

CAMPAIGN FOR PRESS & BROADCASTING FREEDOM

incorporating the Campaign Against Racism in the Media & the Television Users Group

National Council 1986-87

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Office Tel: 01 437 2795 (24 hours)

Relaying the news

The latest edition of the community radio magazine Relay comes in the form of two 30-minute programmes on tape. One includes a round-up of community radio action in Britain, Denmark, France, Greece, the Netherlands and the USA; the other reviews hospital radio, radio drama and sound archives.

Its a novel approach that serves the community radio movement well. Copies cost £1.50, from Relay, Unit 109, Bon Marche Building, 444 Brixton Road, London SW9 8EJ. Tel: 01-242 4000 Extn 312.

Broadcasting booklet soon

The Campaign's booklet on broadcasting policy, "Switching Channels", is about to hit the bookstands. It will cost £1.50.

Developing out of the broadcasting project set up by Janet Whyatt last year, it has been completed by Campaign worker Tom O'Malley and takes a look at reactions to the Peacock Report and suggests new policy directions for the Campaign in the wake of the government's long awaited Green Paper on broadcasting.

• The Community Radio Association decided not to take up the Campaign's offer (FP 38) of full status on the CPBF National Council, but may take up observer status. Close contact is being maintained between both organisations.

Heterosexism Pack

If you're fed up with the way the media portray lesbians and gay men, and with the way they censor our point of view, then this is the pack for you!

- * "The Dissemblers of Fleet Street: Press distortion of gay issues in the UK" - an 18pp. booklet by Terry Sanderson
- * A summary of the findings of the Gays and Broadcasting Report, 1986
- * Leaflet on how to complain, with list of addresses of all major newspapers and broadcasting companies
- * NUJ leaflets on the Ethics Council, the reporting of homosexuality and AIDS
- * Information about the CPBF Lesbian and Gay Group

And all this for only £1.60! Order your copy from the Campaign Office now!

Liverpool CPBF

A well attended meeting at the Liverpool Unemployed Centre Theatre in February laun-

ched another round of debate about the Campaign's Media Manifesto.

The Liverpool group is now up and running with Zircon showings planned. Members in the Liverpool area should contact Marjory Hayward on 051 526 8746.

Manchester survey

North West CPBF are carrying out a survey of members to discover how to improve the range of activities organised from our Manchester office.

The first ten respondents were sent a free CPBF mug illustrated with a Lowry cartoon, which are still on sale priced £1, from Nancy Jaeger, NW-CPBF, 136 Corn Exchange Building, Hanging Ditch, Manchester M4 3BN.

Third World media

The educational and campaigning body Third World First have organised a three-day event on western media misrepresentation of the majority of the world's population.

"Altered Images" takes place in London on April 10-12. Sessions include examination of the myth of media neutrality, challenging consensus in the mass media, and the creation of independent media.

CPBF has contributed to a special issue of TWF's journal "Links" which should appear in time for the conference. For more details contact TWF at 232 Cowley Road, Oxford, OX4 1VH. Tel: 0865 245678.

Police in the media

The Institute of Race Relations have resumed publication of their Police-Media Research Project Bulletin, which examines the impact of developments in policing in Britain's black communities.

No.59 looks at media coverage of the PC Blakelock murder trial, public order issues, community policing, racist attacks and a selection of other cases involving police ill-treatment of black people.

Copies are available from Graham Murray, IRR, 2-6 Leeke St. Kings Cross Road, London WC1X 9HS, Tel: 01 837 0041

Edited for the National Council by MIKE JEMPSON.

Copy for FP 41 should reach the Campaign Office by May 1st.

FREE PRESS 30p

JOURNAL OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR PRESS AND BROADCASTING FREEDOM

No 40 APRIL 1987

Green light for pop and prattle

By Steven Gray

Much more pop and prattle radio will be the order of the day if Home Secretary Douglas Hurd gets his way.

The Government's Green Paper, on the future of radio has far-reaching implications for public service broadcasting and for the Freedom of our Airwaves.

It recommends the deregulation of commercial radio on a massive scale, proposes three new commercial nationwide stations and gives the go-ahead for community radio. Neither will be subject to proper regulation - a new toothless Radio Authority will act as overseer.

And the BBC is to lose two national VHF frequencies.

The proposals are consistent with the government's post-Peacock policy of subjecting broadcasting to market forces. Last year's ill-fated community radio (CR) 'experiment' was shelved by Hurd because it had an 'insufficient regulatory framework'. Yet the new proposals will have far less rigorous regulation.

Controls on advertising and programming will be lifted so stations can up the ads and dump costly extras like proper speech programming or a decent news service!

Ratings wars will follow as stations compete for advertising revenue. Community radio will sink or swim according to its commercial viability, rather than its ability to meet the needs of the community. Jobs and conditions of service in the new sector will be under immediate attack.

cont p. 2



Zapping Zircon

The Campaign has been inundated with calls for samizdat copies of the banned Secret Society film about the Zircon project since its packed London premiere at the Conway Hall on February 9.

About 1,000 people watched the film that night and hundreds were turned away. Many queued for two hours, and the hall filled up again for a second showing after the marathon meeting.

