

FREE Press

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HERE COMES THE MEDIA ELECTION

Press will set terms of debate

by Nicholas Jones

Online participation in this year's general election is certain to set a new benchmark for the web's influence on political debate but the British blogosphere will be hard pressed to match the impact achieved in the campaigning for and against President Obama.

Unlike the US, where television and radio are dominant news providers along with the internet, Britain has a powerful national press which regularly calls the shots and commands the news agenda.

Much of the traffic generated by blogs and social networking sites is a response to the storylines of the daily papers and it still tends to be the press rather than the internet which retains the clout to transform online chatter into mainstream news.

While the established media can only observe what is said on the internet - and has no control over where an argument might end up - the

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● Can the UK keep the public service broadcasting that people want? Will the BBC licence fee be safe and its digital services be free to expand? Or will they be cut back to benefit commercial competitors?

● Can local and regional news be maintained or will it be abandoned to the mercies of the corporations that are bringing it to the brink of extinction? Will there be funding or incentives for start-ups to replace them, and how would they be financed?

● What kind of media regulation will remain? Will commercial broadcasting be released from its public obligations? Will there still be Ofcom, or something worse?

A lot will hang for media policy in the coming UK general election. These questions (left) are just the biggest: there are uncertainties too around cross-platform publication as the Digital Economy Bill struggles through parliament, before the election even starts.

There is also the growing intimacy between the Conservative leadership and the still-powerful Murdoch cross-media group, the biggest in Europe.

To determine campaigning priorities and the questions to put to the parties, the CPBF is preparing a Media Manifesto, for circulation in both print and online versions: a compact publication focusing on issues to place in the political debate.

It is a time of extreme political and

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PHOTOGRAPHERS SNAP BACK

How they defend press freedom on the streets

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JESS HURD/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

ADS IN THE PROGRAMMES

Product placement is coming to commercial TV

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Ownership

ELECTION CAMPAIGN

From page one

economic instability. The weak performance of the UK economy has rocked media companies and decimated their workforces. What will be the economic climate for new media? Things could get even worse.

A few more questions:

PARTIAL OR IMPARTIAL NEWS

The Conservatives have plans to relax the long-standing statutory requirement that UK broadcast news must be impartial. John Ryley, the head of Sky News – controlled by David Cameron's best friends in the Murdoch empire – said recently: "I no longer want to be subjected to the controlling hand of a regulator armed with a set of codes and sanctions." Can Fox News UK be on the way?

THE LOCAL NEWS CONSORTIA

As ITV jettisons its public service obligation to provide local and regional news there is a government programme to replace it – and supplement the dwindling service from the press – with regional multi-media Independently Financed News Consortia (IFNCs). Three pilots are planned but shadow culture secretary Jeremy Hunt has confirmed they would be stopped; he wants the sector left to the market. How will local and regional news continue to thrive?

THE FUTURE OF ITN

ITN provides the news for ITV and C4 (Sky provides the news for C5). The current contract with ITV expires in 2012. Will ITN survive as a provider of high-quality national and international news, in vital competition with the BBC?

REGULATION OF THE MEDIA

How can the Press Complaints Commission, a creature of the national press, be made effective and independent? The Conservatives want to rein back Ofcom – the Murdochs don't like it – but what sort of body might regulate our converged communications media?

PRESS FREEDOM

The libel laws are under attack as seldom before, with growth of libel tourism in London and the gross profiteering of law firms that benefit from it. The government wants to cut them back, but what will happen after the election?

The CPBF Media Manifesto will be aimed at raising awareness of the importance of the media as an election issue. When it comes out in March it will be circulated around the members, groups and unions in the CPBF. It will be online and supporters should spread it and get the debates going far and wide.

Big media just want to get bigger

At times of economic crisis the response of media companies is predictable, says **GRANVILLE WILLIAMS**. It's 'cut back and merge' – and get rid of any regulations that stand in their way

We have been given it straight: government should relax rules on media ownership, limit their funding and restrict new services by public service broadcasters, and tear up tiresome restrictive regulations.

