

FREE PRESS

Bulletin of the Campaign for Press Freedom

MAY/
JUNE
1982

Number 13

10p

By jingo — truth is the first casualty in South Atlantic

WAR MAD

AN EMERGENCY resolution at the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom's Annual General meeting in April condemned the jingoistic gung-ho attitude of the British popular press towards the 'Falklands crisis'.

At the time, the Fleet had just been despatched to the South Atlantic. Politicians talked of their hopes for diplomatic solutions to the crisis. War with Argentina was still unthinkable.

As *Free Press* goes to the printers this month, and the death toll rises with casualties on both sides, the foresight of that resolution is becoming even more clear.

American newspaper tycoon William Randolph Hearst once said: "You furnish the pictures and I'll furnish the war". Most of Fleet Street seems determined to live up to that boast today.

The *Sun* has for several weeks been running a racist campaign against all Argentinians by calling them 'Argies', and early editions of the paper on the day an Argentinian destroyer was reported sunk with the loss of several hundred lives carried the headline: 'Gotcha! The headline was later changed to: 'Did 1,200 Argies drown?' as the full horror of the incident penetrated even Bouverie Street. The *Sun* has also encouraged readers to 'sponsor a missile'.

The vast majority of Fleet Street newspapers and much of the television and radio broadcasts have concentrated on the 'courage' and 'heroism' of British military forces — ignoring the fact that wars are really about killing people.

The 'Falklands crisis' has kept many other important stories out of the newspapers — no doubt much to the relief of the British government.

Meanwhile the truth about the situation remains hidden. All copy filed back to Britain from the Fleet is subject to censorship for 'security reasons', and many newspapers are dependent on the same 'source' for their stories. Now more than ever it is necessary to campaign for real Press 'freedom'.



As far as the *Sun* is concerned the real war is over circulation figures. See page 2 for what you can do.

£50,000 appeal boost

LETTERS and donations in response to our appeal for sponsorship have been coming in thick and fast. The level of interest and enthusiasm for the Campaign's work has been reflected in the kind of support we have received so far. Replies have been received from:

Tom Conti, UB40, Ken Loach, Elvis Costello, Melvyn Bragg, John Fowles, Margaret Drabble, E. P. Thompson, Michael Foot, Pamela Stephenson, Carmin Callil, Peter Taylor, Lord Houghton, Christopher Hill, Bishop of Liverpool, Bruce Kent, Gareth Steadman Jones, David Basnett, Judith Hart MP, Hilary Wainwright, Neil Ascherson, Richard Hoggart, William Sims, Ken Cameron, Bill Keys, John McGrath, Jonathan Dimbleby, Albert Spanswick, Terry Marsland, Marie Patterson, Philip Whitehead MP, Ken Gill, Peter Hildrew, Inez McCormack, Tess Woodcraft, D Hearn, Dr Parekh.

More good news — The Joseph Rowntree Social Service Trust Ltd have agreed to our request for office accommodation. We shall be moving into 9 Poland St, London W1 in May. This greatly enhances our scope for future work and guarantees us a measure of stability.

However, we are still far away from our target of £50,000. There is lots to be done in the coming period and we shall be calling on you for your help. Keep your eyes open for further news of the appeal in the next issue of *Free Press*.

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Campaign for Press Freedom

WHY THE NEWS IS MOSTLY BAD

THERE is no shortage of calls for a daily paper supporting the Labour Party and trade union cause but I can't bring myself to agree that we need a new newspaper. We need several.

It is of course ridiculous that in a country with twelve million trade unionists there is no daily paper supporting trade unions but it is equally ridiculous that in an officially Christian country there is no daily newspaper professing Christian principles, in a country where women comprise more than half the population there is no women's daily and in a country where radical thought has done so much to change institutions and could do more there is no paper which as a matter of policy promotes radical ideas on prisons, the health service, sexuality and so on where appropriate.

