

The Aspen Institute's 'fix' of the 1980 U.S. election

by Kathy Burdman

Suppose the Ayatollah Khomeini were in process of rigging the 1980 presidential elections in the United States. Sounds ridiculous, impossible? In fact, the people who put Khomeini into power are in process of doing just that.

The Aspen Institute, founded in the 1920s by British Intelligence operative Robert Hutchins, trained most of the Khomeini government through its "Islam; Past, Present and Future" seminars. And Aspen, as part of its Governance Project for the 1980s, has set up the Aspen Institute-Twentieth Century Fund Task Force on the Presidential Debates of 1980. The Task Force intends to exert top-down control over all campaign news coverage.

Chaired by Aspen Washington chief Douglass Cater, former editor of the *London Observer*, the Task Force includes the heads of the national media such as Frank Stanton, former president of CBS, William Small, President of NBC News, and Richard Wald, Senior Vice-President of ABC News. Their intent, as stated in the Task Force's April 1979 report, "With the Nation Watching," is to see to it that the "public see and hear [only] the most significant candidates" in the presidential race. Who these candidates are, they will decide.

The extent of "the fix" being attempted is scandalous. Citizens for Lyndon LaRouche, the Democratic presidential candidate, reported this week that CBS News Executive-Producer Donald Hewitt, a close collaborator of Frank Stanton and of Aspen who has run CBS coverage of every presidential campaign since 1960, is planning a "60 Minutes" hatchet-job on the candidate, in

concert with a similar slander planned by ABC's 20-20.

More serious on a national level, Hewitt and CBS' Walter Cronkite, whose Evening News Hewitt has produced since 1960, are trying to black out the vital New Hampshire primary because of LaRouche's prominence there. Cronkite has announced CBS's major Campaign '80 coverage through the end of January, i.e., until the eve of the February New Hampshire primary, will be on the Iowa caucuses only. (See article, below.)

"Acceptable Governance"

As made clear by the excerpts from "Governance" by Aspen's President Joseph Slater printed below, Aspen believes "the role of communications" including the Task Force, will "determine the nature and success of institutions created to deal with the other problems listed on this agenda."

On the agenda, basically, is the "one-world" United Nations government that would do away with sovereign nation-states and technological development. What is now the Aspen circle in fact helped found the U.N., as a project of the Jesuits and the Cecil-family's factional associates in the British elite.

Slater notes that the basic conflict of the current world crisis—as in Khomeini's Iran—is between "Those seeking to turn back the clock and those betting on more and better technologies."

Aspen, also the founder of the environmentalist movement, comes down squarely on Khomeini's side, denouncing the evils of "charging ahead with scientific

discovery," and says that to "manage the unmanageable ... an emerging global system, ... international organization and transnational imperatives are increasingly important."

Princeton professor Richard Falk recently pointed out that only such international bodies as the UN World Court and Security Council could handle crises of the magnitude of Iran—which they today are indeed doing. Falk, the mentor of Iranian ex-Foreign Minister Bani-Sadr is also a member of the Aspen-founded Planetary Citizens for a U.N. world government, and participant in Aspen's seminar "Islam: Past, Present, and Future."

The Presidential task force: Corruption

As scandalous as the dirty tricks the Task Force is playing against the LaRouche campaign is the fact that several members and top consultants are partisan members of rival presidential campaigns, who have no business being in such an influential, preferential position with the national media in violation of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Section 315 "Equal Time" fairness mandate. Task Force member Herbert Schmertz, former Mobil Oil Public Affairs chief, is Director of Public Relations for the Edward Kennedy 1980 campaign; Task Force member Norman Lear, the Los Angeles TV producer, was the head of Democrats for Change, the national "draft Kennedy" organization. Task Force Chairman Douglass Cater himself, together with Task Force report-writer Lee Mitchell and advisor Newton Minow, are public organizers for the Kennedy campaign in the city of Chicago, from their prestigious law firm Siddley & Austin, specialists in election law. Minow was Chairman of the FCC from 1961-63.

On the other hand, Task Force member Douglas Bailey, President of the Bailey, Deardourff & Assoc. public relations firm, is the current Director of Media for Howard Baker's 1980 Republican Campaign and directed the entire Republican post-convention campaign in 1976, as he will in 1980.

Only significant candidates

The Task Force report "With the Nation Watching," written by Lee Mitchell, states the Task Force was formed to deal with "two major problems that call for constructive action ... First...television has become the primary campaign medium. Yet...the great promise of television as a means of informing—and involving—potential voters has not yet been fulfilled." That is, national television, controlled as it is from the top by "Aspen-sympy," must be the final opinion-maker which determines how the public will vote for president. "Second, federal law and regulations ... have restricted robust debate. The requirement of Section 315 of the Commu-

The task force members

Douglass Cater, Chairman; Aspen Senior Fellow; Director of Aspen Washington, D.C.; Office of Strategic Services 1942-45; public relations consultant to Secretary of the Army 1951-52; Special Assistant to President Johnson 1964-68; Senior Domestic Advisor, Hubert Humphrey presidential campaign 1968; Editor, *London Observer* 1972-79.

William Small, President, NBC News Sept. 1979 to present; Vice President, CBS Inc. 1972-79; Graduate of Hutchin's University of Chicago School of Journalism; News Director WLS radio, Chicago 1951-56; CBS Washington Bureau Chief 1962-72.