Remember James Murdoch's tirade against the BBC, Ofcom, impartiality in broadcast news and other targets in his speech to the Edinburgh Television Festival in August 2009?

He talked of "a land-grab, pure and simple, going on – and in the interests of a free society it should be sternly resisted. The land grab is spearheaded by the BBC. The scale and scope of its current activities and future ambitions is chilling".

He contrasted the BBC's "state-sponsored journalism" with inde-

pendent journalism sustained through commercial activity and argued "the only reliable, durable, and perpetual guarantor of independence is profit". Did he have Fox News in mind?

In fact James Murdoch's BSKyB is the largest TV company in Europe; the parent News Corporation has annual revenues of \$30 billion (with this year's results likely to be boosted by the relentless cross-promotion in Murdoch media of the film *Avatar*, produced by its film company, 20th Century Fox). Who's the behemoth now?

Just before Christmas the pace of consolidation quickened, with the Disney Company's acquisition of Marvel Entertainment Inc, and Comcast, the largest American cable services provider, taking control of NBC, acquiring a 51 per cent stake from its existing owner, General Electric. It means that the production and distribution of TV and films to millions of homes will be controlled by one company.

In the UK we have seen a push by media groups to revise ownership rules and jettison restrictive regulation. In difficult economic times, local and regional newspaper groups, ITV

BSkyB is the largest TV company in Europe; the parent News Corporation has annual revenues of \$30 billion. Who's the behemoth now?

Ownership

and local radio stations all argue that the solution was consolidation and an end to regulation.

A prominent proponent of this view is the media analyst Claire Enders, who wrote in the January issue of *Wired* magazine: "Now is the time to ditch regulation of the broadcasting sector altogether ... We should allow market forces to act unimpeded within the commercial sector, and leave public service broadcasting to the BBC".

The CPBF take a very different view. Positive regulation protects viewers and listeners from a tide of commercialism. Media consolidation, whether in ITV or regional newspapers, has served viewers and readers badly.

As groups like Johnston Press, Newsquest and Trinity Mirror acquired more and more newspapers the resources which should have been invested in journalism were diverted in the good times to boost shareholder profits.

And what about ITV? The new ITV boss, former Tory MP Archie Norman, acting in tandem with Murdoch's BSkyB, wants to set up a coalition to lobby for the further deregulation of the broadcast industry.

If you want the evidence of what has been lost by media consolidation and deregulation – diversity in programming, the disappearance of hard-hitting critical journalism, drama and

current affairs rooted within communities – you can see with your own eyes.

Go and visit the exhibition Manchester: Television and The City: Ghosts of Winter Hill on at Urbis Manchester until April 2010; Winter Hill is a transmitter for the Granada region in Lancashire.

Arranged in a series of period sitting rooms you can watch extracts from a stream of programming by

Granada which excited, amused, challenged and inspired. From the 1990s you witness a terrible falling off in talent, innovation and memorable programmes as a distinctive broadcaster is collapsed into the single ITV brand. That's media consolidation for you.

Granville Williams is a former editor of Free Press and author of Britain's Media: How They Are Related

News Corp has to pay up

Rupert Murdoch's perpetual aggressive strategy for his News Corporation to dominate all its markets has suffered a couple of serious setbacks around legal cases in the UK and US.

In Britain, BSkyB has thrown in the towel after a two-year battle to prevent the forced sale of part of its share in ITV. After losing four rounds of legal challenges it put 10 per cent of its contentious stake on the market in February.

BSkyB retains its remaining shareholding of just under 7.5 per cent – the maximum allowed by the Competition Commission when it ruled that the company had too much influence over its main commercial TV competitor.

The stake was bought in a sudden swoop in 2006 to block a potential takeover of ITV by cable company NTL, now part of Virgin Media. It paid 135p a share. Now the price is 52p, and the adventure has cost the Murdochs as much as £500 million.

