

Venezuelan Media

Yesterday and today

Lecture presented by Dr. Guillermo Gibens, William Penn University, on April 28, 2008.

Dr. Gibens began with a brief account of the history of media in Venezuela, followed by an explanation of the current situation of the media and their relationship with the Venezuelan government of President Hugo Chavez.

Dr. Gibens visited Venezuela in early March 2008 and interviewed a number of media professionals and journalists to get a realistic view of the status of the media in the country. In his speech, Dr. Gibens said that the tense relationship between the media and President Chavez began in 1999 as they became critical of the Chavez government. The traditional political parties of Accion Democratica (Democratic Action) and COPEY (Social Christian Party) had lost their popularity among the Venezuelan electorate amid rampant corruption. Under President Chavez, the news media assumed the role of political opposition, role held by those parties in the past. But President Chavez had difficulties tolerating the news media criticism of his administration. Since then, the Venezuelan government has demonized the Venezuelan news media, calling them “media terrorists,” and has embarked itself in a new adventure of becoming owner of many radio and television stations, and newspapers for the purpose of promoting its “Socialism of the 21st Century.”

What's going on?

All the information gathered and data provided by Dr. Gibens was obtained during interviews with the individuals below indicated

- Interviews conducted from March 3 to March 7, 2008, Caracas:
 - ◆ Francisco Olivares – Investigative Journalism Editor. El Universal newspaper.
 - ◆ Elides Rojas – Chief Editor El Universal
 - ◆ Nelson Bocaranda – Journalist Union Radio
 - ◆ Marcelino Bisbal – Director School of Communication Catholic University Andres Bello (UCAB), communication scholar.
 - ◆ Roberto Giusti – Journalist Globovision and El Universal.
 - ◆ Maria T. Gutierrez – Advisor to president Venezolana de Television (VTV)

History of Venezuelan media

The early years

◆ Radio:

- A.Y.R.E. – 1926
- Broadcasting Caracas – 1930
- Radio Nacional – 1936
- 50 AM stations – 1956

◆ Television:

- Televisora Nacional (T.V.N. 5) – 1952
- Televisa – 1953
- Radio Caracas Television - 1953

History of Venezuelan media

The early years

◆ Newspapers

- Gazeta de Caracas (Caracas Gazette) – 1808
- Correo del Orinoco (Orinoco Courier) – 1818
- 114 newspapers in the 19th century

Recent History

◆ Newspapers

- 1975 – 59 newspapers
- 1986 – 70 newspapers
- 2007 – 111 newspapers

◆ Main newspapers

- El Nacional (The National)
- El Universal (The Universal)
- Ultimas Noticias (Last News)
 - All together circulation: 322,000
- Capriles Network – 1959
- Bloque de Armas Network - 1970

Recent history

- ◆ Radio (AM)
 - 1955= 50 radio stations
 - 1975= 137 radio stations
 - 1989= 173 radio stations
 - 2005= 209 radio stations
- ◆ FM – Late 1980s
 - 2005 – 521 radio stations

Recent History

- Networks
 - ◆ Union Radio
 - ◆ La Mega
 - ◆ AM Center

Recent History

- Television
 - ◆ Televisora Nacional (T.V.N.) – 1952
 - ◆ Televisa – 1953 – Channel 4 – (NBC affiliated) – Changed name to Venevision – 1961
 - ◆ Radio Caracas Television – 1953 – Channel 7, 2 – (ABC affiliated)
 - ◆ Venezolana de Television (V.T.V) – 1978 – Channel 8

Recent History

- Late 1980s
 - ◆ Cable television
 - ★ 2006: 1.16 million subscribers
 - ◆ Direct TV, Intercable, Net Uno, Supercable

Government-owned radio and television stations

- In 1999
 - ◆ V.T.V
 - ◆ Radio Nacional – 630 AM, 91.1 FM
- Today: (2007)
 - ◆ Six television channels
 - ◆ National radio: three stations
 - ◆ Web pages
 - ◆ 400 community radios
 - ◆ 36 community television
 - ◆ 100 newspapers