

MOSS EVANS SPEAKS OUT FOR A NEW LABOUR DAILY

I'VE LOST COUNT of the number of trade unionists and Labour Party members who, over the years, have complained about the rotten press that we receive. Usually they finish up by asking: "Why don't we set up our own paper?"

Time after time I have also heard journalists and editors respond to complaints about the way they deal with trade union affairs by saying: "Well, if you don't like what we do why don't you start your own paper?"

No one seems to doubt that a Labour movement paper is needed. Even the last Royal Commission on the Press said so and since then the case for a new paper has been reinforced no end.

From the so-called winter of discontent to the recent general election we have experienced four long years of bias, trivialisation and in some cases harassment from the moguls of Fleet Street. We know it will continue unabated. We do not complain just because the political imbalance of our newspapers is a threat to the workings of our democracy — although it is.

We complain because the standards of British newspaper journalism, particularly the popular variety, seem to have fallen to such deplorable levels, showing a contempt for the intelligence of the public and a failure of both will and ability to fulfil the true role

of a newspaper in a modern society — to entertain, to inform and to scrutinise.

The desirability of a new national newspaper to help redress the political imbalance of the press and to add greatly to its quality of performance and content is hardly in dispute.

Press freedom is as vital to us as it is to your campaign, says the general secretary of the TGWU

The question which until recently had not been answered is: can it be done?

I have heard it said that it would cost a fortune to start a new paper; nobody would read it; and it would fold within a month. I have also heard people say, with equal conviction, that it would cost next to nothing; would sell millions; and we would drive our competitors to the wall.

Now, at last, we have the answer to both the sceptics and the dreamers.

Earlier this year Lord McCarthy presented the TUC with the result of a two year examination of the

feasibility of setting up a new Labour movement newspaper.

Lord McCarthy has a justified reputation as a realist. He was assisted by a group of hard-nosed, hard-headed men who have spent virtually the whole of their working lives in newspapers, and this shows through in the report. The Group which advised Lord McCarthy was impressive: it consisted of Geoffrey Goodman, Assistant Editor and Industrial Editor of the *Daily*

Mirror; Percy Roberts, former Chairman of Mirror Group Newspapers; Bill McClelland who knows as much as anyone about the market research side of the business; and John Dixey who as Production Director of the *Guardian* was able to provide expert knowledge on the facts and figures of running and producing a national newspaper.

Lord McCarthy asked a professional market research organisation to conduct a survey as part of the study. The results, together with the work of the experts, showed that, provided the trade unions movement is prepared to dig into its pockets, we could indeed have



photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

Moss Evans — speaking out in favour of a Labour Daily

a newspaper for the Labour movement with a real chance of success.

What sort of paper would it be?

It would be national daily, a similar size to the *Sun*, *Daily Mirror* and the *Daily Star*. It might look a bit more like the *Daily Express* or *Daily Mail* than the other tabloid newspapers, but the content would be radically different. The news coverage, particularly coverage of the trade union movement, would be fairer and more accurate.

There would be sports coverage, entertainment and crosswords as in the other papers but sensationalism, gimmicks and sexual exploitation would be out.

It might not be the sort of paper that would suit everyone. We would not expect *Sun* readers to flock to the new paper in their millions. But we would appeal to those who want more balanced news than they get in their present paper and who are sick of the anti-union, anti-Labour line peddled in most of the papers.

The survey showed that, while we would not leap to the top of the

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Sunday Mirror DAILY Mirror

Change for the worse in Fleet St.

THE NEXT 12 months are likely to bring immense changes in the British newspaper industry — the long-term implications of which can only be guessed at. Underlying these changes, indeed the very reason for them, is money. Money in huge quantities.

The source of this new found wealth is at 85 Fleet Street, which

is the head office of Reuters. The international news agency, set up by an emigre German in 1851, has suddenly become profitable on a vast scale — thanks to its business and financial information service. Over the past decade this has grown from being a sideline to the main news gathering operation to

become the dominant part of the business.

Last year the agency chalked up £30 million profit. This year it is likely to be almost double.

Profits on such a scale make newspaper proprietors' eyes glisten and their palms sweaty. Greed — pure, unalloyed greed — takes over. Which is where Lords Rothermere

and Mathews and others enter the scene.

Reuters is a trust, the shares in which are owned by the members of the Newspaper Publishers' Association, the Newspaper Society and their opposite numbers in Australia and New Zealand. The trust was set up during the war, the proprietors nobly accepting responsibility for the agency rather than see it nationalised. Now, 40 years on and with the prospect of cashing in on Reuters' profits, the trustees are planning to turn the news agency into a public company.

Reuters is said to be worth between £1,000m and £1,500m on the stock-market because of the prospect of endless bonanza profits.

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Contempt Act used to protect famous

Ban on Heath's name in court sex case

FEARS THAT THE Contempt of Court Act (1981) would be used to protect the rich and the famous from embarrassment were well-founded. Judge Miskin, hearing a rape case at the Old Bailey, came up with a novel — and worrying — extension of the law on October 13 when he ordered that the name of Edward Heath MP, disclosed during cross examination, should not be published.

The judge made his order under Sections 4(2) and 11 of the Act. Section 4(2) says that where there is a "substantial risk" of prejudice to the administration of justice an order may be made postponing publication of all or part of the proceedings. Section 11 merely provides a statutory backing for the common law provision that in certain clearly defined cases of national security and blackmail, a person's name might be withheld. Section 11, however, would not allow a judge to extend common law.

In this case, the defendant, who is unnamed in order to protect the identity of the woman, made allegations concerning Mr Edward Heath during lengthy cross-examination by prosecuting counsel. Allegations were also made against a senior police officer by the accused. No material evidence was submitted at the time to support the allegations.

For a century and more, journalists in Britain have been able to report anything said in open court provided their reports have been fair. Innocent third parties named in proceedings have had no redress, something which has undoubtedly worried some lawyers and journalists — as well as those who have been wrongly traduced.