● In the US, a NewsCorp subsidiary, News America Marketing (NA), doesn't quite dominate the market for publishing newspaper inserts. There is a

rival company, Valassis, which in 2006 launched a legal action, accusing NA of anticompetitive behaviour.

Now News Corporation has announced it will pay \$500 million to Valassis. "It has become evident to our legal advisors from pre-trial proceedings over the past couple of weeks that significant risks were developing in presenting this case to a jury," said News Corporation Deputy Chairman Chase Carey.

In plain English that means they didn't have a leg to stand on and it was better to pay up than risk losing more going through the courts.

In a separate case that was settled last year, NA was sued by another competitor, Floorgraphics, for alleged corporate spying. Just as witnesses began testifying, News Corporation settled the lawsuit – and days later bought the company outright for an undisclosed sum.

In a court filing, Floorgraphics said that NA had "illegally accessed plaintiff's computer system and obtained proprietary information from the computer system" and "disseminated false, misleading and malicious information about the plaintiff."

Positive regulation protects viewers and listeners from a tide of commercialism. Media consolidation has served viewers and readers badly

IT IS. WILL IT STAY THAT WAY?

The *Independent's* advertising slogan for its launch in 1986 was: "It is. Are You?"

But what if Alexander Lebedev, the Russian billionaire who acquired a 75 per cent stake in the *Evening Standard* for £1 last year, takes it over, as he is negotiating with owners Independent News and Media (INM) to do?

Alexander Lebedev has a mixed record on press freedom.

He funds *Novaya Gazeta*, the bravely independent opposition newspaper where the murdered journalist Anna Politkovskaya

worked. But the editor of another of his papers, the Moscow business weekly *Kompaniya*, was fired after criticising President Vladimir Putin's handling of the Beslan school siege in North Ossetia.

Alexander Lebedev's business interests have suffered in the recession and he has just sold his stake in the airline Aeroflot and an aircraft leasing company back to the Russian government for £450 million, in a deal sanctioned by the now prime minister Putin.

The deal has been reported to carry a condition that Alexander Lebedev

cannot invest the money outside Russia, but it means that the relationship between them is not as sharp as made out publicly.

Could it be that the quid pro quo for Putin assisting Lebedev financially is an agreement that if he acquires the *Independent* titles he goes soft on the reporting of Russia?

Talks on the takeover have stalled. The original deadline of February 15 has been missed, but analysts still expect it to go through by late March.

INM holds its annual meeting then and its shareholders are desperate to sell.

Two pints of Heineken and a packet of Walkers

Look out for the big brands cropping up in popular British programmes, says

JONATHAN HARDY.

American-style TV is coming

If you had watched NBC's *Jay Leno Show* in the US every night last year you would have seen four commercial products promoted live in each programme. *Jay Leno* topped the "product placement" (PP) ratings for 2009 with no fewer than 1,015 mentions. Companies like Coca-Cola, Ford and McDonalds routinely pay for gratuitous references in the top-rating US entertainment shows, providing brands with uncritical, promotionally friendly environments.

The "best" product placement in 2009, according to the ratings agency Nielsen's brand opinion index, was fast-food chain Subway for NBC's *The Biggest Loser* – a slimming show, which came second after *Jay Leno* in 2009 with 704 placements – described by an enthusiastic trade journal as a "seamless fit". In a placement in the series *Chuck* (NBC again!), a lead character repeated Subway's ad message "\$5 foot-longs" while delivering one of its sandwiches to his boss.

Now PP is coming to the UK, and similar entertainment shows, together with soaps and dramas, will be the principal vehicles, and no doubt incorporate the same global brands.

Current UK regulations allow only the unpaid supply of "props". Commercial references are subject to rules against "undue prominence". British TV production culture used to be antagonistic to PP, but it is changing. Last year the EU adopted a new Audiovisual Media Services Directive, which leaves each country to make its own decision – though the ban remains on news and current affairs and children's and religious programmes. Most EU states, except Denmark, are expected to allow PP in commercial television, though some, like Germany and France, are debating exclusions for public service media. In the UK the BBC will not adopt the practice.