Lee M. Mitchell, Author, Task Force report; Attorney, Sidley and Austin, Chicago; chief protégé of Sidley's Newton Minow (see below).

Herbert Schmertz, Director of Public Relations, Edward Kennedy presidential Campaign, 1980; Senior Vice President and Director of Public Relations, Mobil Oil 1969-79; Deputy Director New York Citizens for (John) Kennedy, 1960; General Counsel, Fed. Mediation Service 1961-63; Director of Public Relations Robert Kennedy Presidential Campaign, 1968; Professor of Law, Georgetown University 1961-65.

Norman Lear, Los Angeles TV producer; Chairman, Democrats for Change 1979;

Douglas L. Bailey, President, Bailey, Deardourff & Associates; Director of Media, Howard Baker for President 1980; Director of Media, Gerald Ford for President 1976.

Consultants to the task force

Frank Stanton, President, CBS Inc. 1963-79; Trustee, Rand Corp, Rockefeller Foundation; member Council on Foreign Relations; Carnegie Institute.

Lester Crystal, Senior Executive Producer, NBC News Political Coverage.

Richard Wald, Senior Vice President, ABC News; Vice President, NBC News 1968-75; Assistant Editor, *Washington Post*, 1967.

Newton N. Minow, Sidley & Austin, Chicago. Chairman. Federal Communications Commission 1961-63; General Counsel Hutchins' *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1963-65; Chairman, Rand Corp, 1965-75.

nications Act that *all* candidates for the presidency have 'equal time' ... has served to reduce the opportunity of the public to see and hear the most significant candidates." (Emphasis in original.) That is, candidates designated "insignificant" by Aspen should not be nationally televised, and therefore not be national candidates. Federal law be damned.

Citizens for LaRouche reported this week that *Des Moines Register* executive editor James Gannon, when a Democratic debate in Iowa was still scheduled, told them, "I am not going to put Mr. LaRouche on the debate, I do not recognize him as a significant candidate," even though the Iowa debate was to have been the only nationally-televised debate of the campaign and LaRouche has just become only the third candidate to receive Federal Matching Funds. Gannon cited the so-called "Aspen ruling" of the FCC, in which the Aspen Institute "in the public interest" in 1976 won from the FCC the right of the national networks to broadcast presidential debates *without* being subject to federal "equal time" provisions if the debate is being sponsored by some other organization—like Gannon's *Des Moines Register*.

Extent of the corruption

The Task Force's tainting of the presidential election process may extend well beyond the networks and disparate candidates' campaign committees. Both the Republican and Democratic National Committees were involved in the Task Force's 1973 report "Presidential Television," a book authored by Newton Minow, the Task Force's first report on the subject. Advisors to Minow on the project included Joseph Califano, then General Counsel to the Democratic National Committee, until recently Carter's Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, and now rumored to be joining the Kennedy Campaign. Also an advisor was Lyn Nofziger, then Deputy Chairman of the Republican National Committee and until recently, with the Reagan presidential campaign. The two national committees are still reported to be in touch with the Task Force.

Also influenced by the Task Force apparently is the prestigious League of Women Voters, whose Chairman and Vice-Chairman Ruth Hinerfeld and Elizabeth Dribben were consultants to the Task Force's "With the Nation Watching." Indeed, the League had been receiving funding for its presidential debates program from the Twentieth Century Fund and the Markle Foundation, the two main financial backers of the Aspen-Twentieth Century Fund Task Force, since they funded the League's 1976 Carter-Ford Debates. Task Force Chairman Aspen's Douglass Cater told EIR this week that he is directly in touch with the League through Ms. Hinerfeld, who he noted is not planning any nationally-tele-

vised presidential primary debates that would counter the Iowa-centric *Des Moines Register* affair. Now that the Democratic side of that debate plan has been cancelled—President Carter withdrew—what the League will be told to do by Cater is unclear.

Also involved with the Task Force is the FCC itself, the mandated "fairness" arbiter in the case. Henry Geller, then the General Counsel of the FCC, was on the 1973 advisory board to the Task Force when it produced Minow's "Presidential TV." Less directly but significant is the FCC interface with another Aspen "sister" task force, the Aspen Task Force on Communications Policy, which is also headed by Douglass Cater, and which elaborates Aspen's more general communications programs. Members of the Communications Task Force include Stanley Besen, the Co-Director for Network Study of the FCC; Henry Geller, the FCC General Counsel mentioned above who is now U.S. Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications; and Forrest Chisman, Leland Johnson, and William Lucas, all currently officials of the U.S. Department of Commerce National Telecommunications Information Administration.

New Hampshire's primary blacked out

The New Hampshire primary, traditionally the earliest significant presidential primary, scheduled for Feb. 26, 1980, has always been a leading national political event. As a result, the voters of the state have traditionally viewed it as their duty to go out, educate themselves in detail as to the programs and moral quality of the candidates, and vote. This primary, however, the Aspen Institute-Twentieth Century Task Force on the Presidential Debates is planning to deemphasize and virtually black out. They have the collaboration of the national networks CBS, ABC, and NBC.

It is the judgment of this publication that the only possible reason the Aspen Institute and collaborators could have for this unprecedented action is that their rabidly environmentalist directors abhor the campaign of Democratic presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche, the nation's leading pronuclear, protechnology candidate, who has made the state the centerpiece of his national campaign.

The news that the New Hampshire primary is not important began to break in the *New York Times* in late September. Just after the LaRouche campaign gathered