

Sun rebels lose battle of Bouverie Street

By our war correspondent John Jennings

ONCE AGAIN OUR Brave Boys and Girls on the *Sun* have shown the world the true meaning of heroism. They did not fail their country or their leaders. And attempts by a small group of dissident NCOs to seize power within the armed forces have been foiled.

On 15 August renewed fighting broke out in the heavily-defended Bouverie Street area, off Fleet Street. It is believed, however, that this was a diversionary manoeuvre led by a rebel unit of *Sun* journalists. Key figures are believed to be two junior NCOs, Corporal Malcolm Withers and Lance-Corporal Ian Blunt.

Withers and Blunt are FOC and deputy FOC respectively of a unit known as the NUJ chapel. It is strong in numbers but poorly disciplined. However, it has not always in the past operated entirely under the control of the *Sun* high command.

One of the major battles in this front-line area of Britain's defences is between the *Sun* forces and the enemy *Mirror* battalions.

But in what was apparently an unauthorised flanking movement, Corporal Withers ordered his men to advance for a 'mandatory but non-disruptive' chapel meeting. The dissident group were attempting to challenge the leadership of their commanding officer, Lieut-Colonel 'K' MacKenzie, the *Sun* editor.

Tough, fast-talking Colonel MacKenzie had been finally pinned down after leading an unorthodox, audacious but highly-dangerous thrust towards the *Mirror's* forward positions.

He had ordered one of his trusted subordinates to invent an 'interview' with Mrs Marica McKay, widow of Falklands VC Sergeant Ian McKay. In a brilliant manoeuvre the *Sun* then printed this as a 'world exclusive'.

However, seizing this opportunity to assert their independence, the rebellious NUJ NCOs planned to issue new orders to their troops. A copy of the instructions, headed *NUJ Code of Conduct* is in our possession.

But as the battle-weary heroes 'yomped' through the corridors of the *Sun* building there were a number of casualties and some platoons appeared to have lost their way.

Only about 50 people finally made the chapel rendezvous point out of a total strength of 230 — though intelligence reports suggests that this is a fairly good turn-out since only 70 or so would be on duty at that time.

Further difficulties lay ahead of the dissident faction, however. It was always doubtful whether they could succeed in their plot to subvert the troops under their command from their loyalty to Colonel 'K'.

Withers and Blunt addressed the men (and women) issuing the new orders. "No falsification by distortion, selection or misrepresentation," they said. "Make it fair and make it accurate. No racism or sexism. And give 'em the right of reply."

It was here that the underlying weakness of the rebel leadership's position became clear. Shock and fear registered on the faces of battle-hardened veterans. Strong young men were seen to blanch and



GOTCHA
Our lads sink gunboat and hole cruiser

Lies, damned lies and Sun exclusives — what the *Mirror* thought of the whole affair.

shudder as the awful reality dawned. Then loyalty and patriotism triumphed.

The new orders would leave

continued on back page

Four axes radical current affairs show

CHANNEL FOUR'S radical news and current affairs programme *The Friday Alternative* is being axed. The Channel Four Board say it's because it's amateurish. But Diverse Production who put together the programme say it's because they've upset too many important people on sensitive issues.

"Ever since the first programme," says Barry Flynn, "we've been accused of having a left-wing bias — even though the only independent survey ever carried out showed that a majority of viewers disagreed. We've been ORDERED to do more so-called "right-wing" stories; FORCED — on pain of the programme being dropped — to change scripts at the last minute; CENSORED — again and again."

"It's no coincidence that the

decision to scrap us was announced just days after we were openly criticized in an IBA report for our 'Falklands' programme which went out in January. In it we showed how TV news allowed itself to be manipulated by the Government during the Falklands War. That upset a lot of 'top people'.

"There were other stories they didn't like. In fact, when we tried to repeat some of them for a "Best of The Friday Alternative" programme, we were made to take them out by Channel Four: one was about media Coverage of Arthur Scargill — and the other was about . . . you've guessed it — the Falklands again."

"Basically, we've been spiked — and it stinks!"

Appeal to supporters

THE WORK OF OUR Campaign is due to expand rapidly. We therefore urgently need all sorts of office equipment and furniture from desks and filing cabinets to typewriters and wastepaper bins.

If you have anything that you think might be useful and you are prepared to donate them don't hold back — let us know right away. Or if you are in an organisation that has unused equipment that we may be able to have please mention our need. We will happily make the approach if you would prefer, so let us know.

Contact the CPBF at 9 Poland Street, London, W1. Or phone 437 2795 and if necessary leave a message on the answerphone and we will get in touch.

By the time you read this we hope that our grant application to the GLC for staff funding will have been endorsed. If so it will have been in spite of dogged opposition that has held it up for some months — a sure sign of the Campaign's growing effectiveness.

TUC Call for Communications Council

By John Jennings

THE CPBF NATIONAL committee and the National Union of Journalists want a boycott of the ineffectual Press Council. Instead the CPBF wants to see a new independent press authority with statutory powers to enforce the right of reply.

