

## Bulletin of the Campaign for Press & Broadcasting Freedom

### NUJ moves to defend its Code of Conduct

# COMPLAINT UPHELD

The National Union of Journalists has struck a major blow for Press freedom — and given a tremendous boost to the Campaign — by taking dramatic steps to defend its Code of Conduct.

The NUJ's Executive voted to uphold complaints against Sun leader writer Ron Spark over an editorial he wrote during the Falkland Islands war, in which he accused other NUJ members of treason.

The NUJ Executive then voted to enforce its decision by expelling Spark from the union.

The complaints against Spark had been brought by two individual NUJ members through their own local branches. One of them was John Jennings, the secretary of the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, acting on behalf of the Campaign's National Committee. The other was Jacob Ecclestone, a former chairman of the Campaign, and the NUJ's deputy general secretary.

The Campaign's National committee has welcomed the NUJ's decision to enforce its Code of Conduct, but has decided to leave the thorny question of how to the union.

"We don't have a view specifically on the expulsion," said Jennings, "but obviously we're greatly heartened by the

decision to uphold the complaint. It shows the Code of Conduct can and should be taken seriously."

Under the NUJ's rules, Spark could have been suspended from the union for up to a year or fined up to £1,000. But Ecclestone maintained that expulsion was the only honourable course open to the NUJ. "There's no place for people like Ron Spark in a journalists' union which takes its Code of Conduct at all seriously," he said.

The decision to expel Spark has split the NUJ, and the row over the Executive's narrow vote is likely to rumble on for several months.

But the choices facing the NUJ are severely limited. The union now has to decide how important it is to have a Code of Conduct at all, as a Code which can be conveniently ignored is nothing more than a hypocrites' charter.


Spark ignored all the NUJ's attempts to bring him to heel, claiming that the editor of the Sun alone was responsible for "editorial freedom". His last letter on the subject of the complaints against him told the NUJ to "get stuffed".

The complaints followed a leader he wrote on May 7, accusing the Guardian, Daily Mirror and BBC of treason for

**How YOU can help the Campaign clean up the media**

**THESE RULES WERE NOT MADE TO BE BROKEN**

By Graham South



*[Small text describing the rules and the context of the article, including references to the NUJ Code of Conduct and the expulsion of Ron Spark.]*

suggesting that the Falklands war might not be worth the cost in human life.

Many Campaign supporters feel that Spark's column verged on fascism, seeking to gag the legitimately held views of a sizeable section of the community. As one remarked: "It's not the NUJ's Code of Conduct which is a threat to media freedom — it's editors and proprietors and people like Ron Spark."

The National Committee is inviting the NUJ to jointly-sponsor a conference to discuss ways of using the Code of Conduct to improve standards of journalism throughout the media.

**STOP PRESS SPARK'S EXPULSION REJECTED ON APPEAL, NOW MERELY 'SUSPENDED' FROM NUJ.**



# LET'S WORK TOGETHER

COMBINATION, we know, builds unity and strength. Fragmentation of effort and resources has the opposite effect.

Our path, since long before the CPBF was formed, is littered with the corpses of valiant attempts to counter the prevailing values of the capitalist controlled Press. Yet there can be no doubt that the skills needed to succeed exist within our movement.

If we separate out the elements required in the production and distribution of a newspaper, and give them off to those with the appropriate skills, would it not be possible to establish a network of inter-locking co-operatives which between them can produce a chain of free newspapers, especially in the major cities?

Instead of a group of frustrated journalists taking on board a range of work and costs for which they are ill-suited (so often the starting point for alternative/community newspapers), why not find the work-horses for the different courses and spread as wide a net as possible to capture the finances needed.

An advertising agency set up to attract revenue for a chain of papers (which might even include trades union papers and other left publications) would have more pulling power than a couple of enthusiasts working out of a cupboard on a small circulation local community paper.

By Mike Jempson

A typesetting & platemaking firm, or even several of them, which were guaranteed contracts from all papers in the group, might find their approaches to public and private sources of finance more willingly considered.

A distribution company, bolstered by these same contracts, and with a considerable spare capacity to undertake other courier and delivery work, might also find favour with their bank.

And small editorial co-operatives, able to concentrate more earnestly on the content of their paper, might find it not only easier to raise the funds needed to get them off the ground but also more likely that they can produce a paper which gets closer to the minds of the people and the heart of the matter.

This may seem very far-fetched. But if you think about it, and if you shrug off your traditional antipathy towards highly organised business skills, and unwillingness to seek investment capital from the private sector, there is some sense in the idea.

