

# THE EAST GETS REDDER

FRIDAY the 13th of March wasn't the most propitious day to launch a new newspaper. But after over a year of meetings, fund-raising and discussions on how it should be run, the *East End News* has finally made it on to the streets of East London.

Workers, readers and the 750-odd individuals and organisations who've bought shares in the paper's co-operative should all be well pleased with the result. The first issue was reported to be a sell-out and circulation is now around 10,000.

The *East End News* is obviously different from the other weekly papers on offer to people living in Tower Hamlets and the neighbouring boroughs. It has a clear policy of campaigning against cuts in local services and combatting sexual and racial discrimination.

It's also controlled by a management committee elected from the co-op members and supported by the local and national labour movement, who clearly hope it will present a very different view of the world to that produced by existing newspaper proprietors.

But on the basis of the first four issues, at least, the paper has successfully avoided a hard propaganda line which would inevitably alienate some of the wide readership it aims to reach.

For those who haven't yet seen a copy, the paper appears superficially like a bright weekly tabloid — well-designed, busy pages, bold headlines, lots of pictures and clear, crisp reporting. The content is somewhat different. Though some of the regular news items you'd expect in a local paper are there, the *East End News* has concentrated on issues which affect working people in the area, especially jobs and housing.

The first four lead stories, for instance, covered electricity cut-offs, GLC council house sales, attacks on community group budgets, and council workers' action against the cuts.

Although the paper has kept to the journalistic principle of asking the other side, a twin interview with local MPs David Owen and Ian Mikardo was linked to an editorial statement of support for the left of the Labour Party.

The most interesting aspect of the paper, however, is a range of feature material you definitely wouldn't find in a typical weekly. This includes a column of women's movement news and events, serialisations of a book about 'The English Rebel' and a youth page called 'Revolutions', where kids write about such things as trying for a job or getting arrested.

Articles in this bulletin can be freely reproduced provided *Free Press* is acknowledged.

Contributors to *Free Press* from campaign supporters are welcome. The deadline for the July-August issue is 5 June. Send your contribution to: Geoffrey Sheridan, 16 Cazenove Road, London N16. Day Tel: 01-359 8189.

*Free Press* is published by the Campaign for Press Freedom and is sent free to members. Individuals and organisations are invited to place multiple-orders (supplied at a discount rate) for distribution at meetings and workplaces, etc.

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Typeset/design by Redesign (TU) 01-837 6039

by Crispin Aubrey

There are also more traditional items, including pets, personal finance and eating columns, sport, entertainments, a parliamentary report and a series on local wildlife. Some of this has been contributed by local people, an important *East End News* principle, and partly because of this, the writing is fresh, unpretentious and uncluttered with clichés.

What has to be remembered, of course, is that all this has been put together by a tiny full-time staff and a lot of volunteers. Despite some initial capital, the paper still has to run on a shoe-string budget and depends on the support of advertisers.

But from the few issues produced so far, it deserves equally substantial support from the labour movement, and from anybody who wants to see such papers flourish

## Media myths and plain lies

by Jake Ecclestone

NEWSPAPER journalists in Britain — editors particularly — are almost obsessively fond of writing stories about their own industry, provided always that the central assumptions on which it is based are not called into question.

Strangely, the same journalists have an abhorrence of academics poking their noses in and subjecting those assumptions to more detailed and rigorous scrutiny. Academics, it is usually argued, don't understand the real world, much less 'news values'.

The effect of such an attitude is that regrettably few journalists will probably bother to read a new study of the press and broadcasting organisations in Britain, *Power Without Responsibility*, by James Curran and Jean Seaton (Fontana, £2.95), which is a valuable contribution to the gathering debate on press freedom.

Not the least of the book's merits is the way it constantly challenges conventional wisdom.

Thus, the orthodox view that press freedom in Britain was brought to full flower around the middle of the 19th century, and that newspapers, the 'great organs of the public mind', were somehow responsible for making our political institutions more open and democratic, is found on closer examination to be a myth.

Instead, market forces and the growth of advertising achieved a censorship far more effective than legal controls and political repression.

Similarly, the fears of successive Royal Commissions on the Press that any form of



elsewhere. Hopefully, it then won't go the way of the last paper to bear the same name, which went out of business in 1962.

*East End News* needs helpers, subscribers and donations. Details from: 17 Victoria Park Square, London E2. Tel: 01-981 7337.

state intervention in the newspaper industry would inevitably lead to state control are shown to be in contradiction to what has actually happened in broadcasting, where the justification for state involvement has evolved largely unencumbered by the play of market forces.

After tracing separately the growth and changes which took place in both newspapers and broadcasting, the authors have put together a third section on theories about the media generally. Although harder going, this helps to put the whole into a broader social context without at the same time losing the originality of perception.

There is, finally, a short section on proposals for reform of our media which, if taken up, would cause near-hysteria in not a few boardrooms.

As one would expect from James Curran, an academic consultant to the last Royal Commission — of which he is suitably critical, and from Jean Seaton, a sociologist specialising in broadcasting, *Power Without Responsibility* is meticulously researched and supported with tables to satisfy even those for whom only statistics offer convincing proof.

### Left-Write

LEFT-WRITE is a group of working journalists who will help people understand the basic techniques of writing for newspapers and magazines.

If your group would like to hold a one-day workshop, please contact, Left-Write, c/o 94 Colvestone Crescent, Hackney, London E8. Women-only sessions possible.

