richest population of the world into the hands of a select, unknown and very wealthy few for a fraction of its value.

Wealth is transferred via the equivalence of a parlor trick before our eyes. The Federal Government of the US has not stepped in to 'rescue' Freddie Mac, Fannie Mae or AIG. What is occurring is the transfer of tangible assets, 50% of the mortgages in the US and 80% ownership of the world's largest insurer into the hands of an estimated three hundred people through contract manipulation.

Conspiracy theory? No. Those benefiting would like you to think so because labeling anyone as such discredits them. But this isn't secret. The same tactic has been used since 1913 to acquire control--power that is, over the key institutions influencing public opinion, action and behavior. Bailouts are planned and part of the natural Central Banking Cycle. As is inflation. When money is created from nothing, as the Fed does, it dilutes the value of dollars in circulation. The only value the US dollar has, (or any currency created under a central bank with minimal reserves) is what you and I believe it has. Lose that belief and it becomes worthless. Nothing backs it up. It's that simple.

THE TOP TEN

The cover-up of the financial crisis is not part of this year's list, though number five is tied to it and several others feed into it. The full ramifications are only becoming known today, but it will likely find a spot near the top on next year's list.

Each story below stands on its own merit and once known forces people to consider facts hereto not in evidence. This is information that changes minds and information that must be known for the sake of all people on this planet.

Presenting Project Censor's list: **MOST CENSORED NEWS STORIES OF MAY 2007 - APRIL 2008.**
First two paragraphs of the top ten are included. Links to 11-25 are here

#1. OVER ONE MILLION IRAQI DEATHS CAUSED BY US OCCUPATION

Over one million Iraqis have met violent deaths as a result of the 2003 invasion, according to a study conducted by the prestigious British polling group, Opinion Research Business (ORB). These numbers suggest that the invasion and occupation of Iraq rivals the mass killings of the last century—the human

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toll exceeds the 800,000 to 900,000 believed killed in the Rwandan genocide in 1994, and is approaching the number (1.7 million) who died in Cambodia's infamous "Killing Fields" during the Khmer Rouge era of the 1970s.

ORB's research covered fifteen of Iraq's eighteen provinces. Those not covered include two of Iraq's more volatile regions—Kerbala and Anbar—and the northern province of Arbil, where local authorities refused them a permit to work. In face-to-face interviews with 2,414 adults, the poll found that more than one in five respondents had had at least one death in their household as a result of the conflict, as opposed to natural cause. *More* TOP

2 SECURITY AND PROSPERITY PARTNERSHIP: MILITARIZED NAFTA

Leaders of Canada, the US, and Mexico have been meeting to secretly expand the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with "deep integration" of a more militarized tri-national Homeland Security force. Taking shape under the radar of the respective governments and without public knowledge or consideration, the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP)—headquartered in Washington—aims to integrate the three nations into a single political, economic, and security bloc.

The SPP was launched at a meeting of Presidents George W. Bush and Vicente Fox, and Prime Minister Paul Martin, in Waco, Texas, on March 31, 2005. The official US web page describes the SPP as ". . . a White House-led initiative among the United States and Canada and Mexico to increase security and to enhance prosperity . . ." The SPP is not a law, or a treaty, or even a signed agreement. All these would require public debate and participation of Congress. *More* TOP

3 INFRAGARD: THE FBI DEPUTIZES BUSINESS

More than 23,000 representatives of private industry are working quietly with the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to collect and provide information on fellow Americans. In return, members of this rapidly growing group, called InfraGard, receive secret warnings of terrorist threats before the public, and at times before elected officials. "There is evidence that InfraGard may be closer to a corporate Total Information Awareness program (TIPS), turning private-sector corporations—some of which may be in a position to observe the activities of millions of individual customers—into surrogate eyes and ears for the FBI," according to an ACLU report titled "The Surveillance-Industrial Complex: How the American Government Is Conscripting Businesses and Individuals in the Construction of a Surveillance Society."