First of all a network of freesheets distributed to every household in your area could, if the editorial content is right, have an enormous impact on the area. Secondly, the creation of such a network would also create a wide range of new

jobs. Thirdly, some aspects of the operation would be capable of amassing a surplus sufficient to encourage banks to loan funds with reasonable certainty of its return. And finally, the level of public funding from sympathetic local authorities etc. might be modest enough to persuade those authorities that they should risk our money on the enterprise.

Normally we expect public funds, which are restricted severely when it comes to subsidising publications, to provide all the answers. Consequently we seldom obtain the funds needed to underwrite such ventures. Union pension funds operate in much the same way as any other financial institution and are not available for risky investments — but might be if they were applied to projects which can bring a return.

And freesheets, with mass circulation, are attractive to advertisers and investors alike, whatever the editorial content it would seem. They may not always succeed, but they seem the most likely to.

There are jobs, investment, and a platform here for all the print unions, and it may be worth investigating the possibilities further. In London the possibilities are considerable, and there are moves to investigate them.

Any CPBF member interested in taking up these ideas should contact me c/o 17 Victoria Park Square, Bethnal Green, E.2.

# The Mail says 'no comment'

By Mike Power, NGA Timehands FOC, Daily Mail, London

ON Tuesday September 21st, the day before the day of action for the health workers, the Daily Mail was published with a blank space instead of its usual editorial COMMENT column.

The decision to publish a blank space was taken by the editor. Subsequent events, including an exchange of letters in the Guardian between myself and Sir David English (Mail Editor) lead us to conclude that we were 'set up' to be accused of Censorship.

When publication was resumed after the day of action on September 23rd the editorial COMMENT accused the union chapels of threatening press freedom saying: "... the NGA and SOGAT refused to print views expressed by this newspaper to which they took exception unless a disclaimer giving their own objections was also published."

This, the editor knows to be untrue. At no time did the chapels demand publication of their views, the disclaimer in fact said: "Members of the NGA and SOGAT 32 employed at the Daily Mail wish to dissociate themselves from the above article".

Equally there was no refusal to handle the editorial or attempt to change its Contents. On the same day the 'Times' quoted the Deputy NGA FOC saying that: "Daily Mail executives did not even ask what the wording of the proposed disclaimer was."

The editorial was scurrilous and provocative and no self respecting print trade unionist could have failed to respond. Under the circumstances there-

fore to withdraw the COMMENT column would only have been a sledgehammer to crack a walnut, except that management's ulterior motive was to counter-attack and denounce us as censors. This follows the successful Right of Reply Campaign on behalf of the health workers launched in June and fully covered by Free Press.

That Campaign has had the backing of all the Print Unions. In the case of the blank editorial, George Jerrom, NGA, Fleet Street Officer and former National Committee member CPBF, replied to the Mail managements protests saying: "Our Chapel in seeking to have a disclaimer of a right of reply were acting in total conformity with the Associations policy and the fact that the Comment Column did not appear in our view was the responsibility of the editorial department and not our members."

The pathetic Press Council actually managed a statement about the issue on September 30th — only nine days after the event! In the time honoured practice of the Council it simply repeated the view of the management and denounced the print workers as censors.

What a contrast to the treatment given to ordinary citizens who complain to the Press Council. That same week the Council adjudicated on the 'Sun's' treatment of the demonstration of Black Youths held in March 1981 — eighteen months after the event.

If we did not know better we might be led to believe that a conspiracy existed in favour of the Press Lords.



In the aftermath the Chapels received a number of hostile letters from readers objecting to what they considered to be our action in denying them an editorial COMMENT. One such letter read as follows:

"Dear Father of the Chapel (Typesetters),

No doubt you were the instigator of the removal of the editorial Comment Column from today's 'Daily Mail'.

Do you truly appreciate the full implications of what you have done? Do you realise that your action helps to kill free speech — one of the foundations on which our entire Newspaper Press (and other news media) is built? Do you realise that, without it, newspapers will wither and die — and, without them, your fat income? Have you thought for a moment what a thoroughly evil crime you have committed?

Do you, in short, realise that in addition to being one of a complete bunch of idiots, you, and the creatures you control, have reduced yourselves to the level of a gang of brothel-bred, mother fucking bastards, unable to raise themselves from the level of the gutter sufficiently high to kiss the shoes of the most diseased prostitute in Soho?

Think about it." This letter was urgently dispatched to Sir David by the Chapel with a recommendation that it be published on the letter page. Surely, we thought, management would not want to deny themselves the opportunity of printing such a concise exposition of the thinking of the average 'Daily Mail' reader.