The TUC want a new authority but not a boycott. For the moment the Press Council, however unsatisfactory, is the only available way of obtaining redress against the abuses of the press, they argue.

Thus there is a clear disagreement over tactics, though not on general objectives.

Several years ago the NUJ withdrew their representatives from the Press Council and have refused entreaties and pressures to go back in. We support them on that.

The Press Council themselves are now under considerable pressure. It was the NUJ action, reinforced by the CPBF's right of reply campaign, and the criticisms, among others, of the TUC itself, which forced some relatively minor reforms upon the Press Council.

They are on the defensive and on the retreat. That is why now is precisely the wrong time to relax the pressure. It should be stepped up, with an all-out national campaign, drawing in as many people and interest groups as possible.

Perhaps inevitably there is an element of facing both ways in the TUC's position. While urging the NUJ to return, and "regretting" that they have not done so, the TUC also makes important radical proposals for the future.

In a pamphlet published in August the TUC call for a Communications Council with statutory powers to replace the Press Council and the Broadcasting Complaints Commission.

Entitled *The Other Side of the Story*, it is (apart from the criticism levelled above) an excellent, thoughtful and well-argued document. It summarises and pulls together many of the main themes in the debate on the media which has taken place over the past four years.

It explains the importance and also the limitations of the NUJ code of conduct, the TUC General Council's 1981 'Statement of Principle on the Right of Reply' (drafted as a result of the CPBF's campaign) and Frank Allaun's Right of Reply Bill.

Its main conclusions are broadly right. Voluntary procedures have not proved satisfactory, it says, and the TUC favours "a statutory right of reply firmly in the context of a 'watchdog' organisation which could combine and build on the existing functions of the Press Council and the Broadcasting Complaints Commission."

All CPBF members should buy it. *The Other Side of the Story* is only 40p from the TUC, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1.



The contempt in which Fleet Street editors hold the Press Council was shown once again last month. As usual, the Daily Express tucked away a Press Council criticism of itself well inside the paper. They printed it on page 10 in small, densely packed type and with the most boring headline their sub-editor could think up — the regulation disincentive to anyone thinking of reading it.

But the top half of the Express's front page was devoted entirely to the Daily Express criticism of the Press Council and declared "whose side are they on?"

It went on to criticise the Council's report upholding a complaint about "2,000 victims of IRA terror." In reality half the victims mentioned in the earlier Express report had been killed by the army, police or Ulster Loyalists.

The lead said "Does the Press Council seriously suggest that the army and the police would have been killing people in Ulster if it were not for the murderous activities of the IRA . . . Just whose side are they on, just what purpose do they think they are serving by giving aid and comfort to Britain's enemies?"

Inside the Press Council's adjudication said "On the natural

construction of its words, the Daily Express's reference to 2,000 victims of terror was inaccurate. . . . it inaccurately implied that the IRA directly killed and wounded these victims."

. . . In particular it draws attention to the need to distinguish between the number of people killed directly by the IRA and the total killed in Northern Ireland as a result of the emergency and thus attributable directly or indirectly to the existence of terrorism."

Yet again the Press Council has failed. Only a legislative course can remedy the blatant inadequacies of this current system which allows constant mockery of any attempts to redress inaccuracies in our biased press.

OBITUARY

Jonathan Hammond



Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

JONATHAN HAMMOND's sudden early death at 41 will leave a yawning gap in the NUJ which will be difficult to bridge. Jonathan came late to publishing in 1971, having been an actor, and started work for John Calder, where he quickly formed an NUJ chapel.

During his 12 years membership of the NUJ, he served willingly on numerous committees and made thoughtful and useful contributions to their reports. He always worked energetically for the grass roots membership, and was a loyal rank and file member of the NUJ chapel at Penguin, regardless of his eminence within the union's hierarchy.

Jonathan was often first. He was the first chairman of Book branch, having been instrumental in setting up the branch in 1973. He was their first and only member of the NEC to date, and he was the first President of the union to come from Book

branch. He worked hard on the Campaign to End Low Pay in Book Publishing and was always to be found supporting NUJ picket lines and carrying the NUJ banner on demonstrations.

He was a great believer in the trade union movement, and worked tirelessly for it. He was a keen supporter of Amnesty International and the Women's Peace Camp at Greenham, an activist in his local Labour party and in the Troops Out of Northern Ireland Movement. He was an enthusiastic member of the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom and supported many of our fights for media reforms.

He was a kind, generous and considerate man of great integrity who always found time to listen and to help others. He believed in the right of all people to have decent standard of living and spent his life to make that belief come true.

Distinctive and Innovative — so why the axe?

by Barry Flynn



THE LAST edition of *The Friday Alternative* is being broadcast on the 31 October. The programme — a controversial weekly news and current affairs slot on Channel Four — has attracted a rare combination of critical acclaim and respectable ratings (it regularly added over 200,000 viewers to the audience it inherited from ITN's Channel Four News on Friday nights, at its peak attracting three quarters of a million).