I don't mean a sermon or tract added to the end of each news story. Most papers retain a Conservative stance not by comment in the news reporting but by executive decisions on which stories should be covered and the 'angle' which should be adopted.

The business of news gathering itself is so similar as to be indistinguishable in all papers. Reporters are interchangeable between papers because they are not the source of bias. The public see it as a sign of apostasy when Left wing journalists work on Right wing papers because the public does not understand that the reporter does the job to the best of his/her ability regardless of the political character of the paper.

I remember working on a story alongside a *Daily Mail* reporter who had dug out some crushing anti-management facts about a strike. He diligently filed the story but said to me: "The *Mail* won't use it of course, it's too pro-union."

I once wrote a major health story for a Fleet Street paper where the facts could not be presented as sympathetic to the government. When I saw my story in print it was under a joint byline because, unknown to me, the executives had drafted in their parliamentary editor to write in some pro-Conservative comment. Two of the best *Guardian* journalists spent most of their working lives on the *Daily Express* but they did not suddenly become liberal to make the change, they worked as they always had.

What I am getting at is that there is nothing sacrosanct about the particular bias we are used to in newspapers. The bias could equally well be used in favour of, say, a Moslem or an ecological stance.

Because we are used to an almost exclusively Conservative Press we have to be reminded again and again that things have not always been this bad. They could be better again.

In the heyday of the radical Press in Britain, in the 1830s, alternative papers proliferated with such splendid titles as Richard Carlile's *Slap At The Church* (which did) and Henry Hetherington's *Destructive* (which was).

by Jad Adams

These could not be dailies because of state restrictions designed to prevent the circulation of newspapers to working people but by 1836 the papers which did not pay the government's fourpenny stamp had topped the 13 million circulation of the stamped, establishment publications.

Even by 1867 the Newspaper Press Directory shows four London printed mornings supporting the Liberals, three with Conservative sympathies and one rooting for the Whigs. Of the London evenings five were Liberal, three Conservative and one (*L'International*) neutral.

In comparison the line up of dailies published in London today rather lacks the



Nottingham News closes after 3-year fight

The Nottingham News has closed. The News was born out of a lost industrial dispute at the Nottingham Evening Post in 1979, and for three years has struggled for advertising and space on news stands. Circulation dropped from initial 18,000 to a steady 12,000 - but gradually sunk to 7,000.

The venture was eventually forced to close

by Lorretta Loach

when the Nottingham Trader - a free sheet published by the News' printers - attracted some of the News' advertising sales staff. The National Union of Journalists has so far paid out £185,000 in victimisation pay to its members who were sacked from the Post for going on strike in 1979.

From Page 1

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

The Campaign for Press & Broadcasting freedom is calling on all its supporters to protest about the SUN's disgraceful coverage of the Falklands Islands crisis. You can make a formal complaint against the journalists responsible, by using the National Union of Journalists' rule book, allied to

diversity of choice Free Enterprise is supposed to bestow on its vessels. Six papers are Conservative, the *Daily Mirror* normally supports Labour, the *Guardian* and the *Daily Star* are anti-Tory without being pro-Labour but normally operate with a social conscience and the *Morning Star* is Communist. There is one Conservative evening paper for the capital.

But I would suggest that the situation is even worse than this list implies. All these, with the exception of the *Guardian* on some issues, are conservative rather than progressive in their outlook. If any *Morning Star* readers raise their eyebrows at this I would point to that paper's dreary predictability in news coverage which mirrors its bleak format.

The 'diversity' of the British Press actually turns out to be a dull similarity in the daily news coverage with journalistic enterprise - of which there is much - reduced to a scramble to get more rape victim coverage than a rival paper or a more profound interview with someone who supposedly has knowledge of the royal family.

We have the technology to make progress in providing a more representative press and we have the money, if we have the will to allocate it. Yes, the trade unions could support a daily paper but so could the big charities, so could the Church of England, giving these organisations an immense increase in the influence their ideas could exert on society.