InfraGard, with members from 350 companies of the Fortune 500, started in Cleveland back in 1996, when the private sector there cooperated with the FBI to investigate cyber threats. "Then the FBI cloned it," says Phyllis Schneck, chairman of the board of directors of the InfraGard National Members Alliance, and the prime mover behind the growth of InfraGard over the last several years. *More* TOP

4 ILEA: IS THE US RESTARTING DIRTY WARS IN LATIN AMERICA?

A resurgence of US-backed militarism threatens peace and democracy in Latin America. By 2005, US

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military aid to Latin America had increased by thirty-four times the amount spent in 2000. In a marked shift in US military strategy, secretive training of Latin American military and police personnel that used to just take place at the notorious School of the Americas, in Fort Benning, Georgia—including torture and execution techniques—is now decentralized. The 2008 US federal budget includes $16.5 million to fund an International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) in El Salvador, with satellite operations in Peru. With provision of immunity from charges of crimes against humanity, each academy will train an average of 1,500 police officers, judges, prosecutors, and other law enforcement officials throughout Latin America per year in "counterterrorism techniques."

The academy in El Salvador is part of a network of ILEAs created in 1995 under President Bill Clinton, who touted the training facilities as a series of US schools "throughout the world to combat international drug trafficking, criminality, and terrorism through strengthened international cooperation." There are ILEAs in Budapest, Hungary; Bangkok, Thailand; Gaborone, Botswana; and Roswell, New Mexico. *More* TOP

5 SEIZING WAR PROTESTERS' ASSETS

President Bush has signed two executive orders that would allow the US Treasury Department to seize the property of any person perceived to, directly or indirectly, pose a threat to US operations in the Middle East.

The first of these executive orders, titled "Blocking Property of Certain Persons Who Threaten Stabilization Efforts in Iraq," signed by Bush on July 17, 2007, authorizes the Secretary of Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense, to confiscate the assets of US citizens and organizations who "directly or indirectly" pose a risk to US operations in Iraq. Bush's order states:

I have issued an Executive Order blocking property of persons determined 1) to have committed, or pose a significant risk of committing, an act or acts of violence that have the purpose or effect of threatening the peace or stability of Iraq or the Government of Iraq or undermining efforts to promote economic reconstruction and political reform in Iraq . . . or 2) to have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, logistical, or technical support for, or goods or services in support of, such an act or acts of violence or any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to this order . . . *More* TOP

7 GUEST WORKERS INC.: FRAUD AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

While the guest worker program in the United States has been praised and recommended for expansion by President Bush, and is likely to be considered by Congress as a template for future immigration reform, human rights advocates warn that the system seriously victimizes immigrant workers. Workers, labor organizers, lawyers, and policy makers say that the program, designed to open up the legal labor market and provide a piece of the American dream to immigrants, has instead locked thousands into a modern-day form of indentured servitude. Congressman Charles Rangel has called the guest worker program "the closest thing I've ever seen to slavery."

In the process of attaining an H-2 guest worker visa, workers typically fall victim to bait-and-switch

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schemes that force them to borrow huge sums of money at high interest rates (often leveraging family homes) in order to land short-term, low-wage jobs that all too often end up shorter-term and lower-waged than promised. Under crushing debt, and legally bound to work only for the employer who filed petition for them, these workers often face the most dangerous and harsh of working conditions in places like shipyards, the forestry department, or construction, with no medical benefits for on-the-job injuries or access to legal services. Bosses often hold workers' documents to make sure they don't "jump jobs." *More* TOP

8 EXECUTIVE ORDERS CAN BE CHANGED SECRETLY

On December 7, 2007, Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, as a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, disclosed on the floor of the US Senate that he had declassified three legal documents of the Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) within the Department of Justice that state:

1. An executive order cannot limit a president. There is no constitutional requirement for a president to issue a new executive order whenever he wishes to depart from the terms of a previous executive order. Rather than violate an executive order, the president has instead modified or waived it.

2. The President, exercising his constitutional authority under Article II, can determine whether an action is a lawful exercise of the President's authority under Article II.