The UK commercial TV lobby came in hard on the then culture secretary Andy Burnham. He said "no", but his call to "preserve editorial integrity as technology advances" was not to last long. In September his successor Ben Bradshaw announced he was reviewing the decision. "Product placement is not a big deal", his junior minister Sion Simon told a CPBF delegation.

In February, after a brief public consultation and even briefer deliberation, Ben Bradshaw announced it would go ahead. But the argument that, without PP, British TV will be less competitive in internation-

The viewer would then have embedded advertising without greater spending on programmes; the same money going to worse use.

There may be a narrow economic case for PP as a source of "additional" revenue – though Ofcom's estimate of £30 million a year in five years shows how modest the gains may be – and this is without considering the cost to the credibility of broadcasting of removing restrictions on how marketers pay to promote products.

The DCMS consultation, to which the CPBF submitted evidence, identified such issues of concern as the proper identification for viewers, maintaining editorial independence, and ensuring that the rules on junk food, alcohol and other advertising are not entirely undermined if marketers can bypass them by paying for placements. This long list hardly corroborates Ben Bradshaw's claim that liberalising PP amounted to removing "regulation for regulation's sake".

The powerful commercial interests who failed to convince Andy Burnham have triumphed, but there has been strong opposition from churches, children's charities, teaching unions, health bodies like the BMA, and media freedom groups like the CPBF.

Ben Bradshaw has made one concession, that PP will not be allowed for alcohol, food high in fat, sugar or salt, gambling, smoking products, over-the-counter medicines or baby food. While welcome, it does not exhaust the list of advertising rules that PP undermines, such as those concerning cars, speed and dangerous driving, and it fails to address the wider damage of blurring commercial and media speech.

There has been a notable defection from the ranks of PP advocacy: the Incorporated Society of British Advertisers is worried about the increased cost for its members who currently get their props used for free. But it also judged that PP would further erode public trust in TV and generate viewer complaints. Get those complaints line numbers preset on your telephone now!

● Jonathan Hardy wrote the CPBF submission to the DCMS consultation. It is at www.cpbj.org.uk



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al markets is no more persuasive now than before. ITV's argument has been that "every little helps": PP will offset ad revenues that have fallen sharply in recent years – though they are rising again now.

If the focus really was on economic viability, then the risks of cannibalising existing revenues would have generated more serious consideration. The likelihood is that marketers will simply redistribute rather than increase spending.

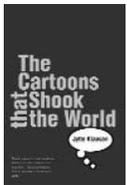
Reviews

SELF-CENSORSHIP AT WORK



CENSORSHIP: A BEGINNER'S GUIDE

Julian Petley
OneWorld £9.99



THE CARTOONS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

Jytte Klausen
Yale University Press £20

by Granville Williams

In September 2005 the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten published 12 cartoons featuring the Prophet Mohammed. Kurt Westergaard, whose bomb in a turban cartoon was one of the 12, has had stark reminders of the continuing anger and controversy provoked by their publication.

In February 2006 police arrested three Muslim men for plotting to kill Kurt Westergaard and his wife. And in January this year a 28-year-old man attacked his house armed with an axe and a knife. Police arrested the man after a struggle in which he was shot (but survived).

Jytte Klausen's *The Cartoons That Shook The World* tells the story, but its publication has sparked accusations of self-censorship. The US publisher decided not to publish the cartoons because of a perceived risk of violence.

The December 2009 issue of *Index on Censorship* in London carried an interview with Jytte Klausen, but again without any of the cartoons. The chair of Index, Jonathan Dimbleby, spoke of his hope that "we will get beyond a narrow obsession with those Danish cartoons and engage a much bigger audience in this great debate."