THE AIRWAVES BELONG TO EVERYONE



OPEN access to the airwaves was enthusiastically demanded by the Cardiff Community Radio Conference.

The conference called on the Home Secretary to immediately sanction several pilot schemes for community radio stations. These would be non-profit bodies outside the BBC and IBA, and run by and for their local communities. The growing number of pirate stations was cited as evidence of dissatisfaction with the present system.

Delegates were dismayed that the recent Cabinet Office report "Cable Systems" guaranteed no provision for community input. They stressed that this be made a condition of cable licences, and that cable operators be obliged to contribute financially and technically to support such community services.

The conference was attended by some 120 individuals and representative groups from community radio initiatives throughout the British Isles. It was called to see what these initiatives had "done and learned" and where they "should go next".

The conference agreed to establish on a standing basis - with an Autumn meeting to review further progress and timed so that it could feed information into the Hunt Inquiry on broadcasting and cable TV.

West Midlands Campaign gets under way

THE Campaign has launched its fourth regional branch in the West Midlands, where people have seen two particularly virulent cases of Press bias over the last few years.

The first involved Tom Litterick, the former MP for Selly Oak, who died after a heart attack following a series of vicious libels in the Press. Eventually Tom Litterick won £50,000 in damages and legal costs from the Press Association, the *Daily Express*, the *Daily Mail* and 14 provincial newspapers who admitted there was no truth in a report that he had failed to provide for his family after the break-up of his marriage.

The other case involved Derek Robinson, the former Longbridge shop-steward, who was dubbed 'Red Robbo' by the media and was sacked by the BL chairman, Michael Edwardes. Few trade unionists can ever remember such a concerted attack against a democratically elected union official.

The new campaign in the West Midlands hopes to highlight such cases and encourage debate on the ownership of the media in the Midlands. BPM Holdings Limited, for instance, not only owns the *Birmingham Post and Mail*, but also a string of local weeklies and three major chains of newsagents. A new weekly newspaper, the *Birmingham Inquirer*, hopes to launch as a co-operative in the Autumn, but expects to run into problems from the opposition.

The new Campaign will also seek to co-ordinate the activities of alternative newspapers and monitor the local Press, TV and radio for examples of bias, distortion and sensationalism.

Using the Media in the Midlands



There will also be attempts to build on the work already done in Birmingham on helping active trade unionists to 'Use the Media'. A pamphlet on the subject has sold more than 2,500 copies and local journalists have been addressing union meetings around the city.

Further information can be obtained from Rob Burkitt, at 34 Vicarage Road, Kings Heath, Birmingham B14 7RA. Tel: 021-444 0356.

● Why not organise a Campaign in YOUR area? More details from The Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, 9 Poland Street, London W1.

LABOUR CALL FOR CLEAR OWNERSHIP POLICY

THE Labour Party has been called upon to formulate a clear policy on ownership of the media for the next election. The call came following a lively debate at a Campaign meeting held at the offices of the Burton-upon-Trent Constituency Party.

Members complained of a consistent bias against the Labour movement by the local evening newspaper, the *Burton Mail*. The meeting was distressed that the Labour Party had no far reaching manifesto commitments on control of the Press.

Nationalisation was ruled out by one member of the audience. "If you think the Press are biased against us now," she said, "wait until the Party try to take away control of their companies."

A proposal was put forward to organise the launch of a local radical pub-

lication along the lines of RAP, the alternative newspaper for Rochdale. But members ended the meeting by stressing the importance of tackling 'control of the media' as a major issue. It was agreed to open debate on this matter in time for the next Labour Party conference.

STOP PRESS

THE LABOUR PARTY

DOES THE 'RIGHT OF REPLY' CAMPAIGN GO FAR ENOUGH?

Conference call for political solution to media bias

A STATUTORY Right of Reply for victims of media maltreatment was needed and overdue; but it did not go far enough.

What was required was a political commitment to overhaul completely the ownership, control of and access to the press.