We were disappointed.

Mike Power

## How the Daily Mail found Reds under the Archers' beds...



by Graham Smith

The Daily Mail seems to delight in attacking other sections of the media these days.

Not only has it led to the campaign against Channel 4's "liberal" approach to programming, it found nearly a whole page on September 28 to rubbish BBC Radio 4's "The Archers".

The central thrust of the Mail's attack was that the programme was now written by "trendy feminists" who didn't even live in the kind of rural area which the Mail thinks the Archers is supposed to be all about.

According to the Mail people like Walter Gabriel and Eddie Grundy should be fore-locked tugging serfs; Shula Archer should have been married (preferably to a solicitor) years ago and the rest of the characters should spend their time tearing foxes to pieces.

Instead — and all credit to the writers — the characters now come across as rather more human, concerning themselves with fundraising stunts to help Third World charities and campaigning against nuclear weapons.

Even if "The Archers" still bears little relation to what living (as opposed to holidaying) in a rural area is really like, it is far closer to the truth now than it was a year ago. People who live in rural areas have to struggle against non-existent services, on low wages, often in sub-standard housing and with a higher percentage of their community without jobs.

But then people who read the Daily Mail wouldn't want to know about that, would they?

(The author of this article lives in a rural area).

## ATKINSON FIGHTS BACK

Norman Atkinson, MP does not pretend to have made a new discovery in his pamphlet "Fleet Street declares war on the Labour Party". He does however put the latest hostilities into their current context.

He argues convincingly that the Party Lords promoted the SDP as an alternative to the Tories when they temporarily lost confidence in Thatcher. This was coupled with a desperate need to destroy Labour and the Left as the real political alternative.

The message comes across strongly: "... the vitriolic malignancy of the stuff thrown at Tony Benn and the Left" ... has never previously been matched. The Press has abandoned honest analysis and has personalised politics at the expense of issues. On this many of us would agree with him.

This pamphlet tries to be different. Its style is breezy and it uses cartoons and illustrations; the text is short, punchy and didactic. Not what we expect from the Left — there are few about in its like and its a good effort.

The style however creates a paucity in considered argument that begs many

questions. But it is a useful stimulus to the current discussion about access to the media.

We need to get into the questions raised about why trade unionists read Anti Labour Papers; and how to undermine the power of Fleet Street. It is questionable whether our time would be well spent in campaigning to reduce the readership of the Sun and Mail. Rather than putting more effort into demanding access to their columns.

Ultimately Norman Atkinson gets it off his chest and he probably feels better for it. Many more people, trade unions and Labour Party members in particular will also feel some relief in reading this pamphlet. It deserves a wide circulation.

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# Donald Hirsch looks at media coverage of the CRIME OF THE CENTURY

SINCE 1979, Fleet Street has dutifully followed the monthly ritual of reporting, regretting and, from time to time, depicting successive rises in the unemployment rate.

Nobody could accuse the press for trying to cover up the fact of mass unemployment in this country, or even of pretending that the problem will soon go away. Even the most Right wing of our daily newspapers have yet to escape completely from the sacred postwar consensus that abhors any major statistical deviation from full employment.

Unfortunately, any concern that they may have for the plight of the unemployed themselves is all too often shown to be skin deep.

Ministerial speeches on unemployment these days have a habit of starting off with a statement of regret at the tragic human waste of three million people out of work. The remainder of the speech talks of over-manning, competitiveness and the fight against inflation, but fails to give any sign that the government's sympathy with the victims of this tragedy is real enough to give them the attention and help that they need.

In the case of the Press, once we get past the knee-jerk headlines following each increase in the level of unemployment, we find that the attitude can be much the same.

As with Conservative speeches, one way in which these double standards are justified is in hiding behind economic arguments. Commenting on the massive rise in unemployment this August, the *Telegraph* leader declared:

"No one who cares about the dignity of man, let alone economic waste in human terms, can fail to be moved by persistently high unemployment".

The leader went on to applaud the government's failure to spend its way out of the crisis, to attribute unemployment to the "structural change" that Britain is undergoing, and to declare that industry must face up to this change "however painful it might be to do so". Such familiar arguments make no attempt to assess whether "the dignity of man" is ever too great a sacrifice to be made in the name of economic efficiency.

Recent expansion of government programmes providing the unemployed with temporary substitutes for real jobs have been lapped up as propaganda fodder by papers anxious to prove that the government is not totally uncaring.