# FREE PRESS

Bulletin of the Campaign for Press Freedom

## It's your right to reply!

THE Campaign for Press Freedom has just published a pamphlet on the right of reply which promises to be an invaluable aid for all those who are on the receiving end of bias or distortion in the media.

It explains why the right of reply is needed, and how it can be obtained with the help of the unions in the newspaper and magazine industries.

Details are given of the policies of the journalists' and print unions, together with advice on contacting workplace union representatives.

The 16-page guide, on sale at 40p, is part of CPF's Right of Reply Campaign. 'The first aim of this campaign,' the pamphlet states, 'is to increase public awareness of the importance of extending access to the media and of giving people the right of reply.'

Noting that newspaper proprietors are unlikely to respond voluntarily by granting a fair reply in cases of bias or distortion, the pamphlet adds: 'We therefore look to the trade unionists who are employed on the newspapers in question to help obtain the right of reply.'

In an introductory statement, five union leaders say: 'This pamphlet makes an important contribution to the growing debate about the control and ownership of the

## Campaign launch in North East

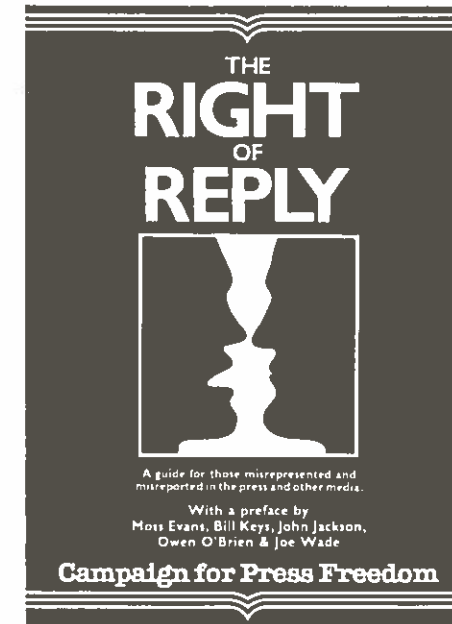
by Malcolm Wright, NUJ

A MAJOR new regional committee of the Campaign for Press Freedom has been formed in the North-east of England. Recruiting began on May Day, with the distribution of 4,000 specially produced leaflets.

A course for trade unionists on 'Handling the Media' is being held at the Darlington Media Workshop on three Saturdays during May. We have been asked by the white-collar union ASTMS to organise a course on the media for local members, and we plan to make this a regular workshop.

The new committee covers Tyne and Wear, Northumberland, County Durham, and Cleveland. CPF speakers have already visited trades councils and Labour Party branches in the area.

CPF North-east is monitoring local media to make sure news coverage is fair and accurate. If it isn't we will be making complaints. We are encouraging local trade unions and pressure groups to do the same.



press in Britain. All those groups and individuals who suffer from biased, distorted or unfair reporting in the press should read it.'

The statement is made by Moss Evans, who is chairperson of the TUC's Media Working Group, and by the general sec-

We aim to put representatives on every listeners' and viewers' association linked with local radio and TV stations.

We plan to produce a poster giving media spokespersons a 10-point guide on how to deal with reporters. Also in the pipeline is a series of leaflets, booklets, and slide shows explaining how papers, radio, and TV stations in the region are owned and run.

CPF North-east is investigating the possibility of setting up a radical weekly paper in the region. Meanwhile we are supporting papers like *Durham Street Press* and Newcastle Trades Council's paper, *Workers' Chronicle*.

We are helping with a one-day seminar on 'Women in the Media' to be held in Middlesbrough in May.

Information on CPF North-east from: Malcolm Wright, 29 Stanhope Road, Darlington. Tel: Darlington (0325) 484374 or 54621. Details of other regional groups on page 7.

... and here's how to get it

retaries of the print unions NATSOPA, NGA, SLADE, and SOGAT.

They argue that if the democratic system is to survive, 'We cannot leave it to a handful of millionaires and multinationals to determine society's news values, and to decide if and how the major issues of the day are to be reported.'

The five union leaders say that we should applaud the efforts of the journalists' union to uphold the NUJ's code of conduct (which includes a commitment to the right of reply), and that all those involved in the press 'have some responsibility for the product of their labours.' They firmly recommend the pamphlet to trade unionists.

The pamphlet explains that the aim is not to boycott copy, but to persuade an editor to publish a reply.

In a step-by-step guide to securing an effective reply, the pamphlet says that the outcome in the end may depend on whether the press unions are prepared to use their strength and undertake some form of industrial action.

Examples are given where such measures have resulted in the publication of a reply to biased coverage. Newspapers are, of course, only part of the media and the pamphlet concludes with the promise that we will be investigating ways of extending the Right of Reply Campaign to radio and television.

• The Right of Reply, price 40p (pre-paid), from: CPF, 274-288 London Road, Haddenham, Essex SS7 2DE.

### ... Inside ... Inside ...

Page 2: Veto sought at Observer  
Page 3: Sound of Cardiff Broadcasting  
Page 4 & 5: Half century of racist reporting & Women journalists' dissent  
Page 6: Free Comment on Leavelle & Star  
Page 7: What the campaign's been up to  
Page 8: East End News

MAY/JUNE 1981  
Number 7  
10p





## Journalists want veto on editor's appointment

by Jonathan Hunt,  
NUJ FoC, *The Observer*

'UNINFLUENCED by party — unbiased by prejudice' read the newsbill for *The Observer* when it first appeared in 1791.

Apart from a few transgressions in the intervening years, such as the time when the editor was in the pay of the Home Office and when Palmston, then Foreign Secretary, wrote the foreign policy leaders, that has remained the paper's position.