This was the general conclusion that emerged from a Right of Reply conference organised by the Campaign for Press Freedom last month.

More than 300 people attended the conference, many of them from the NUJ and other media unions.

The conference opened with a general discussion on the Right of Reply, led by a contribution from MP Frank Allaun, who appealed for support for his Private Member's Bill which seeks to establish such a right.

Some speakers from the floor made the point that trade union members should seek to ensure that their union journals were as open and fair to dissenting

opinions as they would wish the press and broadcasting to be.

But the most pressing need for the majority of those present seemed to be a political solution to the problems of our wayward press, and the afternoon workshop to consider a political programme attracted a large participating following.

Michael Meacher, MP, believed a future Labour government should create a Ministry of Communications, enact Freedom of Information legislation and set up an Independent Press Authority.

The IPA, he explained, would operate on a similar basis as the IBA. It would give franchises for newspapers to operate under a general code of practice. This would be one way of ensuring a greater diversity of the press.

Another useful function of the IPA, he said, would be to build up a launch fund for new publications from advertising profits made by existing ones.

Former NUJ President Denis MacShane warned that any attempt to restructure the British press would be attacked as "a black death" threat to our basic freedoms. It was vital to demonstrate that many other West European states had intervened in the operations of the press without becoming oppressive, despotic regimes.

Ron Knowles, Editor of the NUJ's *Journalist*, felt that Meacher's proposals did not go far enough. What was required was a national publishing body which would take over all major printing and publishing centres.

These would be handed back to local communities to produce a number of local newspapers, reflecting a variety of opinions. They would also publish special interest magazines.

He argued that all income from advertising should be ploughed back into the publishing centres, with any profits being passed on to the national organisation for development and new publications.

Sogat official Dave Ingham said information was too important to be left in private hands. The answer was to bring the press under the democratic control of its workers in trade unions.

Meacher responded by accepting most of the points that were made, but making it clear



NUJ President Harry Conroy (Centre) and Aidan White (NUJ) look on as Tony Benn addresses the conference.

THE fact that the workshop on the Press Council attracted only a handful of delegates was, perhaps, testimony to the council's failure over many years to protect people from the Press — much less give them the right of reply.

Chaired by Jacob Ecclestone, a former member of the Press Council who also reported back to the plenary session, the workshop heard from Aidan White, another former NUJ representative on the council, why the journalists' union had withdrawn from membership in 1980.

White argued that the council was by no means independent of the interests of the commercial Press; that it was irrelevant to the real needs of the community, and that the speed with which it was always ready to jump to the defence of the Royal family (a rapid condemnation of Fleet Street journalists for invading Princess Diana's privacy) contrasted oddly with its resolute silence throughout the 11-month lock-out at Times Newspapers.

Roper Mead, a former assistant secretary of the Press Council, defended it faithfully, but even a genuine clash of options failed to generate more than a briefly polite interest in the subject. The Press Council, it was clear, was of no great concern to anyone anymore.

that no one wanted to see a press under state control.

Instead overall control should be handed to local communities, he agreed, with workers and unions having their say in individual publications.

He also supported direct action by unions against press abuses of workers who were denied the Right of Reply.

A member of the NUJ's Provincial Newspapers' Industrial Council, Peter McIntyre, was one of those who agreed in the full conference session in the afternoon that a statutory Right of Reply was not enough. It would soon become accommodated by press proprietors, he warned. The question that had to be faced was one of direct intervention in the

right of private ownership of the media.

An example of direct intervention in the opposite direction was given by Anna Coote, deputy editor of the *New Statesman*, who voiced fears about the future editorial policy of the magazine. It's position as one of the few socialist voices in the media was threatened by the influence of SDP members on the board of the company.

Already the magazine's editor, Bruce Page, had been moved to another position and the editorial staff were concerned that his successor would be given a brief to steer the editorial policy to the right.