The reasons for the removal of such a successful and original programme from next year's schedules can only be guessed at — because *The Friday Alternative*, for all its imperfections, would seem to typify the kind of 'distinctive', 'radical', and 'innovative' programming the 1980 Broadcasting Act called for. In place of a presenter, the programme uses a unique graphics system to 'link' items in the programme. It also uses a network of 250 people — who represent a rough cross-section of the population at large — to inform the programme's news-values, to generate story ideas, and to provide the kind of feed-back other news programmes only pay lip-service to.

We suspect that the reason *The Friday Alternative* is not having its commission renewed lies with the IBA. From the very beginning, we have maintained that their notions of 'due impartiality' and 'balance' only serve to reinforce an establishment consensus that is clearly at odds with popular opinion in the politically fragmented Britain of the 80s. Instead, we proposed that items in our programmes should, on occasion, be overtly partisan, and that any problems of 'balance' be remedied over our commission as a whole. Thus we have sometimes done items from a 'left-wing' perspective, and sometimes from a 'right-wing' one.

These notions have caused much (over-due) debate in the industry, and have been the source of some invigorating discussions inside Channel Four. But according to this year's Annual Report, the IBA have accepted our re-interpretation of the IBA Charter: "Channel Four takes the view — and the IBA accepts this — that political balance should be seen in terms of the output as a whole and over a period. "Why, then, are we being axed?"

We believe that the programme we showed on 7 January about the way British broadcasting allowed itself to be manipulated by the Government during the Falklands War annoyed too many 'important people' — including the IBA. Although the BBC and ITN

subsequently accused us of distorting the facts, we were able to provide satisfactory rebuttals to all their allegations, and the matter was never taken any further. There were, of course, a number of avenues open to them if they had still felt aggrieved — such as the Independent Broadcasting Complaints Commission.

Regardless of this, and regardless of the fact that the IBA never made any criticisms of the programme either at the time or since, or had any communication with those who produced it, they now state (again in this year's Annual Report) that: ". . . early editions, and in particular one about media coverage of the Falklands, fell short of what the Authority regards as normal professional journalistic standards and revealed

political bias" (this criticism obviously clearly contradicts the policy quoted above that the Authority would view questions of

'balance' over the 'output as a whole').

On the Falklands programme, as well as its commission, *The Friday Alternative* has been tried — and condemned — out of court. Other Channel Four current affairs programmes have suffered the same fate, notably *Broadside* and *State of the Nation*. Others are threatened. We think the demise of so many 'distinctive' and 'innovative' programmes should not go unnoticed. Any controversy they have caused surely only serves to demonstrate that they are doing their job! The authorities — the Channel Four Board and the IBA — should, at the very least, have to give reasons for their decisions. Channel Four is, after all, ultimately funded by public money. Shouldn't that public have a right to know where and why that money is spent?

Cable TV

In association with the WEA, the GLC is producing educational material on the Cabling of London.

These will take the form of a free broadsheet, and a printed education pack.

The broadsheet and pack will explain, in a clear and accessible way, the many issues raised by cabling, including:

- The effect on jobs in the telecoms and media industries, and also offices, and post and other services.
- The effect on the quality of television broadcasting and programming.
- The effect of electronic data transmission on the quality of people's lives at work and at home.
- The issues of control, regulation, access and privacy.

Tear off here

If you want to know more about this material or to use it when it is available, return this slip.

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 Please send me details of the educational pack on Cable.

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Intended use (public meeting/adult education class/
 union branch/Labour Party/other

*(Please delete as inapplicable)
 Return this coupon to: Popular Planning Unit, The Showroom,
 South Block, County Hall, LONDON SE1

CONGRESS DEBATES McCARTHY REPORT

PLANS TO RAISE the money for a new labour daily received the go-ahead from the TUC's influential Finance & General Purposes Committee on 22 August. By a one vote margin (6:5) the committee voted in favour of setting up a top level team of union leaders, to examine how the launch fund could be found.

Two days later the full General Council voted 23-13 in favour of putting this recommendation to the Trades Union Congress in Blackpool.

As reported in the last issue of *Free Press*, a TUC report by Lord McCarthy established the viability of a labour daily with a circulation of 300,000. The main findings and recommendations of the McCarthy Report are set out below:

as it should be. It is also evident that the treatment of industrial relations and political issues remains inadequate and biased in large parts of the press. In more general terms the so called 'popular' papers present a sensationalised and frivolous picture of events. There are also a rising number of complaints about a deterioration in journalistic standards in recent years. All these features constitute a strong case for attempting to establish a distinctive additional voice, in the form of a new and serious paper which supports the labour Movement in a not uncritical way.

There are those who have argued that the best way for the labour Movement to contribute to an

Estimates of Potential Circulation and Readership

Existing readership patterns change with considerable rapidity, suggesting that an acceptable entrant might well be able to establish itself in what is clearly a fluid market. It also seems that even established and successful papers, particularly those at the 'popular' end of the market, spend literally millions of pounds simply to maintain their circulation levels. This means that evidence of a potential market could not be taken to imply that, once captured, circulation was likely to be maintained without continued effort and cost.