Following the House of Lords report that pointed out that for a mere £2 billion a year unemployment could be reduced by 1 million over 2-3 years, the *Times* leader writer (Aug. 25) denied that the government could be accused of inaction, citing the Youth Training Scheme, the Community Programme and a jobsharing subsidy, and calling for more such measures to provide "relief" to those without jobs.

Mr Murdoch's other paper put the same point more bluntly: "The *Sun* says... Employment Minister Norman Tebbit is riding to the rescue" with a new training scheme for 16 year olds. Such praise of temporary palliatives for those worst hit by unemployment did not seem to bear much relation to the *Times* leader's

admission that unemployment would be with us "for a long time to come."

But even this apparent sympathy for the victims of "inevitable" economic forces does not always find its way into the hearts of Fleet Street's headline and leader writers. On 4 September, they proudly announced Operation Major, the Oxford benefit office swoop, as follows: "The Sting! - 286 are held as £1.5 million fiddle smashed." Following this headline, the *Express* went on to declare: "Fraud is theft: no sympathy should be wasted on the perpetrators."

In the next few days, a number of facts about the case became evident. One was that the vast majority of people held were innocent claimants, who were not properly informed of their rights, and that on being charged most were prejudged as guilty and denied bail.

Another was that those who had committed fraud were not professional criminals growing rich by their misdoings, but rather poor, unemployed and homeless people attempting to get something more than the pitiful £18.60 a week given by the DHSS to people of no fixed abode as their soul means of survival.

Of the national dailies, only the *Guardian* made any attempt to report this information. The popular press fell silent after their initial jubilation at the success of Operation Major, whilst the *Times* and *Telegraph* continue to give one-sided coverage. "Benefit Cheats go to Prison" announced the *Times* on September 7, totally ignoring the complaints about legal procedures that were already being made. Still more revealingly, the *Telegraph* leader on the same day ridiculed the "inverse morality of Camden Passage" which defends "scroungers", as well as the "reaction of shock and outrage that the unemployed should have been 'harassed', a word dear to those who befriend the unemployed" (emphasis added).

In the same week as taking this strict moral tone against "scroungers", many papers were pitying the fate of Lord Lucan (supposedly captured in South America), as a suspected criminal who wanted nothing more than to return to a quiet life in his own country. Earlier this year, during the Tory Wets' revolt against the cut in the value of benefits, papers who would instantly be up in arms if, say, tax exemptions on mortgage payments were threatened, had little to say about the morality of cutting the income of the worst off in our society.

It was left to groups such as the Child Poverty Action Group to write letters to the *Times* to make such points.

Perhaps even more ominous is the creeping acceptance of the fact of mass unemployment, which is already making it conceivable that a government presiding over an economy with over three million unemployed will be re-elected without too much difficulty. The *Daily Mail* continues to report, from time to time, statements such as shadow employment secretary Eric Varley's parliamentary condemnations of the Tories' failure to create more jobs; but there comes a point when constant reiteration of these statements turns them into familiar rhetoric which nobody really listens to.

More appealing to *Mail* readers no doubt was a story on September 8 about



"Youngsters who can find life brighter out of work." Reported by several papers, the supposed research findings of a distinguished academic called Ken Roberts that the young may be happier on the dole was in fact a distortion of what Roberts had said - basically that young people without stable employment are learning how to cope with their lot, despite the fact that they would prefer to be in secure jobs, they are not willing to accept any job or any scheme.

But there is nothing more attractive to the press these days than evidence showing that unemployment may not be so bad after all.

The more that unemployment appears to be a permanent feature of our society, the more accepting of it the Press becomes. It is no accident that during the Falklands campaign, coverage of the issue virtually disappeared from the Press - even when unemployment topped three million for the second time it only got a cursory mention.

After all, we were in the middle of our first war since Suez, and how many times

can the statistical facts about unemployment continue to be newsworthy? There is a danger that if the level of (registered) unemployment stabilises at around 3, 3½ or 4 million mark, the fact that there are no further rises to report will make it even less newsworthy.

The way in which the Press handle the question of unemployment is a good example of the subtlety of the bias in the British media. The incantation of regret can be cited as evidence that the coverage is balanced. Yet unemployment is made to seem a distant and regrettable necessity. Feelings of sympathy and anger are not encouraged - even though the ability of the Press to whip up emotions in favour of our boys in the Falklands or the victims of crime cannot be in doubt.

Finally, there is no serious discussion of solutions. The task is completed when opinion polls commissioned by newspapers tell us that the majority of people do not believe it is possible to return to full employment.