The conference concluded with a session chaired by NUJ President Harry Conroy and intro-

duced by Aidan White, chairman of the National Newspapers and Agencies Industrial Council. The main speaker was Tony Benn, MP.

Benn, in sparkling form, drew several witty comparisons between Fleet Street treatment of left and right wing causes.

Sir Freddie Laker, a man with enormous undischarged debts, was treated as a hero who tried to operate a "people's airline". Ken Livingstone, who tried to operate a "people's" tube and bus service was attacked in the media.

He contrasted too, the treatment of ASLEF and Rupert Murdoch, and compared the meagre coverage given to a huge organisation like CND to the

countless columns devoted to the SDP, a party only a quarter of CND's size.

Benn thought, in the face of mass media distortions, that the Right of Reply had a useful, but limited value. It did, however, question basic assumptions about a supposedly free, diverse and pluralistic media which reflected in reality the interests of the Establishment.

Journalists, he said, had a tremendous moral responsibility to the public, and he argued in favour of a public service framework for the media, freedom of Information legislation and the journalistic coverage to campaign on civil liberties issues, such as phone-tapping, invasion of privacy and secret computerisation of personal details.

THE Conference's Broadcasting Group made it clear that the "Right of Reply" had little to offer as a demand in broadcasting. The problems were more structural, although unions had successfully applied pressure to make sure that certain programmes, such as Panorama's account of the Security Services, did get air time. Union pressure had also prevented the editor of Panorama from being sacked after filming at Carrickmore in Ireland.

The Right of Reply might be a useful tactic for correcting factual errors, but could not deal with bias. As one participant put it: "How do you reply to what Michael Aspel says between records?"

THE Labour Party wants newspaper publishers to be fined up to £40,000 if they wrongly refuse to publish a reply when asked to do so.

The Party's National Executive Committee wants the policy to be included in the manifesto for the next General Election, and to be enacted "as a first step towards the democratisation of the British Press."

The Party's NEC has issued a statement which says: "The Bill we favour would enable an individual, organisation or company to require the editor of a newspaper which has carried a factually inaccurate or distorted report involving that individual, organisation or company to print a reply within three days, in the case of a daily paper, and an appropriate period for other publications."

"The reply must be printed free of charge and be of equal length to, and in the same position as, the original article."

The statement says disputes over whether a reply should be published should be settled at special tribunals or in the courts.

"If the complainant's right of reply is upheld, the editor will be required to print it immediately and also pay a fine varying from £2,000 to £4,000. In election periods the three-day limit will be reduced for daily newspapers to 24 hours."

The Republic of Letters

FOR many people, debates about 'freedom of speech' and 'democratic control of the media' seem often to be simply about widening access to a few more MPs, paid trades unionists or radical professionals. Little serious thought has been given to the forms and processes by which the majority of working people will have their voices heard and their experiences acknowledged.

It may surprise some that the forms of communication many working people often turn to first are those of writing: autobiographical reminiscences, poems, stories. And this despite the fact that writing, or 'literature' as it is known as in the better restaurants and clubs, is often thought of as the property of a metropolitan and privileged elite.

Yet when the T&GWU monthly journal *The Record* reported on the issue which had aroused more correspondence in its pages than any other issue 'ever before', that issue was, not

by Ken Worpole

unemployment, not the state of the Labour Party, not complaints about the food on shop stewards' courses, but . . . poetry!

As the *Record* reported: 'To some people a Union poetry debate may not seem much, yet since last November we have had more readers' letters, more contributions from other unions, than ever before . . .'

Yet the more history one reads the more one realises that this may not be so surprising. Radical and working class movements have always produced their own songs, poems, writers; except that since the war this tradition did seem to have been broken. Yet it is certainly on the rise again. For in the past ten years there has been a phenomenal growth of working class writers' workshops and local publishing initiatives throughout Britain, places where working people take their

Comedia/Minority Press Group Series-6

The Republic of Letters

Working class writing and local publishing

writing for criticism and encouragement and get involved in producing books themselves.