The survey records likely reactions to a non-existent product, based on indications of its general content and approach and a limited number of specimen pages. As a basis for further investigation and detailed costing, a much more cautious estimate was required: a minimum likely sales figure, for which the evidence was much more substantial. This 'hard core' figure was calculated at 300,000 copies, providing a total readership of just under a million.

Running Costs and Revenue

The next task was to consider whether it would be 'feasible' to run a paper on the basis of this 'hard core' figure. To minimise capital cost McCarthy worked on the basis of printing being undertaken on a 'contract' basis — ie, by a commercial printer at a centre close to central London. In this way use could be made of the well established distribution system used by other national dailies. For reasons of efficiency and cost he assumed an editorial and advertising office in central London. The wage rates for staff in the employ of the paper were assumed to be those currently prevailing in national newspapers.

It was also essential to calculate an annual budget for promotion and advertising. In broad terms the group budgeted for £2m a year to be spent on marketing promotion and advertising. There would be a need for extra promotional help from the trade union and labour Movement.

It was then possible to calculate running costs for a 32 page paper with a 'hard core' circulation of 300,000. This was approximately £13m a year. The revenue to be derived from a sale of this size was also calculated, making allowance for necessary sales discounts. To this was added an appropriate sum for advertising revenue, assuming competitive rates and a 30/70 ratio for advertising and editorial space. The result was an income of just over £13m a year, producing a small annual 'profit' of about £360,000.

Of course, profits rose very considerably above this figure if the hard core circulation figure was exceeded. Thus a circulation of 400,000 produced an annual profit of £3.3m. If sales were assumed to reach 500,000 profits rose to some £6.4m a year.

On the assumption that the estimate of 'hard core' circulation is roughly right, together with the estimates of running costs and advertising revenue, it seems that a new national newspaper of the kind described could be run without incurring a working deficit.

improvement in the existing media does not involve a new national daily. The report considers a number of alternatives to this notion — notably a major initiative in the field of broadcasting, the purchase of an existing paper, a network of local papers, free papers financed by advertising, a lunch time paper and a Sunday paper. McCarthy decided that none of these options offered the prospect of a major voice in the national media for the same or similar cost. He also considered that most of them would be more difficult to establish and less likely to succeed. From this point he concentrated on the notion of a new national daily.

The Form and Content of the Paper

The paper should provide a 'full service' of news and features; that it should concentrate on accuracy and objectivity and avoid sensationalism, that it would be a progressive and radical paper, giving sympathetic but not uncritical support to the labour Movement and its objectives. It should be a tabloid and contain on average, 32 pages, priced 18p, a similar level to two of the existing tabloids (*The Mail* and *Express*).

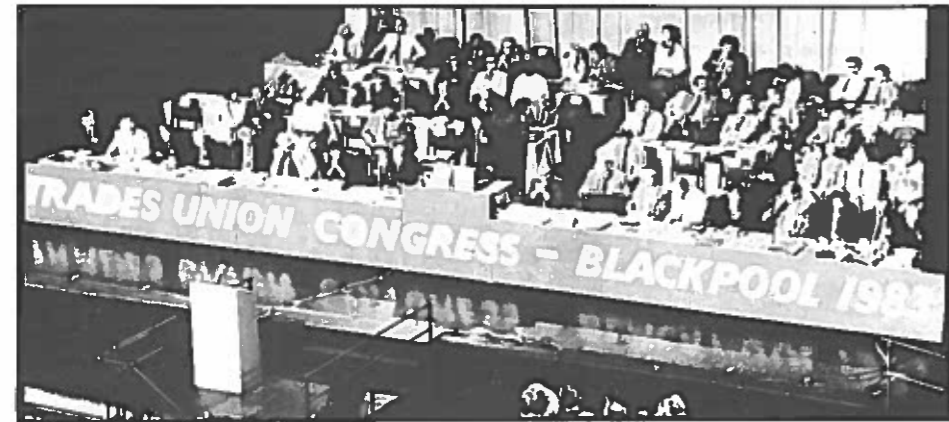


Photo: John Smith (IFL)

The Aims of the Report

Lord McCarthy was asked by the TUC to conduct a study on the feasibility of establishing a new daily newspaper which 'would reflect the aims and interests of the labour and trade union Movement.' The task was to 'assess the viability of such a project and the conditions necessary for its success in terms of capital requirements, establishment and running costs, editorial structure, potential readership, advertising revenue and ownership and proprietorial structure.'

The Case For A New Paper

There is clear evidence of imbalance in the existing media — especially the national press. This prevents the labour and trade union Movement's case being presented

Moreover, if and when the circulation expanded, considerable profits would accrue to its owners. This assessment is based on reactions to the concepts of the paper. At the end of the day the actual circulation secured would depend on the capacity of the editor, and colleagues, to produce an attractive and readable product that at least matches up to the national paper described.

But two related obstacles need to be overcome, before it can be assumed that the project as a whole is feasible. First, it must be possible to raise the initial funds required to start and sustain such a paper. Second, funds of this size must be available on acceptable terms. It must be possible to devise viable arrangements for preserving the independence of the paper and its continued commitment to the aims and interests of the labour and trade union Movement.