3. The Department of Justice is bound by the President's legal determinations.

Whitehouse discovered the OLC's classified legal opinions while researching the Protect America Act legislation passed in August 2007, which Whitehouse warns will allow the administration to bypass Congress and the Courts in order to facilitate unchecked spying on Americans. He noted that for years under the Bush administration, the Office of Legal Council has been issuing highly classified secret legal opinions related to surveillance. *More* TOP

#9 IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN VETS TESTIFY

Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans are coming forward to recount the brutal impact of the ongoing occupations. An investigation by the Nation (July 2007) and the Winter Soldier hearings in Silver Spring, Maryland, in March 2008, which was organized by Iraq Veterans Against the War and brought together over 300 veterans, have made their experiences public. Soldiers' harrowing testimonies of atrocities they witnessed or participated in directly indicate a structural problem in the US military that has created an environment of lawlessness. Some international law experts say the soldiers' statements show the need for investigations into potential violations of international law by high-ranking officials in the Bush administration and the Pentagon. Though BBC predicted that the Winter Soldier event would dominate headlines around the world that week, there was a near total back-out on this historic news event by the US corporate media.1

Dozens of veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan occupation publicly testified at the four-day Winter Soldier gathering about crimes they committed during the course of battle—many of which were

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prompted by the orders or policies laid down by superior officers. Such crimes include targeting innocent, unarmed civilians for murder and detention, destroying property, desecrating corpses, severely abusing detainees (often torturing to death), and using corpses for medical practice. *More* TOP

10 APA COMPLICIT IN CIA TORTURE

When in 2005 news reports exposed the fact that psychologists were working with the US military and the CIA to develop brutal interrogation methods, American Psychological Association (APA) leaders assembled a task force to examine the issue. After just two days of deliberations, the ten-member task force concluded that psychologists were playing a "valuable and ethical role" in assisting the military. A high level of secrecy surrounding the task force prohibited disclosure of the proceedings and of members and attendees. It wasn't until a year later that the membership was finally published on Salon.com, revealing that six of nine voting members were from the military and intelligence agencies with direct connections to interrogations at Guantánamo and CIA black sites that operate outside of Geneva Conventions.

The Psychological Ethics and National Security (PENS) task force was assembled in response to growing evidence that psychologists were not only taking part in procedures that have shocked the senses of humanity around the world, but were in fact in charge of designing those brutal tactics and training interrogators in those techniques. *More* TOP

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METHODOLOGY: Between 700 and 1000 stories are submitted to Project Censored each year from journalists, scholars, librarians, and concerned citizens around the world. With the help of more than 200 Sonoma State University faculty, students, and community members, Project Censored reviews the story submissions for coverage, content, reliability of sources and national significance. The university community selects 25 stories to submit to the Project Censored panel of judges who then rank them in order of importance.

DEFINITION OF CENSORED: Modern Censorship as the subtle yet constant and sophisticated manipulation of reality in our mass media outlets. On a daily basis, censorship refers to the intentional non-inclusion of a news story – or piece of a news story – based on anything other than a desire to tell the truth. Such manipulation can take the form of political pressure (from government officials and powerful individuals), economic pressure (from advertisers and underwriters), and legal pressure (the threat of lawsuits from deep-pocket individuals, corporations, and institutions).

Footnotes

1) The US Constitution states only Congress has the power to create money. The Federal Reserve Act was passed, largely in secret by financial interests on December 22, 1913 after the opposing members of government had left for the Christmas holiday. It is unconstitutional and therefore against the law of the land in the United States. The companion bill, The Federal Income Tax is on the books as the sixteenth amendment. The problem is, not one of the forty-eight states at the time ever ratified it so it is enforced without warrant. If you'd like more information on this, speak with Joe Bannister, the former IRS agent who has been educating Americans about this since the mid-1990's.

2) Several people can provide information on this as well as compelling interviews: Edward Griffin author of 'Creature from Jekyll Island'; Andre Michael Eggelletion, author of 'Thieves in the Temple', Eustace Mullins, the first to expose the Fed beginning in the 1950's and William Greider author of 'Who Will Tell the People' and 'Secrets of the Temple'.

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