Of the 26 groups attached to the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers — a voluntary co-ordinating body — between them they have now published and sold nearly one million books and anthologies of poetry, autobiography and stories. And this on a shoestring. Writing by women nurses, miners, secretaries, shipyard workers, railwaymen, women in battered wives' hostels — writing from everywhere.

This important and growing

movement for the popular production and distribution of working class experience is documented and celebrated in a new book just out. 'The Republic of Letters', published on June 1st by Comedia Press, details this thriving movement and argues the case for greater support by the labour movement. It also includes a cross section of the writing produced by working people in the local groups. It's indispensable for those in the labour movement who really want to find a way forward towards a genuine popular culture and democracy of the means of communication.

NUKESPEAK

TODAY the world is threatened as never before by nuclear war. Yet despite the revival of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the vast majority of people still go about their lives of getting and spending oblivious of the threat facing humanity — or despairing of their abilities to avert the holocaust they secretly feel is inevitable.

The responsibility to be borne by the mass media for bringing about this tragic state of affairs is immense. E. P. Thompson has spoken of the "doomsday consensus" perpetrated by the mass media. And Dr Nicholas Humphrey, in his Bronowski Memorial Lecture "Four minutes to midnight", commented on the way the media were preparing us for the holocaust. He described British society as full of "fascinated spectators of the unfolding nuclear tragedy."

Indeed, though there have been some outstanding contributions to the disarmament debate in the mass media over the last two years, the general picture has been one of distortion, trivialisation and more particularly censorship and silence on the nuclear arms issue.

Two kinds of censorship can be identified — direct and indirect. Direct censorship involves the conscious intervention by Government, editor, media management or journalist to interfere in the dissemination of information.

In this category the most notorious examples are the bannings of Peter

by Richard Keeble

Watkins' film "The War Game" by the BBC, of E. P. Thompson's Dimpleby lecture and of the edition of the children's television programme "Help!" which dealt sympathetically with unilateral nuclear disarmament.

The second category, indirect censorship, is certainly the more pervasive. It refers to the countless instances when the nuclear arms issue has failed to reach the media because of journalists' commitment to mythical notions of "news values", "objectivity" and neutrality and to the conceptual framework provided by the consensus.

Accordingly, movements such as CND which pose direct threats to the consensus are either ignored or marginalised by the media. On the other hand the Social Democratic Party, the consensus party par excellence, immediately attracts vast and sympathetic media coverage.

Secrecy has surrounded the nuclear weapons programme from its very beginnings. Indeed, silence over the issue has been sought by every Government since the war and the media for their part have never really sought to crack that silence.

For instance, for 15 years until early in 1980 Parliament never once debated nuclear weapons. Yet over those years the

arms race was escalating to appalling heights. Those years of silence culminated on December 12 1979 when a NATO meeting in Brussels decided to site American cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe. The decision was to alter radically the European "defence" system and make nuclear war even more probable. But Parliament remained mute and the media virtually ignored it.

It was thus left to the peace movement to draw the issue out into the open. Even today, with the enormous growth of CND, no national newspaper supports unilateralism and the majority of local newspapers remain committed to multilateralism or marginalise the arms issue almost totally out of existence.

Propaganda inspired by the Government, the CIA or M16, that places all the blame for the arms race on the Soviet "enemy" and the rise of CND on KGB gold still dominates the media. Clearly peace activists must give a high priority to media work. There has to be action at all levels both against the established media and towards the creation of new ones.

A new book examines in detail the media coverage of the arms race. *Nukespeak: the media and the bomb* (edited by Crispin Aubrey, Comedia Publishing Group; £2.50), includes an interview with E. P. Thompson, a study of the censoring of "The War Game", an analysis of nukespeak, the special language of the nuclear age, by Paul Chilton, and a chapter by Richard Keeble on ways for disarmers to include media coverage of the disarmament debate.