Raising the Initial Funds

Before an actual paper can be run on a regular basis certain initial funds are required to meet three sorts of advance expenditure: start up costs, launch costs and advance running costs. Minimum start up costs, relying on rental rather than purchase, are estimated at just under £2m. Launch costs mainly required for pre-publication advertising and related promotional activity; would be a relatively large sum in excess of £1m. Advance running costs are payments which have to be made in advance of receipts from sales and advertising, and would be just under £3½m.

The initial funds required to establish a new national daily are in the region of £6.7m. How can this sum be raised, and in what form?

It may be argued that the answer is loan capital to be repaid out of profits. The problem is that it is difficult to calculate in advance the length of time that would be required to repay it. If it turned out to be substantial there would also be a need to repay substantial interest charges. There is limited equipment and no assets of a conventional kind which would serve as collateral for such a loan. At least some of the funds required might more suitably take the form of equity stock.

Ownership, Management and Editorial

After considering various ways of safeguarding editorial independence and ensuring that the paper continued to reflect the aims and interest of the trade union and labour Movement, the concept of a trust was put forward with a board of trustees including the general secretaries of the TUC and the Labour Party. There would be other independent trustees as well as the editor, managing director and staff representatives on the board of trustees.

The terms of the trust would describe the character of the paper, commit it to be run on a sound financial basis, enshrine the principle

of the editor's independence and stipulate that changes in editor, or in the terms of the trust, could not be undertaken without the consent of the General Secretaries of the TUC and the Labour Party. They would also recognise the principle of the 'right of reply'.

Given the aims of the paper it would clearly be preferable if the initial funds required could all be found within the confines of the labour Movement. In this case it might be possible to think in terms of loans rather than equity capital. If this did not prove to be possible the sponsors of the paper would have to decide whether they wished to explore the possibility of outside funding, if need be via the issue of equity capital. If this was the case there would probably be a need to modify the concept of the trust. The providers of the equity might demand seats on the Board of Trustees, or even a dominant influence. In these circumstances it would become increasingly important to ensure there were guarantees through the terms of the trust of a commitment to the labour Movement and mechanisms to guarantee the position of the editor.

McCarthy does not claim to have investigated the 'market' for capital as he has studied the market for the product. Thus while the study indicates that it might well be possible to run a viable new national paper committed to the aims and interests of the labour Movement, it does not presume to say whether or not there would be initial funds available to undertake such a project, or on what terms.

This is not a matter to be decided by surveys or detailed estimates of costing. It is a matter for delicate exploration and investigation by suitably authorised people who can claim to speak on behalf of the trade union and labour Movement. And it can only really be tackled after there has been convincing evidence of a high level of commitment to the notion of a new national daily.

The Next Steps

The report and its conclusions are matters for the TUC — in the first instance for its Media Working Group and General Council. If they wish to follow up the ideas it contains their first step must surely be to assess the level of commitment to the notion of a new national daily within the Movement at the present time. McCarthy has shown that there are good grounds for believing that such a paper, once established, might hold its own and even prosper. The next question that will arise is whether it can be given a chance to succeed.

This question is likely to turn on the availability of funding and the terms on which it can be attained. But this is a complex subject requiring a variety of talents and a readiness to persevere.

However, given a sufficient degree of commitment in the Movement as a whole, a Labour Newspaper Trust should be established without delay.



TWO new pamphlets from the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom

Are you in the picture?

If you aren't, then you should read this introduction to the way television works. It looks at the way television portrays working people, women, black people and issues like nuclear arms and Northern Ireland. It also summarises the organisation of the major TV stations.

Price 50p

Rejoice — The Media and the Falklands by Susan Greenberg & Graham Smith

The media coverage of the Falklands war was often sensational, distorted and inaccurate. Government manipulation of the media was even greater than normal and news was noticeable as not necessarily being the truth. In this booklet, the authors chronicle the media coverage of the war, and highlight just how jingoistic they were.

Price 80p

Both publications are available from the Campaign for £1.00
9 Poland Street, London W1.

Please send me a copy of Rejoice! and Are you in the picture. I enclose a cheque/postal order for £1.00.

NAME

ADDRESS

PRESS RADIO and TELEVISION — An Introduction

This new book will be published by the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom in October. It is designed as a guide to the media and the issues surrounding it. The book is concise, very informative and interesting and will be valuable for those who want an overview of the media and for teachers and educationalists.

The four sections are: **PRESS:** ownership, news creation, advertising, legal constraints and distribution. **TELEVISION:** structure of the BBC/IBA, programming and control. **RADIO:** structure, content and future strategy. **FUTURES:** printing and electronic publishing and video cable satellites. Appendices include the Unions and the Media and the Media Unions.

The book is published at £1.80 and will be available direct from the CPBF at £1.50 post free. So order now:

Please send _____ copies of Press Radio and Television — An

Introduction at £1.50. I enclose cheque/postal order for _____

Name

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send to CPBF, 9 Poland Street, London, W1 3DG.