I am not sure what he means by an obsession with the cartoons, which seems to be held by Islamic rabble-rousers rather than western liberals, but there was an outcry among Index members with calls for Jonathan Dimbleby's resignation posted on the website.

Kenan Malik, a member of the board who could not be at the decisive meeting, said that such pre-emptive censorship creates a self-fulfilling prophecy. The assumption that an "offensive" work will invite violence "both entrenches the idea that the work is offensive and creates a culture that makes violence more likely".

He dismissed the suggestion that it was "unnecessary" and "gratuitous" to use the cartoons: "I cannot see what could be less unnecessary or gratuitous



One of the cartoons, showing a cartoonist shielding his drawing of Mohammed. Ironically, the cartoonist can't be named, since with 11 of the 12 he or she has not been identified and lives under tight security.

than using cartoons to illustrate an interview with the author of a book that was censored by a refusal to publish those very cartoons."

The Cartoons That Shook The World presents a clear account of the publication of the cartoons and how five months later they became the focus of global controversy. Through interviews with key actors in the drama she demonstrates how the reaction was orchestrated first in Denmark and Egypt, then in Pakistan, Lebanon, Libya and Nigeria.

The drawings have been published in more the 50 countries, including Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen – though there were repercussions for the editors responsible in each – and of course on the internet. Only three newspapers did (out of 1,400) in the USA and none in the UK (a student newspaper did). The BBC apologised for showing onscreen the newspaper's page with the cartoons and a news clip of one of the Danish imams holding a picture and presenting it as one of the cartoons when it was a photo downloaded from the inter-

net of a man wearing a pig snout.

The controversy needs a wider context and Julian Petley's *Censorship: A Beginner's Guide* provides that. It carries examples ranging back to the death of Socrates in 399BC to contemporary debates on internet censorship.

The first chapter, *Death and Destruction*, and his conclusion analyse the similar furore around Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, and another, *Markets and Moguls*, demonstrates how "unregulated market forces are equally effective as censors of media as are governments, albeit in a different fashion".

Julian Petley (who chairs CPBF) is unequivocal in the defence of free and open expression and opposes those who argue that, in societies with a variety of deeply held views and beliefs, religious and cultural sensibilities should be appeased through censorship or self-censorship.

He is with George Orwell: "If liberty means anything it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear."

Research in progress



NEW MEDIA, OLD NEWS
Natalie Fenton (ed)
Sage £18.99

by Tim Gopsill

This is a rare academic work that many people in the "real world" will scrutinise; at least, those in the media will if they want an idea of where the industry is going.

It is a comprehensive survey, based on interviews with hundreds of

practitioners, in all fields, of the impact of digital convergence on the production of news, produced by a team of ten lecturers and researchers at Goldsmiths College in London.

It will be of value, too, to campaigners, partly because it provides academic corroboration for the journalistic work of Nick Davies's *Flat Earth News of 2008*.

Its special value lies in the fact that, though they all worked as a team, different writers offer differing takes on similar themes, for instance Angela Phillips and Nick Couldry on the significance of new online journalists as sources or competitors for the mainstream.

But that is the state of the industry: much is still uncertain.

News

Press politics

From page one

framework for much of the online debate is shaped by the dedication and ingenuity of journalists and not by the bloggers who are more likely feed off their work.

John Terry's failed attempt to prevent the *News of the World* publishing allegations about an extra-marital affair was the latest illustration of the continuing power of the press proprietors to drive a story forward.

Online gossip about his private life had long been an irritation for the former England soccer captain – as it is for other Premier League players and managers – but once he was targeted by the Murdoch press the story gained traction and was immediately picked up by the rest of the media, which in turn triggered a flood of comment on sites and forums for football fans.

John Terry's humiliation in the tabloids is a reflection of the experience of countless politicians who have been caught in the eye of media feeding frenzies; it is also a reminder of the damage that well-timed revelations can do to the standing of a political party.

In the long run-up to the 1997 general election, when the press turned against John Major, stories about sleaze dominated the agenda and the Conservatives imploded in the face of newspapers disclosures about extra-marital affairs, cash for questions and splits over Europe.