It has also acquired a reputation for allowing its journalists the freedom to print the truth as they see it, and to participate in the direction of editorial policy.

At a time when most national newspapers are in the hands of press barons with very decided political views, journalists on *The Observer* are jealously guarding this independence.

It is a help that, despite not having a closed shop, there is 100 per cent membership of the NUJ chapel. Like the paper itself, the chapel has never fallen into the hands of politically-motivated militants.

But this pragmatism has also been its strength. Moderates have not been driven into the arms of the Institute of Journalists, nor into forming elitist limited companies. When the chapel speaks, it does so for all of the journalists on the paper.

Much of the present character of the paper grew during the years of Astor ownership — and editorship — but has been preserved, despite the occasional incursion of an editor-in-chief, over the past 4½ years when Atlantic Richfield has been the proprietor.

So it was with some horror that journalists learned that Arco had suddenly decided to sell. The buyer could have been unacceptable — such as another Fleet Street newspaper group, or a right-wing magazine publisher — but journalists realised that the era of beneficial ownership had probably ended.

Tiny Rowland and Lonhro have, as far as we can find out, a good reputation for not interfering in editorial policy in the papers Lonhro owns, albeit not ones of the standing and influence of *The Observer*.

Although a strong feeling exists that Rowland would bring to a financially-troubled paper much-needed commercial flair and expertise, the chapel decided neither to welcome nor oppose the deal. It believed that many of the reservations it had would be best answered by a Monopolies Commission inquiry.

As its officers told Trade Secretary John Biffen, there were no grounds for avoiding one.

Nevertheless, the chapel negotiated with Rowland and Outram management about the type of safeguards necessary to ensure continued editorial independence and integrity.

Agreement could not be reached on the crucial areas of board composition and

Tiny Rowland, boss of Lonhro, which pays poverty-line wages to its black workers in South Africa.



involvement in the appointment of editor, nor about a trust structure. Lonhro has offered consultation about who should be the independent directors, but the chapel believes that independent directors are not enough.

They are answerable to no constituency. Few would be able to take civil action against the owners should the safeguards be transgressed.

We believe there should be an active component on the board, and that journalists' representatives should take on that role, in addition to a number of independent directors.

There must also be participation by journalists in the appointment of the editor. Having agreed to vest so many powers, such as final arbiter of content, policy, the hiring and firing powers over journalists, and issuing them with instructions, it could be open for any future owner to appoint his or her own puppet.

The very least that must be laid down is a veto over any candidate nominated by the board, but as *The Observer* NUJ chapel broke new ground in participating in the selection of the present editor, we do not believe this is territory we should concede.

## Labour leaders call for TV discussion on bias

OVER a hundred trade union leaders, MPs, and professors have protested to the BBC and IBA about anti-labour movement bias in broadcasting.

They say: 'This bias has now been documented in a number of academic studies, including the work of the Leicester Mass Communications Centre and the Birmingham Centre for Cultural Studies.'

'Recently the appearance of *Bad News* and *More Bad News* by the Glasgow University Media Group has again highlighted an enormous gap between the obligations of the broadcasters to give a balanced account of what they actually do.'

The signatories, who include 23 trade union general secretaries and 74 Labour MPs, request 'a televised presentation of these issues in a series of programmes in

The commission is now sitting, and its recommendations are expected at the end of May.

All who believe that free speech is one of the cornerstones of democracy must hope that it will do its duty, and ensure *The Observer* enters its third century of publication free and unfettered.

●A statement on 21 March from representatives of five of *The Observer* production and machine chapels protested that coverage of the takeover bid gave the impression that 'the only people of any consequence in *The Observer* are the journalists.'

They criticised the failure of the journalists on the newspaper 'to consult with the vast majority of the staff whom we represent,' and added: 'We believe we will only have a truly free press and guaranteed journalistic independence when our national newspapers are no longer the property of a small group of multi-millionaires.'

'In the meantime, our prime concern in the current ownership battle is the maintenance and improvement of employment and conditions of our members. We therefore welcome any moves aimed at expanding the paper and introducing new newspapers.'

which this evidence can be shown in detail.

'In these,' they add, 'the broadcasters would have the opportunity to respond and to discuss the possibilities of alternative and more balanced forms of coverage.'

The general secretaries of the broadcasting unions ACTT and ABS are among those who have issued the statement, but three National Union of Journalists broadcasting representatives — Peter Dodson, Vincent Hanna, and Giles Smith — refused to sign it.

They argue that some of the Glasgow research was poorly done and that in its most recent survey the group 'had proceeded to a conclusion from a predetermined position, thus adopting the stance of which they accused our members. In other words, they were biased.'

## Press freedom a year on

THE year since the Campaign for Press Freedom's first annual general meeting in May 1980 has been eventful. A report on the campaign's work has been sent to members, prior to the second AGM.

Newspaper takeovers and closures proceeded apace during the year, which has not been a good one for press freedom.

The campaign condemned the closure of the *Evening News*, which deprived Londoners of a choice of evening papers and marked a further concentration of ownership.

Following a special meeting of the national committee to discuss the takeover of Times Newspapers by Rupert Murdoch, a statement was issued on behalf of the campaign by Jake Ecclestone.

The takeover, we said, posed a grave threat to freedom of expression and we had no confidence in the so-called safeguards on non-interference. The secrecy and speed of the sale was intended to blackmail employees into accepting the takeover, which threatened massive job losses.