Occasionally, however, allegations against third parties have led to the expose of other wrongdoing and further charges.

In this case, Judge Miskin imposed a temporary order within a few minutes of Mr Heath's name being mentioned. The following day he issued a formal order prohibiting publication of Mr Heath's name — and that of a police officer — indefinitely.

Although journalists and executives throughout Fleet Street were aware of the identify of the MP within a few days, no newspaper was willing to publish his name.

by Jacob Ecclestone

nor even to go into court to challenge the order.

Once again, it was left to the National Union of Journalists to take up the cudgels on behalf of the public's right to know. The union's general purpose committee instructed Deputy General Secretary, Jacob Ecclestone, to take legal advice, and within three days Geoffrey Robertson was being instructed to challenge the prohibition order.

Since, by convention, only the Court of Appeal can review decisions by a high court judge, it was decided to wait until the rape trial was completed before seeking to have the order lifted by Judge Miskin himself. Then, on October 20, just a week after he had imposed it, Judge Miskin discharged the jury and ordered a re-trial.

Last autumn, in a practice direction which lays down the ground rules to be followed when

orders under sections 4(2) and 11 are issued, the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Lane, made it clear that orders had to be in writing and that they could not be of indefinite duration.

By discharging the jury and ordering a fresh trial under a different judge, Judge Miskin seems to have left hanging the question of the prohibition orders. Under section 4(2) such orders can be made when "proceedings are pending or imminent", which is certainly the case here, but there are no rules on whether an order made by one judge is binding on another.

The most extensive judgment on how the Act should be implemented was delivered almost two years ago by Lord Denning when the NUJ challenged the very first order under the Act in the Court of Appeal. Lord Denning made it clear that the Act was not to be used to save famous men from embarrassment, and that journalists could not be held in contempt for breaching an order under section 4(2) unless in so doing they had prejudiced the administration of justice.

In the event, Edward Heath issued a statement claiming that although allegations were made against him in court, he was not involved.

What is certain is that Judge Miskin's interpretation of the Contempt of Court Act is a disturbing extension of powers which are already being abused — as the Attorney General has admitted — and that unless the prohibition order is successfully challenged, justice in Britain will rapidly become even more remote and hidden from the public eye. Therein lies the danger.

Mirror's brand of 'support' as it is. Nonetheless, if the Mirror goes the way of the Sun, Express, Mail etc., the Labour Party will find the next general election even harder to fight. The Mirror's commitment to socialism has, in recent years, worn a bit thin, but it was important politically.

With Fleet Street — and Newspaper Society — managements scrambling to get their hands on the golden eggs being laid by Reuters, the next few months are likely to bring about the biggest upheaval in newspaper publishing for many years. The economic, industrial and political consequences can only be guessed at, though it is a fair bet that press freedom will not benefit.

The CPBF's first aim — to challenge the myth that only private ownership provides genuine freedom, diversity or access — is as relevant as ever.

MOSS EVANS ON LABOUR DAILY PLAN

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circulation table, we could sell more papers than some of the more serious papers do today. And most important of all, the figures show that with 300,000 sales we could cover our running costs, and if a higher circulation was achieved a healthy profit could be made.

So how do we make a start? Lord McCarthy estimates we would need about £6.7 million to set up the project.

This would pay for the cost of getting it going, pay the wages and other bills in the period before income from sales and advertising came in, and pay for the advertising campaign needed to launch the paper. After that, with good judgement and good management, we should be on our way. The figures have been questioned by some of our opponents, and by some of our friends. All I would say to them is that these are the best figures currently available. And you can be sure that before the first edition is produced, much more work would need to be done to ensure the product and price are right.

The question I cannot answer is: will the trade union and Labour movement be willing to pay that much for a paper? On the one hand it is a lot of money. The TUC does not have that sort of money. Nor do most unions. I am well aware of the financial difficulties facing unions which have lost membership as unemployment has soared. But on the other hand we are talking in terms of well under £1 per trade unionist. And that is not a very big price to turn a dream into reality.

We are approaching this on a step by step basis. Last month our congress decided to take the next step. We have had the feasibility study. Now we must find out if the money is available.

A small committee of TUC general council members will be established shortly with the specific remit of examining this question. They will have to satisfy themselves and the general council that the finance is available, preferably from within the movement, but if we need to go outside we see no fundamental objections to that. Until we are all clear that sound financial backing is available it would be wrong to press ahead and we will not be led down that path.

But wherever the money comes from you can be sure that in this paper it will not be the money that does the talking. We do not want and do not need another paper where the financial backers determine day to day policy.

It's just not sporting

BOXING WRITERS FACE BAR ON REPORTING

SPORTS JOURNALISTS DO not often find themselves in the front line of the press freedom campaign; reporting on Spurs or Seb Coe is not usually fraught with accusations of bias, and rarely do our sporting heroes want for a right of reply.

Over the past few weeks, however, boxing writers and broadcasters have been faced with a simple choice: do they, as a matter of principle, refuse to cover fights staged by Britain's top boxing promoter, Mike Barrett, or do they allow him to censor what they write and say. Sadly, most of those who cover the "noble art" have not yet covered themselves in glory.

Back in September, Nic Pitt, The Sunday Times boxing correspondent, was refused a press ticket for the Magri-Cedeno world title fight at Wembley on the orders of Barrett. The reason given was that Pitt had not previewed the fight.

This was not wholly convincing, however, since other Sunday papers had also failed to carry previews and they were not banned. Perhaps the real reason was that Pitt is anything but a lickspittle, and his comments on the less savoury aspects of professional boxing may have been too near the knuckle for Barrett and his associates, Mickey Duff and Harry Levene.

At all events, Pitt kept good



Nic Pitt — banned by promoter Barrett

company because Harry Mullan, editor of *Boxing News* was also banned. Mullan's offence to the trio who control British boxing was to allow a rival young promoter to advertise in his influential magazine. Barrett was not amused by the prospect of competition. He retaliated by withdrawing all press facilities from *Boxing News*. For a small trade magazine this was a serious reprisal. It meant, for example, that *Boxing News* was unable to cover a British championship fight for the first time in 75 years.