Are some print unions slow to recognise the value of 'alternative' newspapers?

by Colin Challer

IF there is to be a radical, alternative Press in Britain, which is to escape the Left-wing ghettos and speak to a broader public, what must be guaranteed before it can exist? There have always been various conditions which have impeded the establishment of alternatives, and one example will suffice to show that these conditions are not always those created by capitalist forces.

Hull Free Press (HFP) was started with the idea that a community paper serving Hull would have a better chance of survival if all the means for its production were under its control. Primarily this meant securing the means to print. It was seen that a further benefit of the printing operation would be in its service to community organisations, which previously may have been denied access to printing because of the cost. Also, by providing this service, a feedback of information would occur, further aiding the newspaper. Eventually, the plan envisages the press becoming a Workers Co-operative. So far, so good — or is it?

A local printing union branch has vetoed Trades Council support for HFP. Furthermore, HFP were told that any member of that Trades Union found to be assisting HFP would be disciplined, and local suppliers might be warned about supplying HFP. Yet many Trades Unionists support the goals of a 'Free Press', so why the antagonism in this case?

The primary reason must be the question of safeguarding jobs, that is, a free press starting off as often it must necessarily do with volunteer labour, does nothing to preserve jobs in the industry, and might even, by offering lower prices than commercial printers could afford, have an adverse effect on the market. But does this happen in practice? First, remember that most workers co-ops are unionised, despite the fact that their workers often cannot afford to pay themselves the full rate for the job. Nevertheless, they can in a strong sense be described as increasing employment in unionised trades. There is no great conflict of ideals here.

Secondly, the actual work they do is often of the sort that wasn't done previously, so it can be argued that they are increasing the market for printing. Let's not forget that many commercial printers wouldn't touch a radical or community paper with a barge-pole, never mind a swab of cotton wool and old Kodak plate restorer.

Professional pride may also be cited as a reason for opposing community presses — there is a residual 'mystique' about printing, which it is in the print workers interest to keep alive. But modern technology has opened up vast areas of the print industry to all-comers, trade magazines are full of adverts which, albeit in sexist terms, extol the virtues of their machines' simplicity, which "even secretaries can appreciate".

With or without an adverse effect from community printing, the mainstream print

industry is in decline, especially in the newspaper industry. This fact alone should give an impetus to welcoming the arrival of the alternatives, but regrettably the evidence points to a greater degree of protectionism in practice. New lessons will have to be learnt, if the print unions are to arrest the decline in their industry.

The radical presses have the capacity for much greater growth, but their techniques are different and perhaps create unease in the minds of those who are

familiar with the old established ways of doing things. If that complacency is not rooted out, it will certainly be of short-term harmfulness to the radicals, but in the long term, only those who are complacent will suffer.

It is time for the print unions to fully recognise the value of alternative newspapers as a source of employment, quite apart from their value as mouthpieces for progressive politics. A little help from the unions in the early stages of a community newspaper collective would go a long way, even if the immediate returns seemed marginal.

Local Radio report exposes 'Community' Myth



A REPORT just published, *Local Radio in London*, raises issues close to the heart of the CPBF. Produced by Local Radio Workshop, it documents the poverty and irrelevance of sound broadcasting and suggests ways in which the fairness and quality of local radio can be improved.

One week's output of London's 'local' stations, *Capital*, *LBC* & *BBC Radio London*, was recorded and analysed in April/May 1981.

The findings document conclusively how the 'local' stations have not even lived up to the ideals they set themselves.

LBC claimed it would "encourage the expression of every shade of opinion" and *Radio London* claims that it "speaks for all Londoners". The report lays to rest such vain boasts.

The output was analysed under headings such as News, Music and Phone-ins, and contributions were obtained from trades unions, womens groups and other specialists. It emerged that News coverage was dominated by the "businessman's view of the world" and that there was a heavy reliance on 'easy' orthodox sources of information. The assumptions behind the coverage of industrial disputes led to items *sounding* anti-union even though the content of the piece wasn't overtly so. A constant theme of the report is that items broadcast should be properly researched and should reflect the broad range of views in the locality.