The press didn't win that landslide

for Labour but it helped the Tories.

In the 2010 general election, today's online army of political activists is unlikely to be offered anything like same array of sensational stories, but in any case the national newspapers have no intention of being sidelined by the blogosphere.

Agenda-setting political stories – often backed up by video interviews – are winners for the weekend press. Newspapers like the Mail on Sunday have a well-established track record in

delivering exclusives. Lord Levy's claim that Tony Blair is convinced Gordon Brown cannot beat David Cameron was timed to cause maximum embarrassment for Labour.

Britain's highly-politicised national press might not be as powerful as it once was but Conservative campaign headquarters will be waiting anxiously to see what anti-Cameron stories the Daily Mirror has in its locker, just as Labour will be in fear of a rampant pro-Conservative *Sun*.



Nicholas Jones is a former BBC industrial and political correspondent, author of a number of books on government and the press and a member of the CPBF National Council.

He will be speaking on the media and the election at the 2010 UNESCO World Press Freedom Day meeting on London on April 9.

The meeting will debate the proposition: 'Unregulated political comment online helps the democratic process.'

Other speakers arranged so far include Caroline Thompson, chief operating officer at the BBC, pollster and commentator Sir Robert Worcester and Steve Barnett, Professor at Westminster University.

The debate as at the Frontline Club, Norfolk Place, London W2, at 10.30 am on Friday April 9. Admission is free but places should be booked at www.frontlineclub.com

**Free Press is edited by Tim Gopsill on behalf of the National Council.
Send letters, comments, articles and ideas to freepress@cpbf.org.uk**

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TIM GOPSILL charts the rise of resistance to police attempts to restrict the right to take pictures in a public place

Freedom always has to be fought for, and in few places in Britain is press freedom fought for more determinedly than by photographers on the streets of London. There is always tension between journalists and the police in what they call “public order” situations. Photographers must be close to the action and if police start arresting or beating people they are not going to want the images published.

Photographers can be detained for hours, pushed around, obstructed or thumped and sometimes quite badly hurt. The effect of preventing them either taking photos or getting them out in time to publish is a violation to which the press freedom lobby (including the CPBF!) has paid too little attention.

It’s an old problem but in the last decade there have two crucial developments. The first is the adoption of successive anti-terror laws, giving police

Officers told him they were responding to an incident in which ‘an aggressive male ... had been taking photographs of the staff ... and refused to leave’

new authority to obstruct and threaten people taking photographs.

There are half a dozen such measures that, among other things, grant police the right to stop and search, to clear people from a “designated area”, and outlaw the taking of pictures of police or security personnel that might be of use to a terrorist.

The second development is just as significant: the growth of a corps of photographers who are prepared to challenge all this. They have a group called “I’m a Photographer not a Terrorist!” – PHNAT for short – that grew out of an extraordinary demonstration outside New Scotland Yard, the Metropolitan Police headquarters, just a year ago.

It was the day the day the Counter Terrorism Act came into force, section 58 of which makes it an offence in the UK to take pictures of police or security



Up to 3,000 people joined the ‘I’m a Photographer Not a Terrorist!’ mass gathering in Trafalgar Square in January in defence of street photography and against the arbitrary use of the terrorism laws to stop and search photographers

of the anti-terror laws.

Tens of thousands of people have been stopped and searched – 36,000 in three months last year alone, according to the latest available figures – under section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000, which authorises has police to make random stop-and-searches in “designated” areas of people without suspicion of wrongdoing.

This law is now a dead letter, thanks to a judgement in the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg in a test case brought by Pennie Quinton and Kevin Gillan and backed by Liberty.

Pennie Quinton is a video journalist who had been trying to film a demonstration at the Defence Systems and Equipment International (DESI) exhibition in London Docklands in 2003. She was detained and searched, as was Kevin Gillan, a demonstrator.