The National Union of Journalists has urged all national newspaper chapels and broadcasters to resist this blatant censorship by refusing to handle any material concerning Barrett's promotions. The NUJ is unlikely to let the matter drop, however, and deputy general secretary, Jacob Ecclestone, said he intended to raise it at the next meeting of the National Executive. A formal instruction to members to 'black' all copy and pictures on Barrett promotions until the ban on Pitt and Mullan is lifted is a distinct possibility.

Freedom we can do without

By John Jennings, CPBF secretary

HOW about this for a statement of democratic and libertarian sentiments? "Pinochet's Chile has been the scene of one of the most interesting economic and constitutional experiments in the world today."

Or this? "Pinochet . . . is a statesman on the model of General Franco."

Their relevance to the CPBF may not be immediately obvious, but relevant they unfortunately are. And not simply because of both generals' robust and no-nonsense approach to the media (censorship for a start — beatings up, torture and murder if people still won't keep quiet).

For several months we in the CPBF have been engaged in an intensive verbal and organisational contest with the right-wing Freedom Association. The two quotes above come from an article in the latest (October 1983) issue of their newspaper *The Free Nation*.

They are part of an article by one of their regular contributors

Brian Crozier, printed by the Freedom Association without dissent — indeed with obvious approbation.

I for one do not relish the thought of a philosophical discussion about the freedom of the press with members of General Pinochet's torture squads — nor for that matter with their British apologists either.

But the Freedom Association have decided that we are 'extremists'! And they have singled us out for special attention. The particular issue recently has been our application to the Greater London Council for a grant (reported elsewhere in this issue).

Earlier this year an early day motion was put down in the House of Commons in support of the Freedom Association's concerted campaign to block this grant application.

What is interesting, however, is the person who chose, or was chosen, to be their Parliamentary spokesperson — the well-known anti-immigration MP for Billericay

Mr Harvey Proctor.

Mr Proctor, who moved the motion on immigration at the recent Conservative Party conference, is a close associate of Lady Jane Birdwood and other extreme right-wingers.

He was named frequently in the Young Conservatives' controversial report on right-wing infiltration into the Conservative Party. Until 1975 he was banned from the official list of approved Conservative candidates.

These are the kind of people who we in the CPBF have unfortunately become entangled. The Freedom Association admit they have been 'monitoring' our mailings and sending people to take shorthand notes at our meetings.

That's fine. We have nothing to hide. We are an open, non-party organisation which welcomes into membership anyone who broadly supports our aims. We campaign publicly in any case.

In one sense the amount of time and effort devoted by the Freedom Association to trying to obstruct and hinder our work is a tribute to the growing effectiveness of the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom.

But we ask our friends to take note, and to back us up in this struggle. More money, and more members, are always needed.

We also suggest that CPBF members might like to do a bit of 'monitoring' in turn. Keep an eye on any local Freedom Association activities. Keep us informed of speeches made, meetings attended, by the Harvey Proctors, the Brian Croziers, and their less-well-known hangers-on.

We are keeping a file on them also — it is one way to defend ourselves against their scurrilous

attacks. Send whatever information you have to John Jennings, either at 9 Poland Street, London W1, or 274 London Road, Hadleigh, Essex SS7 2DE.

But one word of warning. Don't call them racists or fascists. They are sensitive souls and get very upset — they may even sue you.

Let's just say the Freedom Association seems to attract people who may well think that Hitler's gas chambers were an interesting experiment in population control.

Press on in Absentia

BRIGHTON CND'S LABOUR Conference fringe meeting intended giving delegates and Peace campaigners a chance to 'meet the press'.

In the event they clashed with a *Tribune* rally and the only speaker who turned up was Mike Power from the CPBF.

Hazel Waddup of the local CND opened the meeting. She told the audience of 30 that all journalists should not be regarded as a monolithic opposition. "We must make greater efforts to get closer to them and influence their work" she said.

In the absence of any journalists Mike Power pointed out the pressures under which they work. Although much of what appears in the Press does reflect the value judgments of reporters, a great deal is also subbed into the political mould of the paper and many journalists simply self-censor.

The key job for us he said "is to build an effective movement for the Right of Reply and thereby apply greater pressure to gain genuine accountability of the Press."

MIRROR GROUP

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Even allowing for the lower figure, Express Newspapers' shareholding in Mirror Group Newspapers would be worth £120-million on the open market. Rothermere's *Daily Mail* group has a similar stake, with Murdoch on about £90m and Mirror Group Newspapers on £80m.

It is this £80m windfall which Reed International, the Mirror's parent company, has its beady eye on. If Reuter shares are publicly quoted, the value of Reed shares will jump accordingly. When that happens, it will become more profit-

able for Reed to sell their controlling interest in Mirror Group Newspapers than to hang on to it.

When Reed pulls out, of course, there is no knowing who will step in. What is certain, however, is that assurances and protestations by Reed management that the *Daily Mirror's* traditional support for the labour movement will be maintained is nonsense. The Stock Exchange is no respecter of such empty promises.

Many of those inside the labour movement do not think much of the

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Labour Conference over- turns NEC on media issues

CHEERS AND APPLAUSE followed the Labour Party conference decision to carry two motions on the media against the advice of the national executive.

A new daily newspaper committed to socialist principles was urgently needed, they declared. And they instructed the NEC to begin discussions with the TUC on the question and to bring back complete proposals to next year's conference.

Another motion listed a series of commitments on the mass media, including reform of the Press Council, the right of reply, support for journalist/printworker co-operatives in the national papers, a national media enterprise agency and an independent press authority. It seemed that delegates put considerable importance on the issues in the wake of the general election defeat and were not prepared to be fobbed off with vague promises and generalisations from the platform.