REVIEWS

Capital — Local Radio and private profit Local Radio Workshop Comedia £3.95

How to win the franchise and influence people Walter Butler Visionwise Ltd £12.00

With the London ILR station franchises being re-awarded next year, and other new contracts in the offing, the time is right to broadcasting-conscious groups to arm themselves well.

Much has been said about the role of ILR over the last 10 years, and I recall questioning at their birth company's approaches on many occasions. Little has changed though, despite the campaigning efforts of fellow journalists, and organisations like the CPBF and the Local Radio Workshop.

Yet there is so much to question: the accountability of these stations is zero. They may not immediately appear as bad as the average tabloid, but balance, redress or right of reply just isn't available. How many times have you heard items like "black youths vandalise property" or "pretty blonde housewife raped" and seethed with rage?

Access programmes — a popular and up and coming 'phenomenon' of the seventies is now a myth and superseded by attacks from programming staff as unprofessional. The 'cheap' programme output created by phone-ins allowed some say, but how many stations operate the system of rining you back if you have the 'right' question? In any case, all too often we are subjected

to an arrogant egotistical presenter whose own bigoted views have the final say.

Capital — Local radio and private profit questions heavily the role of the station and make no bones about its commerciality or banalness. It highlights Capital's horrifying ability to change even the most gloomy happenings and disasters into 'showbiz' presentations. It appears to have no concept of the very real dilemmas that its listeners have. Invitations to take advantage of the 'Monday morning let-off-steam scream' is not only trite but trivialises reality.

Helpline and Jobfinder 'off-air promotions' are actually terrific concepts but instead of being used to really help the community, they are in reality glossy charades which

could be used so much better. Even Revision line or consumer help is done more with public relations in mind than anything else.

The Local Radio Workshop's report is nothing if not an excellent piece of research into the performance of Capital — through all its facets of programming, advertising and public relations. It undoubtedly highlights the failures of a radio system of this nature. But what is more crucial is the fact of whether ILR is the right concept for a really local and listener orientated station. I question whether 'IBA-regulated' commercial stations can be as impartial and community-conscious as we require. Non profit-making trusts can be the only real approaches.

However, LRW concluded their report by making proposals that the IBA oblige the new contractor to allow a minimum of 1/2 hour per month of independent programming, and include musical, dramatic and artistic activities of interest to Londoners during peak time. It also wants more broadcasters producing better localised features and more diversified output for the different communities. Abolition of sexist language is requested, as is positive discrimination for women and ethnic minorities when making appointments.

In *How to win the franchise and influence people*, Walter Butler has produced a step by step guide to making an application for an ILR station. He has reproduced the standard IBA questionnaire and given model answers for consumption. Some of the answers lack conviction and real local consideration.

In some respect, some of Butler's model answers are as loose and ambiguous as Capital Radio submission, so heavily criticised by the Local Radio Workshop. One item suggests that a sports programme should also contain 'an opportunity to take advantage of a light-hearted approach to educating the ladies on the finer points of various sports'; quite apart from the average consumer tips the average lady requires. He also suggests a diet of Mills and Boonish-type short stories and recipes in one example, and — horror of horrors — a woman's hour feet-up programme.

If Mr Butler could have curbed his patronising examples of programming styles and contents, then it would be a highly recommendable manual. The book is comprehensive — it leaves no stone unturned, but does make the assumption that the likely readers are lacking in any knowledge or indeed gumption of any description. But for all that, there are some valuable chapters on the financial aspects of setting up a station and studios, staffing and training.

Walter Butler is in fact principal lecturer in the department of Communication Arts and Design at Manchester Poly, which may account for the reason his manual is a little bit like Key Notes for cracking exams.

Nik Oakley

'REJOICE!' — reprint by Mike Power

Our two pamphlets: *Rejoice! — Media Freedom and the Falklands* and *Are you in the Picture*, produced in June have sold fast. *Rejoice!* is reprinting as orders outstripped stocks in less than two months.

Both publications have proved very timely. One appearing on the first anniversary of the ending of the Falklands conflict, and the other, subtitled *An introduction to the way television works*, coming with the upheaval at Channel 4.

A large literature already exists dealing with the Falklands war including the role of the media. Nevertheless our pamphlet has been well received and reviewed. It is succinct and extremely well produced with expert use of graphics and photographs making it very attractive.

It looks at the serious threats to media freedom that have emerged in the wake of the Falklands experience. These include the MOD's proposals for accredited war correspondents under military control, the setting up of a group to consider censorship in times of tension and the Franks commissions acceptance of forms of news manipulation. The CPBF's concern at these disturbing developments are reflected through *Rejoice!*



Our concern with media freedom means nothing if we are not prepared to defend it at the most difficult and trying times. At moments of heightened tension when lives are at stake, political pressures are being exerted and ministerial censorship is applied as during the Falklands conflict, there is an ever greater need to demand independent and informed opinion and the right to argue and dissent. Without these crucial guarantees information and power become centralised and major decisions are taken — but not in front of the children.

Are you in the Picture has been produced by a group of broadcasters associated with the Campaign. It lays out some of the problems and contributes to "the debate about broadcasting which has barely begun".