The July/August issue of *Free Press* mistakenly implied that MEDIWATCH was an integral part of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. It has been pointed out that the two organisations are completely separate.

Hmmm... Just goes to show that you can't even believe the so-called "quality" papers. On the eve of the Labour Party conference, the *Sunday Times* reported: "Michael Foot made it clear to union leaders that he will resign as Labour leader if he loses the crucial party conference vote aimed at expelling the Militant Tendency". The Observer, same day, reported: "Senior union leaders last night angrily denied suggestions that he had told them he would quit if he did not win on the register issue". The denial was totally absent from the *Sunday Times* report.

## My war with the gutter press by Peter Tatchell, un-endorsed Labour candidate for Bermondsey.

I HAVE long accepted the self-evident Right-wing bias of the media, though not crudely blaming all Labour's ills upon the press as some seem to do. But until I actually went through recent experiences myself, I never imagined the ruthless methods and extent of deception, exaggeration, and even outright fabrication, to which sections of the press are prepared to resort. Many journalists, while not necessarily reporting Bermondsey events in a favourable light, have emerged with their professional ethics intact. Others have not. This article is about them and what they have done to me.

Press attention began in earnest last November following my selection as the prospective Labour candidate for Bermondsey. It has continued on and off ever since.

The constant insistent phone calls and visits to my flat at all hours of the night and day by journalists who will not take "no" for an answer have been the least of my worries.

Of more concern are antics such as reporters blocking the rubbish chute opposite my flat and sitting through the contents adding thereby a new dimension to the term "gutter press".

For days and nights on end they have "doorstepped" my flat, sitting in cars with telephoto lenses to photograph whoever goes in and out - often without their knowledge, let alone their permission. Occasionally, I have been surreptitiously trailed on foot, in cars and even on the tube.

My neighbours on the Rockingham Estate have been constantly subject to harassment. Frequently they have been called on late at night and early in the morning for days at a time with the evident intention of wearing down their resistance and forcing them to "tell all" in order to get some peace and quiet. Neighbours who have consistently refused to speak to the press have been subject to obscene and racist abuse by some journalists.

When these journalists have not been able to get the damning quotes they want from local tenants they have resorted to more devious methods. They have scoured neighbourhood pubs scavenging for gossip and posed as Labour Party members, Southwark Council officers and friends of my family. Even local kids as young as ten years old have been quizzed about intimate details of my personal life.

At North Lambeth Day Centre, where I am employed, my fellow workers and the single homeless people whom we assist have been put under enormous strain. For weeks on end, reporters have telephoned and walked into the Day Centre uninvited, interrupting our work and demanding to speak to me. At times, the telephone lines have been so jammed with journalists that we have been prevented from carrying on our work.

When other staff members have quite refused to take this endless stream of press calls for me, they too have been subject to savage abuse and threats by some journalists. In fact, press harassment has so seriously interfered with the operation of the Day Centre that I have been pressured to resign my job.

Throughout these last ten months, myself, my family, friends and neighbours, have all been subject to a never-ending stream of false, but very intimidating, allegations. These range from my alleged membership of the Communist Party and the IRA, monthly trips to Belfast, arrest for terrorist offences, work as a KGB agent and a sewer of allegations about my private life which are frankly so disgusting that I dare not publicly repeat them for fear that they would be quoted from this article by these very same Fleet Street vultures.

In a few cases, the line of reporters questioning and conversation has bordered on the threatening - "We will get you" and "We will turn your life inside out". In one case, following

my denial of allegations, when I stated that these were libellous, a journalist replied with words to the effect: "Sue us, what do we care. What is a few thousand pounds to us. This is a good story."

Press harassment has not been confined to these shores either. At phenomenal expense, reporters have been sent to Australia to "dig up things you have ever said or done from the day you were born" to quote one journalist. Not content with their own efforts, several indigenous Australian reporters have also been engaged to investigate my family and political background.

In Australia, they have put my family through the same nightmare of round-the-clock phone calls and door-stepping. Journalists have put to them the same false allegations about me deliberately in order to undermine my family's support and provoke them to make critical and damaging statements against me.

On one occasion, reporters waited until all my family, apart from my stepfather, had gone away for the weekend to stay with relations to escape the press. Then, with the incentive of some bottles of wine, they pressured my elderly and invalid stepfather to respond to malicious leading questions about my political and private life.

Subsequently, journalists also led my family to believe that I had a serious accident, as a means of gaining entry to their house. Being in a state of shock at such news, with their guard lowered, these journalists then persuaded my family to talk.