"We have to have a paper for working people to lift to a higher standard than page 3 of the *Sun*," said John Ingham of Leeds West, moving the composite motion on the Labour daily.

And later in the debate, Moss Evans, TGWU general secretary, challenged, "We've lost count of the many times we've heard we've got a rotten press — what are we going to do about it?"

The motion called on conference to recognise the urgent need to "found and fund a daily newspaper pledged to the presentation and defence of socialist principles and Labour Party policies. It believes such a newspaper will give working people the true political facts and challenge the lies and distortions of the Tory-run Fleet Street papers."

Journalists do a good job," said John Ingham. "They do a good job for the editors, who in turn do a good job for the millionaires who own these papers." It was no use just criticising the press. He believed it was up to delegates and the NEC to provide workers with an alternative — their own daily paper.

Seconding the motion, Marion Neville, Reigate Labour Party, said: "I'm always amazed that leaders of our party expect the Tory-owned national newspapers to put across socialist policies in a favourable light.

"I hardly think it's a pressing

concern to them to present socialism to our people, considering the scurrilous attacks on Tony Benn and Michael Foot when they were endeavouring to put Labour's manifesto to the country."

During the election campaign Labour's proposals for peace were deliberately sabotaged, she said. Voters were given the idea that



Alan Sapper ACTT

Labour wished to leave the country undefended.

"In actual fact, what we were and are asking for is unilateral nuclear disarmament. If we had our own daily newspaper, then the task of getting across the message of peace and socialism would be infinitely easier," she argued.

Moss Evans of the TGWU backed the call for a Labour daily paper. "We've accused journalists, editors and proprietors of newspapers that they are biased against the labour movement," he said. "We can complain from now until Christmas, but we won't change them. This is why we need a Labour daily newspaper."

With the publication of the McCarthy Report the argument about whether or not we needed one had been overcome, said Mr Evans. The next question was how to get it launched.

"Yes, we need the money. Bill McCarthy said £6.7 million. Many unions, with declining membership could not afford it. But there are still 10 million trade unionists.

"There are the 8 million who voted labour and there is the wider trade union movement. The Co-op, the labour clubs, the constituency parties and the trade unions themselves. If we all mucked in together we could get the money," he said.

"The TUC has set up a committee, not to debate whether we need a newspaper, but to try and find the practical means of putting it on the road.

"Now I hope that some of the pessimists among us who have found reasons to prevent this going ahead, will have another think

about this, and genuinely support resolution 43. I hope we can get the money. I believe we can," said Mr Evans.

Moving another motion on the media, Greg Campbell, Selly Oak, said it was time to take a constructive approach. The resolution recognised the need for the Labour Party to develop a coherent policy towards the mass media as a whole, to ensure the fair reporting and representation of all views.

Whether or not a mass-circulation daily is established, we should also look at setting up a network of local papers around the country, said Mr Campbell. This would have a better chance of breaking into the market, would be far cheaper and easier to run.

"Let us also develop clear policies for the structure of the existing media. Take the Press Council for a start — a useless and ineffective body — 95 per cent of the time it acts as just another voice of the establishment. The NUJ was absolutely right to withdraw from it."

While the clauses in the resolution did not represent a fully-detailed programme for the media, said Mr Campbell, a coherent policy was needed. He asked the NEC to take them as guidelines, and to come back with a clear strategy.

A third resolution on the media re-affirmed conference's commitment to change the structure, control of, and access to the mass media. It called on all sections of the Labour Party to oppose current Conservative plans to introduce a cable network in the UK.

These plans made little or no provision for public service broadcasting or use, said the motion. They lacked essential controls or safeguards, such as the establishment of a cable authority with regulatory powers equivalent to the Independent Broadcasting Authority, requirements on programme standards equivalent to those in public service broadcasting and a maximum 14 per cent quota of foreign programme material.

Seconding the resolution, Alan Sapper, ACTT, said that the Government was already committed to the introduction of cable television by 12 pilot schemes — before legislation.

By the time legislation was on the parliamentary timetable, a precedent would have been established which would be almost impossible to overturn.

"The main precedent is that this new system will be unregulated," said Mr Sapper. That means that it will not have any guaranteed quota of British material, which the BBC and ITV have, and therefore it will be able to utilise cheaply bought material, mainly from America, which will undermine and destabilise the whole idea of public service broadcasting in this country."

"We did not have the best programming in the world for nothing, he said. "We have good programming because of regulation, and therefore I would suggest that this conference must commit itself

Fundraising needs a boost HELP WITH CASH AND EQUIPMENT

THE CAMPAIGN IS now at the half-way stage of its two year £50,000 appeal. Our thanks to all those individuals and organisations who have responded so far.

To date we have received approximately £12,000 in cash donations. We have acquired free office accommodation from the Joseph Rowntree trust, which we equipped initially with surplus from a Trade Union amalgamation. The recently approved grant from the Greater London Council will pay the salaries of two full and one part timer to develop our work in Greater London.

During the past year our membership has nearly doubled and our publications have circulated widely. Our conferences and meetings are well attended and the Regional groups are growing.

To expand and consolidate our efforts we urgently need a new injection of cash and equipment.

We have been allocated extra office space and now require electric and manual typewriters, filing cabinets, shelving and all kinds of office equipment and stationery.

Will you help in this next stage of our growth? Two major conferences are planned for next year (see forthcoming events) and we want to hold fringe meetings at all the Party conferences. A new video funded by NALGO and NUPE on the 'Health Workers and the Media' will be available soon. New publications are being considered and more resources are needed for *Free Press*. We also intend to expand our educational work and step up the struggle around the *Right of Reply*.

Any contribution that you can make in cash, equipment or ideas will be welcomed.

Contact: CPBF, 9 Poland Street, London, W1. Phone 01-437 2795.

Labour Campaign Launched

THE LABOUR PRESS Campaign, a pressure group of party activists, was recently formed to try to determine if there is the political will to secure the publication of a national daily newspaper promoting the aspirations and policies of the labour movement.