We are beginning to develop the arguments against 'balance' as the essence of impartiality. Wads of evidence has been amassed to

prove how the BBC and IBA have claimed balance but practiced bias. This publication usefully indicates the examples and experiences, points out why and gives reminders on how to complain.

The current developments around Channel 4 include the fear of a steady move away from radical and innovative current affairs programming and the move towards a more commercially acceptable light entertainment medium. It is therefore essential to oppose the heavy hand of the IBA and to reawaken those voices who have in the past demanded changes in the media to defend the Channel 4 innovations. In that objective this pamphlet makes a useful contribution.

REGIONS

North East

MEDIA BIAS — How do we fight it, is the subject under discussion at a public meeting arranged by the CPBF Region and Durham Street Press.

A speaker from the Regional TUC Office will talk about the current initiatives in the form of the McCarthy Report in a Labour Daily, and the report on replacing the Press Council.

Malcolm Wright, CPBF's person in Darlington intends to take the Campaign's view and highlight current outside pressures, and include topics like the Right of Reply campaign.

The third speaker will come from Durham Street Press, the local radical alternative Press.

The meeting, which will be held on Thursday 20 October at Durham Town Hall at 7.30 pm has the backing of the County Labour Party, who also assisted financially.

More ambitious still, are plans for a January conference in conjunction with Darlington Media Group; Social and Political Change through Media Work — A Regional Strategy? is the likely title.

Said Malcolm Wright, "We hope to get together activists from CPBF, media education (WEA, Durham Unit Varsity Adult Education Dept etc), community media resource centres and our radical film units (Amber, Trade and Swing Video) to look at a common approach to media."

"The CPBF input in a morning workshop will study what our members and new interested parties can do to monitor regional media (as opposed to national) and try to work out a strategy for the next twelve months to improve coverage in areas of traditional media bias."

"The afternoon will take up two important areas; media education which is vital for CPBF's expansion and use of film/video, which may lead to our being able to produce an educational video on the mass media for use in schools, TU weekend schools etc."

"The conference will also enable our members to meet and

mix with those working in community resource centres, the skills of which are important in our own publicity and also in encouraging alternative media."

Darlington Media Group has been given a grant of £500 from Northern Arts to research the photographic coverage of The Darlington by-election; and Malcolm Wright is currently involved in drafting a book on the image-making during that election.

LETTERS

Vive la difference

While on holiday in Yugoslavia I heard on the radio a morning news bulletin in English. This was, the announcer said, for the benefit of the English-speaking visitors to the country.

The contrast with the news as preferred by the BBC was interesting and illuminating, both in choice of stories and in approach.

(1) The first story was about the visit of the Swedish Prime Minister (ex-Prime Minister) Olaf Palme to Belgrade.

(2) A lot was given about the United Nations meeting on trade and development for the poor nations.

(3) The visit of the Spanish Socialist Prime Minister Philipo Gonzalez to Washington to meet President Reagan to discuss Spanish membership of NATO, international trade, etc. Central America featured in this account.

(4) The opening of the big Peace Conference in Prague — 2,700

delegates, including Yugoslav participation.

(5) A very big demonstration in West Berlin against the revival of neo-Nazism. Here the inference was that it was a good thing and the demo admirable; and that the police acted with brutality. Reported that 18 were arrested and teargas used.

(6) The theft of £4,000,000 of jewellery in the West End of London considered in the opinion of Scotland Yard to have been by professionals.

A weather and traffic report ended the broadcast, including mention of a bicycle race near Sarajevo so motorists would be delayed.

There was a dignified and rational presentation of all the items.

Chris Rubinstein
Christchurch
Dorset

COMING EVENTS

CPBF — National Committee Meeting. Tuesday 27 September 6.30pm, NALGO, Mabledon Place London, WC1.

CPBF — North East Region. Public Meeting, Media Bias — How do we fight it? Thursday 20 October 7.30pm, Durham Town Hall.

CPBF — National Committee Meeting. Tuesday 25 October 6.30pm, NALGO, Mabledon Place London, WC1.

Jonathan Hammond, 1942-83
Ex-President, NUJ
Labour Movement Memorial Meeting
Wednesday 28 September, 8pm
Bishop Creighton House, Lillie Road,
Fulham, London SW6

Take a step towards press freedom — by distributing Free Press

THE Campaign for press and Broadcasting Freedom's *Free Press* is essential for all those who have had enough of media distortion. It provides information on how the right of reply can be demanded and won. It challenges the existing forms of media ownership and control.

Free Press is not short on ideas and analysis — about what lies behind media bias, and what can be done about the Press Council, how the monopolies which distribute the press can be challenged, the whys and wherefores of a labour daily, and why we have to put an end to official secrecy.

The action is there, too! *Free Press* is helping to build the Campaign, and it reports on the local and national activities which are letting thousands of people know that they can take on the media moguls and win.

Order your copies now!

Circulation of *Free Press* is approaching 10,000. You can help

to make it much more than that by placing an order for copies of the bulletin to distribute yourself or by your organisation. It is published six times a year, with a cover price of only 20p. Multiple orders are supplied at 10p a copy. By filling in the form below you will be helping others to take a step towards press freedom...