Methods aside, the content of reporting on my candidature by the popular press has been calculatedly selective and misrepresentative. Although I have made quite clear from the outset that I am not a Militant supporter, sections of the press are still wilfully categorising me as a Militant supporter.

While they glory in sensationalising my advocacy of gay human rights at the World Youth Festival in East Berlin in 1973, some of the press have taken great pains to demean what I did by falsely alleging that following being attacked, I "burst into tears".

A couple of newspapers have demonstrated a single-minded obsession to "prove" that I am not from a working-class background. In an article in *The Sun* headlined "Middle Class Past of Working Class Hero", only three "facts" were offered in the body of the story to substantiate the headline - and even those were wrong.

Perhaps the most extreme examples of misrepresentation were totally fabricated stories in *The Sun* and *Daily Express*. *The Sun* alleged that I had gone to the Gay Olympics in San Francisco. The *Daily Express* carried a story about myself at the TUC Conference when I was away on holiday and not even in the country.

Related to *The Sun*'s story are the "undercover" methods employed by their reporter Phil Dampier. Posing as "Phil Wilson", he befriended Bermondsey Labour Party members on the TUC Day of Action. He claimed that he lived locally and wished to join the Labour Party. His masquerade even went so far as to go leafleting with the Young Socialists the following night. While ferreting for information, at no time did he indicate that he was a journalist.

It is an enormous tribute to comrades in Bermondsey Labour Party and to local constituents they have stood by me, despite the immense media pressure.

It is also a great tribute to the courage and determination of comrades such as Ted Knight, Ken Livingstone and Tony Benn that they have withstood vilification by the press for so many years.

Like them, I will not be intimidated by the lies and smears of Fleet Street. I will continue to speak out for what I believe is right. (From *Tribune*)

## What's this channel for? 4

What's this Channel four? An alternative report, edited by Simon Blanchard and David Morley (Comedia Publishing Group, 9 Poland Street, London W1) £3.50. 186 pages, ISBN 0 906890 28 4.

Channel Four: Television with a difference? by Stephen Lambert (BFI Publishing, 81 Dean Street, London W1). £3.95. 178 pages. ISBN 0 85170 124 8. Also available as hardback, £7.95.

WHAT would different television look and sound like? the box (as it is often revealingly called), or what is 'on' it, is to be changed (perhaps) by the November 1982 transmissions of two new services: Channel Four, with a 'reach' initially to 87% of the UK population (rising to 93% by the end of 1983) and Sianel Pedwar Cymru (Channel Four Wales) providing programmes in the Welsh language.

Although mentioned in the BFI book, the Comedia collection devotes two essays specifically to the latter service and shows how its origins and meanings are different from Channel Four,

Angharad Tomos's 'Realising a Dream' in particular traces the sustained political campaign, including Gwynfor Evans' hunger strike, direct action and subsequent prosecutions, fines and imprisonment.

These two books are valuable analyses in advance, of course, of any transmission. Lambert traces through the pre-history of Channel Four (84 pages), the formation of the Company (38 pages) and detail on the organisation and intentions in the pre-transmission period (43 pages). I found the careful documentation (including some informative materials) from relevant pressure groups and individuals in the early 70s, including a memorandum of 1973 drawn up by Jeremy Isaacs, now Chief Executive) and the detail of the Commissioning strategies, extremely valuable — the book should serve both as a resource in itself and as a model of the king of history of cultural formations which we need.

My only point of contention is two fold: first, like many others, Lambert fails to see the early years of public television (1936 — 1939 and 1946 onwards) as significant in their systematic indeterminacy.

At that time it was possible to see different ways forward,

different uses, different forms of television, before the systematic naturalisation and domination of particular forms as normal from the mid 1950s. Secondly — and I appreciate it to be beyond his brief — Lambert does not see how various seemingly technical processes — how television production works to be important politically and theoretically.

Fortunately some of the latter questions are examined in the Comedia book, which gathers together a set of essays on precisely the kinds of determinations which are likely to limit the degree to which Channel Four will, in fact, be a different kind of television. Isaacs illustrates one feature of the problem in an interview published in *the Guardian* (quoted p.75 in the Comedia book)

"If all I get offered is agit-prop I'm not likely to be terribly responsive to it. The people who are going to write and produce for this channel will have the freedom to write for particular audiences instead of always for the mass, but they are going to have to do it — I won't say in acceptable ways — but in subtle, amusing and stimulating ways."

Yes, well, eh, now you see it; now you don't sort of freedom really! But this — determination by what are considered correct standards, proper rules, agreed conventions, for (any) television — is as nothing to a set of deter-

minations and contradictions connected with the audience.