The Labour Press Campaign wants to ensure that the matter of a Labour daily paper does not get bogged down in endless debate, nor lost in obscure committee meetings. It is particularly drawn to the ideas developed by Lord McCarthy in his feasibility study for the TUC.

The arguments for a national daily paper supporting the aspirations and policies of the labour movement were set out by the Royal Commission on the Press (1974-77):

to oversee, to monitor, to intervene when cable television is established in this country. The IBA with all its faults is a regulatory body that intervenes and maintains high standards. This will not happen with cable television."

Speaking for the National Executive, Alan Hadden asked conference to remit the motion on the Labour newspaper and the general media motion.

It was wrong to bind the NEC on the timetable and the amount of money involved in the newspaper motion, he said. And the other motion was a mixed bag of measures which needed further study.

But delegates carried all the media motions.

"There is no doubt that over most of this century the Labour Movement has had less newspaper support than its right wing opponents and that its beliefs and activities have been favourably reported by the majority of the Press."

Referring to the lack of a left of centre newspaper the report continues: "... We have no doubt that there is a gap in political terms which could be filled with advantage."

It is with the intention of filling this gap, which is measurably wider today than it was in 1977, that the Labour Press Campaign is addressing itself.

Readers should contact the Labour Press Campaign at 3 Union Street Luton Beds LU1 3AN.

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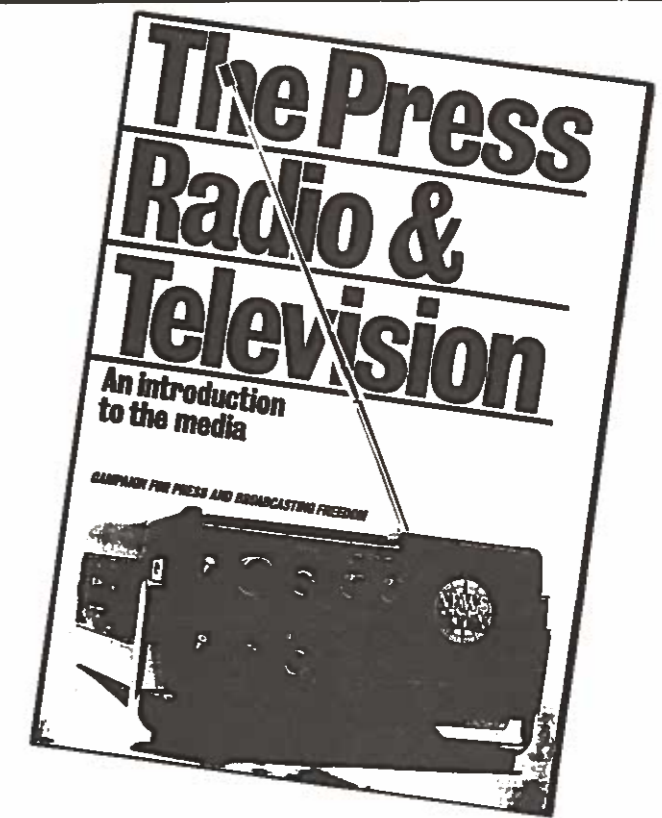
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PRESS RADIO and TELEVISION — An Introduction

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:

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Debating the Labour Daily

AT THE LABOUR Party Conference, the CPBF and the Labour Press Campaign held a joint meeting on the theme: "Can we have a Labour newspaper?"

Speaking strongly in favour, Moss Evans, TGWU general secretary referred to the existing "rotten press" and asked, "why don't we set up our own paper? No one seems to doubt that a labour paper is needed." Since the winter of discontent the labour and trade union movement had suffered four long years of bias, misrepresentation and harassment. Mr Evans said he was also complaining about standards and about the failure of the press to fulfill its true role in society.

On the question of a Labour newspaper, Mr Evans asked, "Can it be done?" With the publication of the McCarthy Report he believed "we have the answer to the sceptics and the dreamers. Provided the trade unions are prepared to dig into their pockets it will be possible."

Mr Evans admitted that before the first edition appeared on the streets much work would need to be done.

The second speaker, Lord McCarthy said that certain assumptions lay behind the paper. It would be an independent paper,

but sympathetic to the movement.

The first assumption was that if the circulation was right, people would advertise in it. Secondly, presses should not be purchased but printing contracted out and produced outside London.

From the floor of the meeting, Charlie Cherrill, SOGAT London Machine Branch Assistant Secretary asked, "Why print outside Fleet Street? — the *Observer* presses stand idle all week".

Shyama Perera of the *Guardian* was surprised how optimistic people were about finance for a Labour paper.

John Gardner of the Labour Press Campaign, insisted that it had to be a paper that reached beyond the activists — "not just to win elections but to win minds. There is an alternative, to the existing press," he said. The feasibility study suggested that there is the political will to establish a national labour daily newspaper.

Geoff Dixon, SOGAT FOC at IPC asked why were capitalist assumptions made. "The reliance on advertising is a fundamental flaw in the McCarthy Report" he said.

The Campaign is committed to keep this debate alive, and would like to hear *Free Press* readers' views on the subject.

The Gang of Jaws Fleet Street's predators

by Reg Mares

SOGAT London Central Branch

IN THE September issue of the SOGAT Journal, Bill Keys said: "... If there ever was a time for the Labour movement to really produce its own newspaper then the time is now. SOGAT has been arguing this for years. It is no longer a question of can we afford. We have to afford it..." And I say a great AMEN to that.

The trade union movement is under attack and we must have a fair crack of the whip in replying to the lies and half-truths sewerage out from the Fleet Street 'Gang of Jaws'.

From reading the proprietorial — no, NOT editorials — of these so-called 'newspapers' one could gain the impression that when Moses came down from the mountain with the Tablets of Truth these owners were 'bucks' on the back of his lorry.

In truth, the Gang of Jaws do for free speech and fair reporting all that the film *Jaws* did for surf-bathers, all that Cyril Smith does for weight-watchers, what Saatchi & Saatchi do for the concept of childish innocence and what Maggie does to that of noble modesty — in a word, NOTHING.