Then came the Lonhro takeover bid for the *Observer*. A statement drafted by Jake Ecclestone and James Curran called for the sale to be referred to the Monopolies Commission and proposed an independent supervisory board composed of public trustees appointed by Parliament to take overall responsibility for the newspaper.

At the local level the campaign has continued to give its support to alternative papers, and has specifically sought funds for the *East End News*, the *Rochdale Alternative Press*, and *Rebecca*.

The national committee has welcomed the feasibility study being conducted by the TUC into the launch of a new daily paper sympathetic to the labour movement, and wishes to see wide discussion on the kind of paper it ought to be.

The campaign shared with the Minority Press Group the costs of researching and publishing *The Other Secret Service* — a joint pamphlet on the wholesale distribution



system. This led to the setting up of the Committee for Press Distribution which is linked to CPF.

The press, of course, is only part of the media. While the campaign has not ignored broadcasting, a special meeting was held in March to strengthen this aspect of CPF's work (see page 3).

The Trades Union Congress in September overwhelmingly passed a resolution welcoming CPF and calling for the right of reply for victims of media bias or distortion. The campaign national committee set up a sub-committee on the right of reply, which has produced a pamphlet on this issue (see page 1). Editorials in the *Sunday Times* and *Observer* attacking such an encroachment on their press freedom were replied to by committee members.

Following the NUJ decision last year to withdraw from the Press Council, the campaign initiated the setting up of a Commission of Inquiry into the Press Council. This is acting independently of CPF, and is asking for opinions on issues affecting

**ALL individual members of the Campaign for Press Freedom together with sponsors and delegates from affiliated organisations are invited to the campaign's annual general meeting on Saturday 9 May. It's at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1, beginning at 10.30am. Report in the next issue of *Free Press*.**

the structure or performance of the Press Council.

If you or your organisation has comments or criticisms, you are urged to contact: Geoffrey Robertson, Commission of Inquiry into the Press Council, 1 Dr Johnson's Buildings, Temple, London EC4.

Freedom of information is another issue of concern, and yet another Bill on the issue, put up by Labour MP Frank Hooley, was barely given the time of day in the Commons. CPF is assisting the Labour Freedom of Information Campaign, and a joint pamphlet is proposed.

CPF has published jointly with the National Council for Civil Liberties a pamphlet on the Contempt Bill, and Harriet Harman informed us that the campaign statement condemning Lord Denning's judgement in her case had been very helpful during NCCL's appeal.

Organisationally, the campaign has mushroomed. The developments which preceded the official launch of CPF in September 1979 — the vicious propaganda campaign against the unions during the 'winter of discontent', and Fleet Street's attachment to Thatcherism — were a foretaste of the present media line-up, which stimulates our growth.

In April 1981 campaign membership stood at 429 individual members and 334 affiliated organisations, including 19 unions at national level.

Regional committees have been established in Scotland (contact *Joe Lynch*, 115 Rowan Road, Abronhill, Cumbernauld,

Glasgow), the North-west of England (contact *Philip Turner*, 28 Ellesmere Road, Manchester M21 1SR), and most recently in the North-east (see page 1).

Many requests for speakers are received, and the campaign held successful fringe meetings at the TUC and Labour Party conference, as well as at the NGA, NALGO, and NUJ conferences. A wide range of publicity leaflets have been circulated, and a series of publicity post cards are now being produced.

Anna Coote has aided our publicity work, Nick Grant at COHSE has assisted with press releases, and Eric Smythe at NALGO is helping to service the Commission of Inquiry into the Press Council.

It was decided in November to expand the campaign bulletin *Free Press* and to publish it on a regular basis. From a circulation of 3,000, the 8-page, bi-monthly bulletin achieved a circulation of 7,500 for its March-April issue. A further 5,000 sales would mean that revenue will fully cover production costs. Multiple orders are therefore greatly appreciated.

*Free Press* was launched by Harold Frayman and has been edited by Geoffrey Sheridan since its expansion.

Increased membership of CPF has meant a mounting burden of organisation and administration, which until the end of last year was dealt with almost entirely by John Jennings, the campaign secretary. To ease that burden the campaign now employs Charles Landry on a part-time basis. He has produced a range of leaflets and initiated a series of recruitment campaigns.

SOGAT has been extremely helpful in allowing us the use of its head office, together with some secretarial assistance. To deal efficiently with the increasing workload, the national committee believes ways of raising extra funds need to be explored to employ people on a regular basis.

National Committee members elected at the May 1980 AGM. Individuals: James Curran, John Jennings (secretary), Michael Mescher, Scarlett McCowrie. Working Journalists: Jake Ecclestone (chairperson), Marion Bowman, Anna Coote, Vincent Hanna. Other print and media workers: Bill Keys, SOGAT; George Jerrom, NGA; John Mitchell, NATSOPA; Jenny Rathbone, ACTT. Other trade unions: Eric Smythe, NALGO; Nick Grant, COHSE; Joe Lynch, Cumbernauld Trades Council. Other organisations: Mike Jemson, East End News; Charles Landry, MPG; Geoffrey Sheridan, CARM; Jane Geber, Hemel Hempstead CLP. Co-opted members: Harold Frayman (treasurer); Laurie Pye, SLADE; Geoffrey Robertson.

**MEMBERSHIP** Individuals: £3 a year.

**AFFILIATIONS** Below 1,000 members: £5; 1,000 to 10,000: £10; 10,000 to 50,000: £15; 50,000 to 100,000: £25; more than 100,000 members: £50.