As Lambert points out 'the one group who have notably not featured in the story of Channel Four are the people who will now judge its performance — the television-viewing public' (p.160) or, better, publics. And Channel Four is in the business of delivering audiences for advertisers — through delivering programmes to the IBA which will arrange for their transmission interspersed with advertisements, the time/space for which will be sold by the existing contractors.

To float the Channel the contractors have paid £35m, the rest of the £104m (to cover the fifteen months between January 1982 and April 1983) has been raised from financial money markets by the IBA, i.e. there are interest payments as well as loan repayments involved. Obtaining audiences means providing what audiences — it is claimed — want; what they want, you can see the drift here, I hope, is based on what they watch (and like, it is said) at the moment.

But, hang on, does not Channel IV (the Company and the IBA) have a statutory duty — a legal obligation — to be different?

Philip Corrigan

## Campaign spreads the word into Wales

THE CAMPAIGN is moving into Wales. Cardiff NUJ branch has organised a meeting at which the Wales Campaign for Press & Broadcasting Freedom will be set up.

Dafydd Elis Thomas MP — a founder member of the campaign — will be speaking along the Mike Power from the national committee. The South Wales miners are sending a speaker as is the Wales Women's Rights Committee.

One of the particular challenges facing the campaign in

Wales is the position of the Welsh language. Wayne Williams, chairman of the Welsh Language Society's broadcasting committee will be discussing the new Welsh fourth TV channel — its attitude to the language and the fact that unlike Channel Four UK there is no provision for public access.

It's hoped that a representative of the co-operative running the new Welsh language Sunday paper SULYN will be able to attend the meeting.

The miners were the first union

to affiliate to the campaign as a result of the NUJ initiative in Wales and with their recent experience of the media propaganda machine, they should have a valuable contribution to make.

Several unions — including the South and West Wales Graphical Society, SOGAT and Cohse are sending delegates and a number of trades councils will also be represented.

With the launch of S4C, Wales will have three TV channels, four radio services, two morning

papers, four evenings and numerous weeklies in English and Welsh. Up to now there has been no consistent attempt to monitor their performance or challenge their assumptions and attitudes. The Wales campaign aims to do that.

There has been some difficulty contacting members of the the campaign living in Wales. But further information about the Cardiff meeting can be obtained from James Stewart, 96 Wyndham Crescent, Canton, Cardiff. (Tel: 0222 45645).

## RAPED BY THE PRESS

NEWSPAPER reports which sensationalise rape may prevent rapists being caught, a meeting of the West Midlands Campaign for Press Freedom was told.

Heather Powell, from Birmingham Film Workshop, said many women who had been sexually assaulted would not go to the police because they were afraid of the treatment they would receive in the press.

Ms Powell, who was explaining research being done into rape reporting, said press reports were often fabricated or exaggerated and used expressions like "fun loving" or "party going girl" to imply the woman was partly to blame.

Some journalists present said descriptions like "mother-of-three" could help personalise a rape report and stop rapes being turned into statistics.

Tim Hylton, West Midlands Police press officer, also speaking at the meeting on reporting rape, said that press and broadcasting coverage sometimes resulted in witnesses coming forward and rapists being caught.

Other speakers at the meeting, which attracted 50 people, were Steve Valentine, Midland correspondent for the News of the World and Denise from Birmingham Rape Crisis Centre.

The Campaign also held a meeting about the alternative press and organised exhibitions as part of Midland Alternative Week in Birmingham.

Steve Wilkinson, a sub editor with The Birmingham Post and a former journalist with the New Manchester Review said the review folded partly because its organisers were unwilling to compromise to make it commercial.

He said that even alternative papers should be seen as products, which need to make profits to survive.

Rhonda Wilson, from the women's paper *Insist*, and Brian Homer, who worked for Birmingham Broadside before it folded, also spoke.

The West Midlands campaign is organising a recruitment drive in the region's Labour and Trade Union movement with a "Join It" leaflet.

The campaign has applied to the Cadbury Trust for funding and hopes to hear the result by Christmas.

The Campaign has published this fundraising leaflet (above) to help spread the word and encourage action against bias and distortion in the media.

The Campaign needs to raise £50,000 by this time next year — and you can help.

You can take copies of the leaflet — called WHY THEIR NEWS IS BAD NEWS — and distribute them at meetings. Moss Evans, Michael Foot, Pamela Stephenson, Tom Conti, Bruce Kent, CLR James and Jayabea Desai give their views on the media in the leaflet, which is designed to encourage people to take out a long-term commitment to the Campaign by taking out a covenant.