They try to give the impression that they alone have cornered the market and are now the sole custodians of truth, yet in fact their prime reason for existence is that they sell advertising and to make a handsome profit doing it.

They assume the function of king makers and breakers, yet they have no more rights in this than you or I. They have only one vote, the same as everyone else! AND, may I ask you, do YOU believe uncritically all the adverts you read? No?

Then why should we be expected to believe and trust the personal opinions of the proprietors to choose to put alongside the adverts for soap-powder? But, stranglely, some people do still believe everything they read in newspapers.

The total make-up of a newspaper depends on the volume of advertising it gets. After making provision for their profit, the Gang of Jaws' next consideration is to decide how many more pages to print in order to encourage you and I to read the adverts. These pages are almost exclusively devoted to sport, to clairvoyancy (what the stars are supposed to tell and the racing tipsters), to direct-bribes in the form of free bingo and million pound giveaways, and to good old SEX — about 10 per cent, give or take a tit.

It has been known sometimes for hard news to creep in, but this practice is not over-encouraged because, it seems, the Gang do not wish to confuse us with facts.

Checking bingo from spread-out newspapers occupies a lot of time of millions of people in factories, shops and offices. The lost production hasn't been excelled even in the 1940 air-raids and managements have been reported as having cried most pathetically to heaven "God! . . . when can we expect to get some work out of them? . . ."

The only safe way to check if a newspaper is a newspaper is to look on the back to the small print at the bottom. This could say 'Registered as a Newspaper at the Post Office', and you would have every right to say "you could have fooled me". Please don't make legal enquiries to see if The Gang are infringing the Trades Description Acts because you might be told they are, and they being noble and sensitive types, we don't want to upset them, do we?

The Gang has always been anti-Labour movement. Since its inception the Labour Party has had to contend with lies, smears, unfair reporting, slanted representation and, worst of all, a conspiracy of silence as to the movement's principles and objects.

The Gang goes in for assassination — that of the character. It has always had to invent a 'bogeyman' to blur our image. Remember Aneurin Bevan and the Tribunites...? Harold Wilson...? Just recently Tony Benn and more recently Ken Livingstone and Arthur Scargill? Personally I hold no brief for Mr. Scargill's extreme political views, but I do deplore the attacks on his integrity and the invasion by Fleet Street of his private life.

One hack, recently, had the gall to complain "... but you will not give us the answers we want."

May I put another question to you? What else can you expect from men who will pay murderers and their ilk thousands of pounds for their sordid stories?

In recent years published free-speech has sustained a terrible loss in the demise of fair newspapers. The *News Chronicle* went, as did the *Co-op Sunday*, the *Citizen*. London lost two of its three evening 'papers, the *Star* and the *Evening News*. The biggest loss was the great *Daily Herald* which evolved into the *Sun* and degenerated, after re-sale into the present-day *Sun* under a gentleman called Murdoch. My soul can only groan.

In all fairness to the *Sun*, I must say:

- That Mr. Murdoch is not the one who used to share a flat with another comedian, Arthur Askey, atop of the BBC. I cannot imagine how such a rumour got started.
- There is no truth whatever in the horrid story that a 'Gang' reporter

was sacked for getting his facts right by an editor who nearly got sacked for nearly printing it. No, not the *Sun*.

- I do not subscribe to the view that if the serious content of the *Sun* could be distilled to TNT, it wouldn't be enough to blow the skin off a rice-pudding because I think it might — just.

- The *Sun* is not a 'rip-off' at 15p, but if you don't mind going up-market a bit you can get the *Beano* for 12p.

- The *Sun* is jolly good under lino, not to mention around fish and chips.

The biggest secret fear the Gang of Jaws must have is that the public will find out one day — (and can this be too soon?) — that they are no longer required.

Doesn't TV give us news immeasurably better and quicker? How quicker can you get by actually seeing something happen? And what is more, the TV media do give balanced programmes and give rights of reply. When did The Gang last do that?

As Bill Keys said, the time for added freedom in the press is now. And I say the best of luck to those who could bring this about.

We have a part to play. We must support it, read it and push the good news around. Remember the *Daily Herald*. We mustn't let it happen again.

**CALLING ALL
LIBERAL
AND SDP
MEMBERS....**

WE HAVE HAD several suggestions recently that Liberal Party and SDP members of the CPBF ought to form a section or group within the Campaign. They should bring pressure to bear on the Campaign nationally, lobby their own parties to develop policies on the media and originate material for Free Press or for possible CPBF pamphlets, it is argued. Would any members interested please contact the secretary, John Jennings, 274 London Road, Hadleigh, Essex, who will assist in making contact with one another.

REGIONS

A BAD DEAL for London members? That was the complaint at this year's annual conference when a member bemoaned the lack of activity in the London area, compared with the range of events taking place outside the city. Now a local group has started up, taking in South East London. The group's first achievement was a speedy and comprehensive look at the way that the press in Lewisham and Greenwich covered the General Election in June.

The report concluded that the papers had broadly failed to develop or cover political stories. This, they say, is more to do with a failure of journalism than deliberate political bias. They recommend that more attention is paid to political education in journalists' training schemes, and that journalist's union chapels should take more of an interest in the standard and quality of their paper's coverage. The report also points to the marked absence of racial coverage, in an area of high racial harassment. "Reading the local papers" the report says, "one would hardly believe that black people even existed."

Spreading the word

It is a busy couple of months for the North East Campaign. On Saturday 19th November, the Darlington Media Group is holding a one day conference looking at campaign strategies during the '80's. It will include a workshop on media coverage of privatisation, CND and tenants housing campaigns. This follows hard on a successful public meeting in Durham on how to fight media bias. An audience of over 40 people heard Jake Ecclestone of the NUJ and George Jerrom of the NGA put the Campaign's case. Malcolm Wright reports that he was particularly pleased with the increasing interest shown by journalism students at Durham College of Journalism. Meanwhile, the Darlington Media Group are also hosting a one day course for people to learn the basics of writing, designing, producing and laying-out their own parish magazines.