I/We would like to join the Campaign for Press Freedom as an individual/affiliated organisation and enclose . . . £

I/We would like to receive . . . copies of each issue of *Free Press* at a discount rate.

**NAME**

**ORGANISATION**

**ADDRESS**

**Campaign for Press Freedom**  
274/288 London Road, Hadleigh,  
Essex SS7 2DE.



# FREE COMMENT

## No control by powerful interests!

THERE IS a paper that conforms to the model that many in the Campaign for Press Freedom might like to see more widely followed. It is still fairly small — with a print run of 15,000 (unaudited) sales around 10,000 and 1,500 subscribers — but it has now been going five years, and is growing fast.

It's *The Leveller*, which in February brought out its 50th edition — it's 51st in fact, since the first issue, five years ago, was a pilot. After that there was an eight-month period of consolidation before Issue 1; for a year it appeared every six weeks, then monthly, and then, from last October, fortnightly.

*The Leveller* lies somewhere between most of the alternatives advocated by CPF members. It's not a local or community paper, and it's not a national daily. It's a national non-aligned socialist news and analysis magazine. But what's remarkable about it, is its structure and financing.

The magazine has never had a penny from either capitalists or trade unions. Its entire income (apart from a derisory level of advertising, on which it has never relied at all) has come from its readers.

It's a revival of the subscription system that produced working-class papers in the last century. The backbone of its structure is the supporting subscribers, who pay £20 for a right to take part in general meetings, and out of sheer commitment to the project.

The structure: it is a collective, without an editor, or manager. Production of each issue is headed by two co-ordinators, with every member — currently about 25 — having a turn. All are volunteers, save for a few (currently five) paid a small fee for administrative or production work. No one is ever paid for contributions; yet the magazine's standards are extremely high, and it has scored dozens of national news scoops.

*The Leveller* began its distribution through the Publications Distribution Co-operative; without the other neither would ever have got going. It still goes through PDC's various regional successors to left bookshops; but over the last year it has managed to get into newsagents, through a national distributor.

The magazine has never been praised by the CPF, nor by the left academics or labour movement careerists clustering around it. It has never sought their support. The suspicion is mutual.

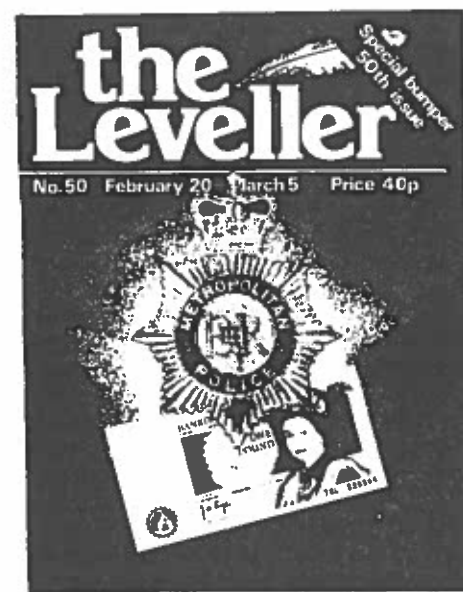
To *The Leveller* collective, the CPF is too tied to rigid trade union attitudes (industrial confrontation over employment issues) without challenging the ideology of the commercial media by any means save rhetoric. It is not anti-labour; many collective members are active in their unions, and the paper is committed to class struggle.

But it believes that press freedom is not possible in media controlled by powerful interests, be they right, left or centre.

It also believes that truly free and radical media are a prerequisite of political

and social change, which will never happen until there are more powerful revolutionary voices for people to hear. And it believes that not just organised labour, but women, black people, claimants, punks, prisoners, and everyone else oppressed must have a voice.

It doesn't just believe these things, it puts them into practice. It's not utopian because it works.



*The Leveller* has proved you can run alternative media, financed, controlled by and responsive to the readers, without capital or a party behind them (we far outsell *Socialist Challenge* and *Tribune*, for instance, both of which require constant outside financing), without editors or managerial structures.

It is not the only such paper: *Spare Rib* is similar, which recently brought out its 100th issue.

The CPF might be suspicious of *The Leveller* because it doesn't create employment and survives, in its dingy Kings Cross basement, on a phenomenal level of self-exploitation. But it should be looked at as a model for alternatives that are not beyond achievement. It won't go away.

**Tim Gopsill,**  
member, *Leveller* collective

## Morning Star route to a labour daily?

IN connection with establishing a labour daily, Michael Meacher MP wrote glibly of taking over one of the existing national dailies, drawing parallels with the ITV franchise system. (Free Press, No 5).

This completely ignores the tradition of British broadcasting which since the establishment of the BBC in 1927 has always been run by 'non-profit public corporations' (the IBA which regulates commercial TV and radio is a public corporation too), and the fact that there are natural technical limits on the channels available

for distributing broadcasts which demand some regulatory body. Even the USA has its Federal Communications Commission.

There are no such technical limits on the number of printing presses one can have.

If Meacher could see beyond his typical 'knee-jerk' reaction of nationalisation (which, despite his protests to the contrary, is what it would amount to — and, anyway, why one paper and not the whole lot, and which one?), he would see that there is one national daily ripe for 'transformation' if not 'take over'.

This is the *Morning Star* which, judging by reports circulating both within and outside it, looks as though it has entered a terminal crisis brought on by falling sales and rising costs. It is now 20p for 6 pages. Its parlous state demands some radical changes and now is the time, if ever, to sever its links with the Communist Party.