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NEWS OUTSIDE BROADCAST



"... CAMERA TWO, CLOSE UP ON THE BLOOD, CUT TO FLYING PICKETS, CAMERA FOUR, DISGUSTED STRIKERS' WIVES. CUT TO INTERVIEW WITH CHIEF CONSTABLE, ROLL THE COMMENTARY, "HOW MUCH MORE CAN PUBLIC STAND?..."



**NOW
OUT...**

PEOPLE AGAINST THE PRESS

By Geoffrey Robertson

Report of an independent enquiry into the Press Council, initiated by the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom.

If you have ever felt like complaining to the Press Council about something you have read in the papers, this book is essential reading. It gives a thorough analysis of the workings of the Press Council — and devastating evidence of dissatisfaction with the Council's performance and procedures.

SPECIAL OFFER — HALF PRICE TO CPBF MEMBERS

The CPBF set up the independent enquiry which produced this report and we are committed to securing the widest possible debate of its findings. We have negotiated with the publishers, Quartet Books, for CPBF members to obtain copies at only £3.95, including postage (full price is £7.95).

To CPBF, 9 Poland Street, London W1

I am a member of the CPBF. Please send me
copies of 'People Against the Press'. I enclose
£.....

Name

Address

.....

.....

Labour Sunday Proposal

A REPORT TO be discussed at the CPBF committee's September meeting suggests that consideration should be given to the launch of a Sunday rather than daily paper.

The report, prepared by committee member Geoffrey Sheridan, appraised the McCarthy proposals, suggesting that there should be a broad financial base for a labour movement paper, so that representation on a management board could reach beyond large shareholders.

From Page 1

the *Sun* positions fatally exposed, the men realised. The whole battle plan would need to be revised. Incursions into such unfamiliar territory would almost certainly give the enemy *Mirror* forces a tactical advantage.

The rebel leaders offered inducements to their reluctant rank and file. The NUJ chapel would back individuals who refused to obey orders on the grounds that they were against the code of conduct, they proposed.

But the weakness of this ploy was that members of the *Sun* battalion, despite their great fighting qualities, are not noted for independence of mind.

On the contrary, eye-witnesses to past engagements have reported men scrambling over one another as they crawled on hands and knees up the trenches to cover the rear positions of Colonel MacKenzie and supreme commander General 'Aussie' Murdoch.

After about 40 minutes the meeting did, however, agree to one characteristically cheeky and flamboyant gesture. They would actually pin up on the notice-boards in the *Sun* offices copies of the Code of Conduct.

And should any eccentric characters in the lower ranks refuse orders in accordance with it they would be defended, it was agreed — though observers regard the possibility as fairly remote.

These latest incidents come after a series of violent clashes along Fleet Street's front line. Positions on either side are heavily manned. New equipment and weaponry which would reduce reliance on the big infantry battalions has been brought in only slowly.

Back in October 1982 the *Sun* high command were outraged when they found that the *Mirror* had, as they believed, captured Sergeant McKay's widow and were interviewing her. Tension still remained high when Mrs McKay said she had actually chosen to talk to the *Mirror* officers. Furthermore, she did not want any money and the *Mirror* did not pay her any.

This original and highly unorthodox manoeuvre, virtually unknown in the annals of Fleet Street military history, threw the

opposing *Sun* forces into complete confusion.

It was at this critical point in the conflict that the courageous Colonel MacKenzie risked his life and career and, almost single-handed, turned the tide of the battle. With a small group of hand-picked men and volunteers 'K' led a charge through the minefield.

Quickly a fake 'interview' with Mrs McKay was cobbled together. They described her, 'hugging her children at their home in Rotherham, Yorkshire'.

She "fought back her tears last night," they wrote, "and said: 'I'm so proud of Ian. His name will remain a legend in the history books forever.'" All that was needed to complete the operation was to add the sub-heading 'World Exclusive' and start the presses rolling. Discipline and morale were restored.

As the grey dawn broke the following morning, 22nd October 1982, the expected counter-attack began. The *Mirror's* artillery opened up a heavy barrage.

Mrs McKay was not even in Rotherham at the time of the 'interview', they fired back. And, even more damagingly, "According to *Sun* journalists, some of the 'quotes' came from secretaries in The *Sun* office who were asked how they would feel if their husbands had died winning the VC."

Then, in a strange interlude in the battle, a woman civilian was seen to intervene. A Ms Caroline Metcalfe read the conflicting statements and complained to the Press Council. This is a supposed peace-keeping force which is largely discredited. It is ineffectual, and in the pay of the newspaper owners.

On this occasion, however, the Press Council performed exceptionally. It brought into action its new 'Fast Track' caterpillar vehicle for dealing with complaints of factual inaccuracy.

In a brilliant rearguard action this delayed the complaint for 10 months.

But eventually even the Press Council was forced to accept the inevitable. The interview had indeed been cobbled together they agreed. It had never actually taken place. It was a deplorable deception.

They could have discovered the deception ten months previously by simply picking up the phone and asking Mrs McKay "Was it true?"

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