The report calls for conditions to be attached by the IBA to the new London News and Information contract (presently held by *LBC*) which will be awarded in the autumn. The conditions are aimed at improving the quality, fairness and 'local' nature of the new station. In 1983 a host of ILR contracts around the country expire and the report urges groups and individuals to listen critically to the output of their 'local' stations as a preliminary to pressurising the IBA to improve the quality of the output of the new contractors.

Further information and copies of the report can be obtained from Local Radio Workshop, 12 Praed Mews, London W2 1QY, 01-402 7651.

IT'S MAKE OR BREAK!

THE next 12 months will be crucial for the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, secretary John Jennings warned at the Annual General Meeting in April.

Although support for the Campaign was still growing, the real question remained as to whether the Campaign was capable of fully realising its potential.

"The Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom is potentially one of the most important new developments in our society this decade," said Jennings. "But we are still relatively small. We are not as yet able to properly harness or utilize the full range of ideas, experiences and energy which could be available to us. We are weak in organisation, administration and finance. The problems faced by a number of radical and alternative newspapers shows what can befall organisations which are under-financed and dependent to a large extent on voluntary effort."

paign's "problems" were temporary and could be overcome in the next year, lifting the Campaign to a new level of activity and organisation. The Campaign's application for office accommodation at 9 Poland Street,

London, W1, had been approved by the Rowntree Trust and this would considerably boost administration.

Jennings condemned the majority of Fleet Street newspapers for their continued racist, sexist, anti-labour movement bias. "Some of these papers supported Hitler and Mussolini in the 1930s," he said, "and I have seen nothing in their approach to journalism that makes me think they would do anything different today, given the opportunity."

The Campaign was not Party-political, added Jennings, but for obvious reasons a great deal of the Campaign's support came from the Left of the political spectrum. "But we must not assume that our members are all committed Left-wingers or active trade unionists. All who are prepared to support our basic aims and objectives should be made welcome."

●THE Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs is the latest trade union to affiliate to the Campaign. ASTMS has more than 100,000 members.

The Campaign for Press Freedom will from now on be known as the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom. The decision was taken at the campaign's Annual General Meeting.

The Campaign's aims have been modified and updated since the list below was compiled - an up to date list will be published in the next issue.

Join the Campaign for Press Freedom

- 1 To challenge the myth that only private ownership of the newspaper industry provides genuine freedom, diversity or access, and to generate public debate on alternative forms of democratic ownership and control.
- 2 To carry out research into alternatives, including ownership by independent trusts or co-operatives, which would guarantee freedom from either state control or domination by major business conglomerates.
- 3 To encourage the creation of alternative newspapers of all kinds including a newspaper or newspapers sympathetic to the labour movement.
- 4 To encourage the development of industrial democracy in the newspaper, broadcasting and television industries.
- 5 To follow up the general principles contained in the Minority Report of the Royal Commission on the Press, including proposals for a National Printing Corporation to provide a competitive public sector in the printing industry and a launch fund to assist new publications.
- 6 To campaign for a reformed and reconstituted Press Council to promote basic standards of fairness and access to the press on behalf of the public.
- 7 To work for a reduction in legal restrictions on freedom of publication and increased access to official sources of information through reform of the Official Secrets Act and similar restrictive legislation and the introduction of a Freedom of Information Bill.

Join

INDIVIDUALS can become members for £5.00 p.a.

ORGANISATIONS can affiliate for an annual fee depending on size of membership (see box).

AFFILIATION FEES	
Below 1,000	£10
1,000 to 10,000	£15
10,000 to 50,000	£15
50,000 to 100,000	£30
100,000 & over	£100

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

NAME (or Secretary's name) _____

ORGANISATION (if applicable) _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTCODE _____

Send to Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom
9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG.

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