It is also owned by a co-operative, the People's Press Printing Society, which not only fits in with CPF's aim 2 — to research alternatives to state control or domination by major business conglomerates — but also provides a vehicle through which this transformation could be carried out, since anyone over 16 may become a voting member of the PPS on payment of £1.

Before the TUC spends thousands of pounds on a feasibility study for a new national daily, I suggest that the CPF give serious study to whether a truly autonomous, cooperatively-run *Morning Star* could not provide the vehicle we are looking for, and where no editorial control would be exercised by any outside body.

I see, ominously, that Moss Evans would like the TUC-Labour Party to appoint the 'editor' of the proposed new daily — would such ultimate control be any more preferable to that by private shareholders or the state?

**Simon Partridge,**  
non-Communist Party member of the PPPS

## 'This is a broadcast on behalf of the TUC . . .'

AS A life-long socialist and active trade unionist it seems to me that the term 'press freedom' would better be described as 'media freedom', to include national and local radio and television.

Since there are regular party political broadcasts, why shouldn't the TUC, which represents 12m people, be entitled to regular broadcasts? In fact it has more right to such broadcasts, since the political parties have far fewer members.

Campaign members should be made aware of the United Nations UNESCO declaration of 22 November 1978, with particular reference to the words 'the unrestricted pursuit of objective truth'.

Lastly, campaign members should be encouraged to write to local and national newspapers, to express alternative views and to challenge the many inaccurate reports about trade unions and the various sections and individual representatives of our broad labour movement.

**Bryan Johnson,**  
member, Kent branch NGA

# SOUNDS DIFFERENT

IN CARDIFF the Independent Broadcasting Authority decided to take a chance. In response to the growing demand for what was called 'community' radio, the franchise was awarded to a group with the usual 'exciting programme plans' but with a structure previously untried in British broadcasting.

Fifty per cent of the radio station is owned by the community it serves. The old cliché that it's 'your very own station' is, in part, literally true.

The structure of the company is that half the shares are owned by financial investors, who nominate six of the board of directors in the normal way. The other shares are owned, at nominal cost, by the Cardiff Radio Trust. All profits made by the station are distributed according to the financial value of the shareholding.

The trust members are chosen in two elections — half by individual listeners and half by organisations (from table tennis clubs to trades unions) active in the listening area. The elected members of the trust in turn nominate six directors to the board of Cardiff Broadcasting (CBC).

The argument behind the proposals, which were generated through very wide ranging and enthusiastic public meetings, is that popular ownership of the media is good in itself.

However, some differences in the way a radio station sounds, and perhaps in the way it is run, should follow from a change in the formal ownership if organising for such change isn't simply to be a question of trying to prevent the franchise going to a more typical consortium.

On the other hand, many people in commercial radio believe in the need to deliver a relatively large audience to advertisers, and to cater to the current tastes of that audience. They consider that the small number of staff in commercial stations makes mandatory an 'Independent Local Radio style' — especially in the daytime — which might appear narrow in scope to outsiders. For people such as these the success of any oddly structured station is

by Simon White,  
co-ordinator, Cardiff Radio Trust

measured by how similar it sounds to 'normal' stations.

In short, the experiment consists of the community learning how to manage an ILR station, rather than changing the nature of ILR.

Tensions exist between the conflicting conceptions of the role of the Cardiff Radio Trust. The conflict highlights a recurring problem in attempts to reform the media — the problem of where to begin. The circumstances which restrict access to the mass media, together with the attitudes and expectations of professional staff and consumers, seem to conspire to resist change in the product, whatever it is.

Piecemeal change, whether of the workers co-operative variety, like the *Scottish Daily News*, or the consumers co-operative, like the Cardiff Radio Trust, seems ineffective.

Another problem for reformers is that changes on a wide variety of fronts are incompatible. For instance, at CBC community control is exercised through the board of directors — through management. In trade union terms the 'community' sits on the opposite side of the table to the staff.

Successful staff absorb and reproduce the ideology of their profession, and an apparent challenge to the ideas which are at the root of people's own self-esteem can be very threatening. The socialisation of the ownership of the media is, in present circumstances, irrelevant to the traditional

## TV union revives bias committee

by Andy Egan,  
research officer, ACTT

THE Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians has reconvened its bias in the media committee.

This reflects the increasing concern throughout the labour movement over the media's treatment and presentation of trade union issues. The well-documented work on television news coverage by the Glasgow University Media Group has raised questions of direct relevance to our members in that sector.

ACTT has recently been approached by a number of individuals and organisations who have been misrepresented, or perhaps not represented at all, in particular programmes. All media unions are strategically placed to take up these issues and to press for some form of redress wherever possible.

ACTT's committee was originally proposed in a conference resolution in 1976,

which called for countervailing action by the union over biased coverage of union and industrial affairs. The committee also covers censorship in the broadcasting media.

Concentration of ownership and control does not only affect the press. Independent television is another area in which power can be wielded without responsibility. During the recent reallocation of franchises — the infamous 'licence to print money' — ACTT members in Yorkshire TV formulated an alternative bid for the franchise.

Because some broadcast workers are directly involved in making programmes for which problems arise, it was considered necessary to be able to investigate such problems at national level within the union, rather than run the risk of internal conflicts arising from the need to defend all members' right to work.

ACTT members are trade unionists, too, and in an unusually tight economic situation it is all the more essential for our members to ensure that coverage of their own industrial action, which has been far



demands of media workers.

CBC has had a rough baptism, with its first schedule of programmes reflecting some of the tension between the objectives of the participants: the management, the staff, the trust, and the financial investors.