Using the Media

Members in Wales are putting the finishing touches to their own media guide — a booklet designed to give local activists a better understanding of how to use the media and who to approach. It will contain a local directory of all the outlets and the best contacts at each place. The Campaign is also organising a series of conferences for the Spring of '84.

Seeing Red

In Birmingham nearly 200 people turned up at Digbeth Civic Hall to hear Peter Tatchell and Stephanie Grant explaining the way they believe the media treats the labour movement and the Left. Peter Tatchell gave an account of the

harassment he had received prior to the Bermondsey by-election — and pinpointed key areas where the press had told lies about him which eventually influenced the result of the election. He did not go to the 'Gay Olympics', he said, neither was he a member of Militant, but both inspired local bigotry against him. Stephanie Grant told the same story of harassment, having reporters outside her house all the time, and being the subject of acute attention as she waited outside the Cowley works to find out the results of a meeting about her reinstatement.

The West Midlands Campaign is also collaborating with the local NUJ on their own media guide — *Get Yourself in the News* — first published two years ago. There is also an urgent appeal to local members from secretary Rob Burkiitt. The demands of the local CPBF are expanding so quickly, he says, that he needs more people to get involved with organisation.

Charles Tremayne

CONTACTS:
West Midlands CPBF — 021-359-5545
Wales CPBF — 0222-482742
North East CPBF — 0325-484374
South East London — Jad Adams, 116 Stanstead Rd, SE23.

REVIEWS

The Press, Radio and Television

THE PRESS, RADIO and Television aims to 'provide an introductory guide to the main communications industries in Britain today, in terms of how each of these industries is organised; who owns and controls them; who takes decisions about the nature of their output; and what their role is in our lives'. In this it succeeds admirably, condensing into 40 informed and highly readable pages much of the valuable work on our media that has emanated from academia and groups such as Comedia and the CPBF over the past few years.

The booklet is divided into four sections. The first, on the press, deals with questions of ownership, legal constraints, advertising and distribution. It also analyses what kind of 'news' papers actually present. Section two looks at the differing institutional structures within which the BBC and ITV operate, examines the implications of the way in which television output is organised so as to 'flow' through afternoon and evening as a seamless sequence, and, finally, summarises the various kinds of controls, overt and covert, manifest and invisible, to which programme makers are constantly, though frequently unconsciously, subject.

The third section deals with radio; this is particularly valuable given

both the relative lack of recent analysis in this area and the rapid growth of commercial radio over the past few years. The institutional frameworks and constraints within which BBC Radio and the commercial companies operate are fully explained, and this is followed by a highly critical look at programme content, both local and national, commercial or otherwise. The section concludes with a useful consideration of future strategies in this area. Section four examines the absolutely crucial question of the impact and implications of the various new technologies rapidly establishing themselves in our various media today.

The Press, Radio and Television is, however, much more than just a descriptive survey of the state of the media today — it's also an argument, an argument against the present restrictive ways in which our media are organised, for a system of organisation in which 'freedom of expression' is something more than just an empty, cynical, rhetorical slogan. Though aimed primarily at trades unionists wanting an introduction to contemporary debates about the media *The Press, Radio and Television* deserves the widest possible public and should certainly be required reading on any self-respecting media studies course, be it in school, polytechnic or university.

JP

THE NEWLY FORMED South East London group of the Campaign has published a report under the title *No News is Bad News*. They monitored the General Election coverage of three local papers and two free sheets. The group also surveyed the coverage of the defence debate in the *Times* and *Guardian*, they also looked at two papers aimed at the black community.

Editors and Chapels at the locals were informed of the interest being taken in them before the monitoring began. The Agents of all the candidates in the area were also contacted and invited to respond after the election with their opinion of their treatment. Only two did so — a pleased Conservative and an irritated Communist.

The report described the performance of the locals as "depressing", and was duly hard on them. The *South East London Mercury* was attacked for "the sheer idleness and lack of imagination of its journalists". The *South London Press* gave greater prominence to the election, but won no accolades for its content, while the *Eltham Times* was 'thin'.

The *Times* and *Guardian* were considered because it was assumed that they would give a lead to the locals. In the event it was noted that important national issues were not picked up and given a local flavour as might have been expected. Instead what was revealed was a superficial local coverage and a

sophisticated partiality nationally which was felt to be more dangerous.

The black Press failed to serve its readership — it was felt — in much the same way as the rest of the Press. Additionally it also failed to give prominence to non-Race issues faced by black people.

The report contains a number of recommendations including the need to improve journalist training. It has been circulated widely and as a result the Chapel of a local paper invited the group to send a speaker to discuss their criticisms.

MP

LETTERS

Dear Editor,

Congratulations on your Sept/Oct issue. The best yet. Especially good on Channel Four the now dropped Friday Alternative.

It was this programme which analysed the American reports on the shooting down of the South Korean 'plane, and showed that the West were being taken for a ride by Reagan and friends.

It was to provide some balance against the enormous bias in nearly all the rest of the media that we understood Channel Four was established. So it would be a tremendous setback if its most progressive items were now spiked.

I wrote the following letter to four quality papers — none of them printed it.

The destruction of the Korean airliner is to be deeply regretted, but some vital questions need to be answered by Mr Reagan.



Frank Allau

- Why was the flight KAL 007 500 kilometres off course over a highly sensitive area?
- Why did Mr Reagan not disclose for four days that there was an American spy 'plane in the vicinity? Why was it revealed only by accident and with reluctance?
- How was it that the American Security Agency monitored conversations between Soviet 'planes and their base?
- Why didn't the Japanese Air traffic control or the US airforce tell Boeing 747 it was 500 kilometres off course?
- Why did it not respond to warnings from Soviet 'planes?
- Was the Korean civilian 'plane

carrying spying equipment of any kind?