Section 44 bypassed the requirement that the police needed grounds for suspicion to conduct a search. The European court said the new powers were “not sufficiently circumscribed” and there were not “adequate legal safeguards against abuse”. The pair had been “obliged to ... submit to the search and if they had refused they would have been liable to arrest, detention at a police station and criminal charges. This element of coercion is indicative of a deprivation of liberty.”

It awarded them 33,850 each in compensation. The UK government will appeal and the law remains in force but lawyers consider it inoperable.

It has not stopped photographers being stopped and searched. Within a month of the judgement Philip Caller got the treatment while taking pictures of demonstrators blockading an import depot in Hayes, Middlesex, that distributes goods produced in Israeli settlements on the West Bank.

He showed his NUJ press card, formally recognised by all police forces, but an officer still searched him – under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE), which authorises police to search on reasonable suspicion of criminal activity.

Philip Caller said: “He said he believed that I might be in possession of a set of keys that fitted the locks the protesters were using to chain themselves to the gates. I replied that I had just arrived, had been in full view of police officers and nobody had passed me anything.

“However, I agreed to the search. My searching officer found my house keys. He tried these in the protesters’ locks to

UP AGAINST THE LAW AND WINNING

personnel that are “likely to be useful to a person committing or preparing an act of terrorism”. The penalty could be ten years in prison.

The NUJ had staged demos at Scotland Yard in support of photographers before, but now the photographers rallied themselves and 300 of them turned up and defiantly took pictures of every copper they could see. Police just had to grin and bear it.

There have been a number of events

since then, culminating in a gathering in January in Trafalgar Square – where so many have been harassed while photographing other people’s demos in the past. Marc Vallee, one of the most active street photographers, said: “Photographers will be exercising their common law right to take a picture in a public place. People are fed up about being stopped and they want to challenge a culture that sees photographers as a threat.”

Even the BBC, generally known for conservatism in estimating the numbers on demos, reported there were 3,000 there.

Such laws may not be intended to prosecute people, but to intimidate them, and this is what the campaign has undermined.

In the process the photographers are fighting for the freedom of everyone, since a lot more vulnerable people than them find themselves at the rough end

no avail. He allowed me to continue my job.” The same thing happened twice more. Each time the searching officer found the house keys, and still they did not fit.

This kind of harassment is common. In the last year PHNAT has recorded several incidents. Award-winning architectural photographer Grant Smith was photographing a church in the City of London near the offices of the Bank of America and Merrill Lynch when a security guard asked for his ID, which he refused to give, as is his right.

Three police cars and a riot van arrived. Officers told him they were responding to an incident in which “an aggressive male ... had been in reception of the building taking photographs of the staff ... and refused to leave”. Grant Smith explained this was incorrect but his bag was searched and he was told that if he did not give his ID he would be physically searched, so he then agreed.

Jerome Taylor of the *Independent* was taking a picture of the Houses of Parliament – as tourists do every day – when two police officers appeared and questioned him, noting his height, name, address and ethnicity. This they recorded on a form that explained the reason: “Using a camera and tripod next to Westminster Bridge.”

A photographer was arrested by two armed police officers at London City Airport while covering a small and peaceful protest by environmental campaigners in Santa Claus outfits.

She was searched four times at Kingsnorth climate camp, but when she photographed Alistair Darling in his office she went through no searches of any kind

Photographers have had other successes. The recent rash of stop-and-searches began at the Kingsnorth climate camp protest in 2008, and Kent Police were forced by the NUJ to apologise publicly for their treatment of photographer Jess Hurd, who was searched four times. She pointed out that the next week she had photographed Chancellor Alistair Darling in his office and went through no searches of any kind.

The union has won compensation and apologies for a number of photographers, most recently for Andy Handley of *MKNNews* in Milton Keynes, who was held for eight hours after trying to take pictures of a car accident.

And Marc Vallee himself received substantial compensation for a serious back injury after he was knocked to the ground by police while covering a demonstration in Parliament Square in 2006.