Get yours now!

## The campaign for press and broadcasting freedom aims to:

- Challenge the myths of 'impartiality' and 'balance' in broadcasting and 'objectivity' in newspapers by campaigning for the genuine presentation of the diversity and plurality of society.
- Challenge the myth that only private ownership of the newspaper industry provides genuine freedom, diversity or access.
- Challenges the myth that the present forms of ownership and regulation of broadcasting guarantee editorial independence, democratic accountability or high programme standards.
- Carry out research and generate debate on alternative forms of ownership and control of newspapers and broadcasting in order to guarantee freedom from either state control or domination by business conglomerates and encourage the creation of alternative media including those sympathetic to the labour movement.
- Encourage the development of industrial democracy in the newspaper and broadcasting industries.
- Encourage debate on the implications of technological advances in the media to ensure that the public interest is safeguarded and that commercial interests do not override public accountability.
- Campaign on the general principles in the Minority Report of the 1977 Royal Commission on the Press, including proposals for National Printing Corporation to provide a competitive public sector in the industry and a launch fund to assist new publications.
- Campaign for a reformed and reconstituted Press Council to promote basic standards of fairness and access to the press on behalf of the public. The right of reply is fundamental to redressing the imbalance in press bias.
- Campaign for a reduction in legal restriction on freedom of publication and increased access to information through a Freedom of Information and Bill and reform of the Official Secrets Act and similar restrictive legislation.
- Campaign for the legal right of access for publications to the distribution system, and a guarantee right of display.

## RACE & CLASS

A JOURNAL FOR BLACK AND THIRD WORLD LIBERATION

*Race & Class* is an anti-racist, anti-imperialist quarterly covering black struggles in metropolitan countries, migrant workers' struggles in Europe and liberation struggles in the Third World.

Recent issues include: Toni Cade Bambara on The Atlanta murders; Fred Halliday on Soviet policy in the Third World; Bernard Coard on Grenada; Cedric Robinson on The Third World and imperialism; David Edgar on Racism and the right in the USA; A. Sivanandan on Imperialism in the silicon age; Herbert Ushewokunze on Socialism in Zimbabwe; Thomas Hodgkin on Revolutionary tradition in Islam; Nawal El Saadawi on Arab Women; Basil Davidson on Guinea Bissau; Eqbal Ahmad on Pakistan. Recent articles have examined: Black marxism; Free trade zones; Sociobiology; The '79 revolt in Ghana; Reconstruction in Nicaragua; Revolutionary culture in Mozambique; The state in Malaysia; The struggle in El Salvador; and Race relations sociology.

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*Race & Class* is available to individuals at £8/US\$16 per annum (£12/US\$30 for institutions).

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## CABLE TV — THE ISSUES

This important new booklet, published by the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, examines the issues surrounding the Hunt Report on Cable TV. It also looks at the experience of other countries and suggests a strategy for the labour movement.

**SPECIAL LAUNCH OFFER**  
**£1.25 (Normal cover price £1.95)**  
**Orders to: CPBF, 9 Poland Street, London W1 3DG.**

# OUR MEMBERS ARE OUR LIFE BLOOD

Since the launch of our Appeal we have:

- \* **Raised over £5,000**
- \* **Recruited over 200 new members and affiliates**

Not bad for a start but we are still a long way off our target of £50,000 and a membership of 5,000 by 1984. We can only continue this difficult battle if our members keep us healthy by *DONATING* and spreading the word of the Campaign to your friends and colleagues.

Over the next period, there will be a series of meetings open to all members and affiliates who wish to be active in the Campaign. The first of these is on *THURSDAY, 9th DECEMBER, 7pm at COUNTY HALL, LONDON SE1*. Nearest tube: Waterloo. Ask at reception for the CPBF meeting. The National Committee will be suggesting a plan of future activities and events which members can be involved in.

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This edition of *Free Press* was edited and produced by Graham Smith, Clover Cottage, St. Mabyn, Bodmin, Cornwall, PL30 3BA. Telephone St. Mabyn (020884) 466. The views expressed in *Free Press* are not necessarily those of the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom. Typeset by Quintrell & Co. Ltd., Wadebridge and printed by Spider Web, London.

The Campaign is looking for someone to take over as editor of FREE PRESS. Candidates should be members of the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, and preferably should live in the London area so as to attend meetings. Applications for this (unpaid) position to: Campaign for Press & Broadcasting Freedom, 9 Poland Street, London, W1.