The programmes were not, for the most part, very attractive to listeners (compared to other commercial radio stations) and were therefore unattractive to advertisers. The crisis this generated has prompted a strong desire to work out a set of common objectives, and it remains to be seen how much this can achieve.

The political implications of failure would be severe because the alternative within ILR is the continued ownership and control of the airwaves by financial interests. Unpopularity would be seen, with some glee, as a particularly ironic cause of failure for a 'community' station.

CBC represents the major achievement of a struggle to open up and democratise radio. It must achieve 'success' as the term is understood by the ILR network, but its existence is profoundly irritating to the great duopoly which controls British broadcasting.

Its existence is somehow a reproach, an unspoken criticism of the alternative available. While CBC remains the only democratic, accountable radio station allowed access to a mass audience it is worth fighting for.

from sympathetic, does not impede their efforts to defend their living standards.

*Complaints over TV bias can be sent to: Andy Egan, ACTT, 2 Soho Square, London W1V 6DD. Tel: 01-437 8506.*

●Following a discussion in March between the Campaign for Press Freedom national committee, and invited members of broadcasting unions, those working in broadcasting and interested pressure groups, the following guiding principles have been adopted by the CPF national committee:

To challenge the myth that the present forms of ownership and regulation in broadcasting guarantee editorial independence, democratic accountability, or high programme standards.

To press for the reform of the broadcasting authorities so that they are more representative of the public at large.

To generate discussion about wider access to all forms of broadcasting through new institutions and structures.

To open up the widest possible debate about the implications of the introduction of new electronic communications to ensure that they are in the public interest.

TAKE two headlines: 'Aliens pouring into Britain' and 'Smuggling of exiles alarms Britain'.

Both have a familiar ring. The first is from the *Daily Mail* in 1938. The second from the *Daily Mirror* in the same year.

The headlines referred to Jewish people. They could have been written in recent years in relation to Kenya Asians, Indians, Pakistanis, or refugees from the fascist junta in Chile.

Some quotations from the British press in the period 1936-38 plainly show its ideological commitment to capitalism, and its need therefore to direct workers' energies and antagonisms against their own kind rather than the class enemy.

On 19 June 1938 the *Sunday Express* carried the following piece of inspired journalism, containing all the pseudo-liberalism and 'fair play' attitude often prevalent in today's journalistic exercises against blacks:

'In Britain half a million Jews find their homes. They are never persecuted and indeed in many respects the Jews are given favoured treatment here.

'But just now there is a big influx of foreign Jews into Britain. They are over-running the country. They are trying to enter the medical profession in great numbers . . .

'Intolerance is loathed and hated by almost everyone in this country . . . We shall be able to continue to treat well those Jews who have made their homes among us, many of them for generations.'

For Jews read blacks, changing the job classifications.

Kingsley Martin in his autobiography tells us that *The Times* censored all anti-Nazi despatches and that Norman Ebbutt, a respected journalist, lost his job because of his honesty. Louis Heren confirms these learnings in his autobiography.

Rothermere commissioned feature writer Ward Price to produce in the *Daily Mail* on 21 September 1936 a piece which said in relation to Hitler: 'All Western Europe might soon be clamouring for such a champion.'

Not to be outdone, Winston Churchill wrote in the *Daily Telegraph* on 23 June 1938: 'Without the championship of armed Germany, Sudeten wrongs might never have been redressed.' That was before Churchill recognised Hitler and his creed to be a greater threat to world imperialism than Bolshevism.

The heirs of the Nazis and their ideology are still with us. The same monopoly ownership, now as then, gives blatant and open support to policies and per-

# PRESS SCAPEGOATS IN THE 1930s AND '80s

sonalities that preach racism, bigotry, intolerance, anti-trade unionism, and anti-socialism.

Nothing has changed in the desires and aspirations of these pillars of the establishment and their supporters. But something has changed with the British trade union and labour movement.

We are stronger! We have the lessons of the past. We are breaking down the ideological-isms that have for too long divided us. We can see major moves to the left on the national executive of the Labour Party and within parliament. The

TUC has called major demonstrations against racism, urging the movement to take to the streets to fight racism.

This is still not enough. The lesson of history is that anything that divides; anything that attempts to place worker against worker is anti-trade union and by definition pro-employer.

Therefore we should be prepared to act under the rules of our unions against those who preach a doctrine of racism and division. All unions have such disciplinary rules for the protection of the

by George Jerrom  
national officer, NGA

union and its members.

Journalists should be more aggressive in the application of the NUJ's code of conduct, and they should recruit the assistance of the production unions in applying industrial pressure at the point of production.

The joint union statement on race reporting (see panel) is a sound base. It will not be an easy task, but any failure on our part to face up to the challenge and win will mean a Britain of the right instead of the prospect of socialism.

The drug of racism is easily assimilated. It becomes the excuse for all the political, social, and industrial ills of society. Blame people of a different religion was the option in the '30s. Now the easy answer is to blame people of a different colour.

We must not simply say in humanistic fashion that prejudice is wrong. We have to constantly pose the answers and alternatives

to the problems created by the system represented by today's Thatcherism — the problems are the daily breeding ground of racism.

●Some 60 black people participated in the inaugural meeting of the Black Media Workers Association held on 28 February.

Discussion centred on the need for solidarity among black media workers; tackling employment practices which stop black men and women having a fair chance of jobs in the media, and responding to media coverage of black people and their affairs.