• Why have Canadian and American passanegers on other Korean flights reported that navigation and cabin lights were extinguished over this area?

There is a lot more information to emerge — it should and will.

Frank Allau
Manchester 21

Dear Editor,

I have only recently joined CPBF, although I have supported your main aims from the start. The reason for holding back support was the proposal, now dropped I believe, that trade unions should replace owners as controllers of the media, an idea that would be at least as dreadful.

So I thought that CPBF would now be a broader campaign, but I find that in recent issues of Free Press almost all the articles are about the media's treatment of the increasingly irrelevant and ridiculous Labour Party. I cannot find a word about the equally blatant misrepresentations of, say, Liberal policies or activities.

It is clearly stated, in small print, that views expressed are not necessarily those of the Campaign. Fair enough, but does this mean that you only get Labour/TU articles or are other viewpoints edited out?

Although I vote Tory or Liberal, depending on the candidate, I agree that the mass media is far too right wing or right of centre, and that to redress the balance is a high priority. However, I believe that equal concern should be known to access, distribution and factual accuracy.

Perhaps I have been unlucky with this edition but I do hope to see a much wider range of articles and discussion in future.

John Bennett
London N15

John Jennings, CPBF secretary, writes: We have never argued that trade unions should take over control of the media. We do say that media workers — journalists, technicians, printers, clerical staff, — should be jointly involved through their unions in major policy decisions.

Liberal, Tory and SDP members of the Campaign area as welcome to contribute to *Free Press* as Labour and trade union members. Let's have your articles and letters!

COMING EVENTS

CPBF One Day conference on LABOUR MOVEMENT DAILY and MEDIA ALTERNATIVES, Sunday 26th February 1984, at County Hall, London SE1.

CPBF Conference and AGM Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th April 1984 at County Hall, London, SE1.

A question of balance?

THE AUTUMN EDITION of Channel Four's magazine boasts that there is "More choice of 4". Until recently, the choice included the series by film director Ken Loach — *Questions of Leadership* — and another series called *What the Censor Saw* which, to quote, "explores how the limit of what is permissible has been widened over the last fifty years." It obviously hasn't widened far enough, because as many already know, Channel Four has censored Ken Loach's series and given it back to Central Television to 'balance'.

This is strange if you read further into Channel Four's magazine and see another film described as a 'partisan film, not a bland documentary which strives for balance.' So why has this survived, while *Questions of Leadership* was rejected?

The answer is in the very contradictions which the films set out to expose. They study union democracy in the electricians union, the FETPU; the victimisation of Alan Thornett at BL Cowley and Derek Robinson at Longbridge, where union leaders refused to back their members; and they also study four industrial disputes where there was a chance of widespread industrial action which was actually destroyed by the union leadership.

In short, the films showed how some union leaders are actually working *against* the interests of their members, and consequently helping the Conservative government.

This is not to say that the films did not give union officials a chance to defend their actions. John Boyd and Ken Cure of the AEUW, both right wingers, give their views, and Frank Chapple of the EETPU walked out in the middle of an interview.



As Frank Chapple was last year's President of the TUC, it might be expected he would follow the union movement's pamphlet, *The Other Side of the Story*, which urges greater diversity in the media. He didn't; he complained to Edmund Dell,

Chairman of Channel Four, and George Thomson, chairman of the IBA. Both are former Labour ministers — and sympathetic to Chapple's 'don't rock the boat' philosophy of trade unionism.

They supported Chapple and Channel Four caved in, passing the films back to Central Television. Eleven million trade unionists were deprived of an opportunity to judge whether they were being short-changed by their leadership.

Apart from the whole question of censorship by Channel Four, the action by the President of the TUC confirms Loach's beliefs that many union leaders do not want to challenge the government in a meaningful way, and thus do not represent their members. It also makes one wonder how seriously union bosses really do want an unfettered, unbiased and free media?

Charles Tremayne

From Little Acorns?

Are you interested in starting a group in your region? There is plenty of work to be done influencing local tv, radio and newspapers, as well as organising day courses for voluntary groups, campaigns and trade unionists. If you want to get things going we can give you a list of other local members as a first step to launching your own campaign. We will be able to provide help, advice and back-up to your activities. Contact Charles Tremayne via 01-437-2795, or write to 33 Glossop Rd, Little Hayfield, Derbyshire SK12 5NG.

Free Press is published by the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, 9 Poland Street, London W1. Typeset by S Colmer 0442 53701 and printed by Spectra (UK) Ltd 0442 211895. Articles for publication should be sent to Nik Oakley, 4 Old Mill Road, Hunton Bridge, Kings Langley, Herts. 08277 64049.

READERSHIP SURVEY

Help us find out what you would like to see in Free Press and to find out a little about our readers by filling in this questionnaire.

1. What editorial information do you find the most interesting? Please state in order of preference, ie number from 1 —

- Reviews 0
 Features 1
 News 2
 Coming Events 3
 4

- Give it to someone else 17
 Keep it 18
 Throw it away 19

2. What other information would you like to see in Free Press?

3. Do you like the current format?

- Yes 5
 No 6

4. How could it be improved?

5. Where does your copy come from?

- Union Branch 7
 Subscription 8
 Friend 9
 Work 10

Other, please state

6. How many other people read your copy of Free Press?

- 1 11
 2 12
 3 13
 4 14
 5 15
 More than 5 16

8. Are you a member of a political party?

- Labour 20
 Conservative 21
 SDP 22
 Liberal 23
 Other 24
 None 25

9. What is your job?

10. Do you belong to an union?

- Yes 26
 No 27

11. If so, which one?

12. Have you ever bought any books or pamphlets from the Campaign?

- Yes 28
 No 29

Name

Address

- Age 16-24 30 35-44 32 over 60 34
 25-34 31 45-60 33 Male 35 Female 36

Please send your completed questionnaire, to Free Press Readership Survey, CPBF, 9 Poland Street, London W1.