The group's first action was to complain to newspapers over the coverage of the protest march over the Deptford fire deaths. Further details from: *BMWA*, 29c Lanhill Road, London W9.

●*It Ain't Half Racist, Mum*, the expose of racist bias in television produced by the Campaign Against Racism in the Media, continues to be widely shown. It can be hired in 16mm or video from: *The Other Cinema*, 79 Wardour Street, London W1V 3PH. Tel: 01-734 8508/9.



Telling it as it was: demonstration about the Deptford fire deaths. (pic: Dave Hampshire)

## From the joint union statement on race reporting

The NGA, NUJ, and NATSOPA reaffirm their total opposition to censorship but equally affirm their belief that press freedom must be conditioned by responsibility and an acknowledgement by all media workers of the need not to allow press freedom to be abused to slander a section of the community or to promote the evil of racism.

The NGA, NUJ, and NATSOPA recognise the right of members to withhold their labour on grounds of conscience because employers are providing a platform for racist propaganda.

The NGA, NUJ, and NATSOPA will continue to monitor the development of media coverage in this area and give mutual support to members of each union seeking to enforce the aims outlined in this joint statement.

## 'What can you do when reporters' wives go on demos?'



Possibly no reporters' wives, but certainly women journalists were among those who occupied the London Evening News in January 1978 and secured the right to reply to articles attacking lesbians who have babies by AID. (pic: Val Wilmer)

by Marion Bowman  
former member of the  
NUJ Equality Working Party

IN THE last years of the Vietnam war, when public opposition to the US government's war policy was becoming increasingly 'respectable', the American press also began to shift away from the official view that the war was not only just but winnable.

At that time Ben Bradlee, executive editor of the *Washington Post*, complained to a colleague: 'We tell reporters not to march in a demonstration. But what can you do when their wives march in demonstrations?'

Apart from the give-away that *Washington Post* reporters were men, the remark is interesting because it offers an insight into that process which goes some way to answering a question constantly being asked by supporters of the Campaign for Press Freedom:

Why do journalists endorse the values and views of their employers and where do they draw the line?

Another US editor, Turner Catledge of the *New York Times*, provides further clues. In his book *My Life and the Times*, Catledge

wrote that in hiring staff he wanted 'independent, creative men, thoroughbreds . . . not the sort who could be bossed or browbeaten. I had to make them do what I wanted done, often by making them think it was what they wanted done.'

That statement is sufficiently contradictory to explain why it often is that journalists believe themselves to be completely objective when their work, founded on selectivity, reflects the priorities of particular types of people.

These anecdotes highlight an important issue for press freedom — that of content and how news values and editorial policies are created and adhered to.

It is easy enough to argue that the current system of ownership of the press is the source of much of the injustice perpetrated by the newspapers. But when it comes to questions such as 'Why does the TUC Women's Conference get so little coverage, and then only of a trivial nature?' the answer is less clear.

To deal with problems like that discussion has to range wider than concern for the right of reply or the support of alternatives like the *East End News* or the desirability of a labour daily. How different would the final product be?

Very little is known by the general public about the beliefs of journalists or the nature of their work. Journalists themselves have a need for reassurance so strong that the whys and wherefores of their craft are rarely debated critically.

So it is significant that organised dissent among journalists recently has come from that group who are already vulnerable to employers' prejudices — women.

It is easier for male journalists to identify with the values of male employers, to be the 'thoroughbreds' of whom Turner Catledge wrote. Women, on the other hand, have never had the automatic foothold in the province of the powerful that gender bestows. Quite apart from what men think women are fit for, there is the simple fact that women are not men.

The increasing number of women working in journalism who spurn the 'Queen Bee' role, who identify with each other and with women outside the industry, has given rise to a new spirit of dissent from the sexism of conventional, male-created journalism; dissent which affects many other areas of journalistic practice.

Discussions about sexism, that ideology of male supremacy most popularly recognised in the page three pin-up but one which involves the complexities of omission, condescension and distortion, raise many issues central to press free-

dom and the role of journalists in society.

Censorship, ownership, allegiances, alliances, trade union organisation, social, as well as industrial, relations — all these have to be considered once objection to sexism is voiced.

It is important therefore that women in the NUJ have put as much emphasis on the nature of the work of journalists as on straight employment matters such as equal opportunity in recruitment and promotion, maternity and abortion rights, or provisions for working parents like creches.

There is no guarantee that equal numbers of men and women in the workplace will mean equal treatment for the female public in the pages of the press, but men and women do have different life experiences and it may be more difficult for male employers to convince female employees that the systematic subordination of women in their own work is, as Turner Catledge puts it, 'what they want done' too.

Indeed, the fact that young women trainees, very much the minority in provincial newspaper offices, can now be crushed only temporarily in their dissent by news editors saying: 'If you don't agree with me, you have no news sense and you'll never make a journalist' is an indication of how that process of endorsement can be interrupted.

Equality of opportunity for women and minority groups, support for those struggling against sexism and racism and enfranchisement of the powerless have implications for press freedom and the creation of a just press which should not be overlooked as the powerful are taken to task.

'Unlike the institutionalised journalists of the later period, (those on the radical press of the 1830s and '40s) tended to see themselves as activists rather than professionals . . .

'They sought to understand and expose the dynamics of power and inequality rather than to report "hard news" as a series of disconnected events.

'They saw themselves as class representatives rather than as disinterested intermediaries between competing groups, and they sought to establish a relationship of real reciprocity and equality with their readers.'

— From *Power Without Responsibility*, reviewed on page 8.