Speakers included Duncan Campbell, MPs Tony Benn, Norman Buchan and Anna Clywd, Prof Stuart Hall, Paddy Leach of BETA, Alan Sapper of ACTT and representatives of the Campaign for Freedom of Information and the National Council for Civil Liberties.

The BBC and Tokio TV film crews were present, and the mainstream media were well represented, but little appeared in the press until the Freedom Association announced the failure of its attempt to obtain injunctions to stop the showing. Such people may think they are setting the agenda for debate, but it was the Campaign's defiant stand against censorship that won the argument.

Trades union, CND, and Labour and Green Party branches were quick to organise showings with the help of the Campaign, at venues as varied as Belfast, Bradford, Brent, Bristol, Camden, Cambridge, Dorset, Exeter, Hackney, Harrow, Hendon, Hertfordshire, Islington, Kensington & Chelsea, Lambeth, Leeds, Lewisham, Manchester, Medway, Milton Keynes, Otley, Oxford, Portsmouth, Reading, Saffron Walden, Southampton, Southwark, Torbay, Tower Hamlets, Whitchurch, several Welsh towns, and the Netherlands.

Despite the original ban and subsequent threats and injunctions, thousands of people have now seen the film that exposes how the cost of a planned spy satellite was kept from parliament by burying it in Ministry of Defence budgets for Trident.

The issue is not national security, but government embarrassment that their deception of parliament has been rumbled.

So many clandestine copies are now in circulation that the film will eventually have to be shown.

Have you had a Zircon Party in your home yet?

STOP PRESS

Police made three visits to Christine Dean's house near Leeds in March after Otley Peace Action Group showed the film, investigating her private correspondence with Duncan Campbell in July 1985.

Final visit witnessed by 21 peace activists with tape recorder. Ms Dean said: 'I do not wish to make a statement to Scottish police.' Cost of operation not known. Watch this space.

Crunch time at the Campaign

Losses on Censorama, a much-expanded programme of activities and the possible loss of grant-aiding have combined to cause a cash crisis that may severely limit the Campaign's ability to employ staff.

See p.3

INSIDE: Libel victory p. 3 Manifesto pp. 4 & 5 Ireland p. 7

PUBLICATIONS

NEW FROM CPBF

SWITCHING CHANNELS-The Campaign's response to the Peacock Report and the Government's Green Paper on Broadcasting. £1.50 □

MEDIA HETEROSEXISM PACK-All you need to know about how the media treat gay men and lesbians, and how to fight back. £1.60 □

THE PRESS & POLITICAL DISSENT-Mark Hollingsworth's critique of the way 'unconventional' ideas are censored by the press. Pluto Press £6.95 CPBF price £5.95 □

• John Jennings

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Hilary Kingsley

Standards tumble in the battle between TV and the tabloids

Slippery soaps

By Chris Benfield

The chief press officer of Granada TV told an audience at Manchester's Cornerhouse that he was coming up to retirement with all respect for journalists gone.

Norman Frisby, who joined Granada from newspapers 30 years ago, was taking part in a NW-CPBF debate on press treatment of soap operas and their stars. He was joined by Hilary Kingsley of the Daily Mirror and the actor Tony Booth at a highly popular meeting.

He said: 'As the man said, I am all for freedom of the press. I just can't stand the newspapers.'

I am talking about deliberate misunderstandings, ridiculous misreadings and inability of journalists to know when their legs are being pulled.

'At the end of 1976, 29 per cent of readers polled by NOP had "a great deal" of confidence in the press. In '83, that figure had shrunk to 13.7 per cent. I am one of the 15.3 who defected. It makes me sad to say I don't believe in newspapers any more and I don't trust a single journalist.'

He went on 'They put their lies together for

Critics heard...

Home Secretary Douglas Hurd faced a critical audience of trades unionists, at an NUJ Conference on the Future of Broadcasting in London on March 4.

Justifying his government's pursuit of free market principles in broadcasting, Hurd said that the idea of a BBC financed by subscription was 'attractive', and simply needed more work done on it before its viability could be established.

He admitted that pegging of the BBC's licence fee to the retail price index 'does amount to a squeeze'. In his view the government has now 'begun the process of deregulation.'

But he faced angry questions from NUJ members in local radio, who saw their jobs, and newsrooms, under attack at present from cuts in income and a supine IBA unwilling to intervene and save valuable local news rooms.

Asked if he sanctioned the idea of killing off proper national news on ILR, Hurd answered that under his proposals the government would 'cease to compel' the new stations to provide news.

After his departure contributions from a range of speakers made it a stimulating and worthwhile, if at times chilling day conference.

TO'M



Tony Booth

commercial gain so let them take the commercial stick.

'Why not have a body which has the power to take papers off the streets for a couple of days. You could have a points system, building up, for small fibs. Say 12 points of Mr Murdoch's license to print money and he loses it for a bit. I think it would be a very stimulating exercise.'

It was a theme taken up by actor Tony Booth. He recalled a Star analysis of the fictional character Elsie Tanner's love life, by a psychiatrist! He spoke of a recent story about him headlined 'When the stars speak, they speak only to Woman's Own'. He had not spoken to them - the article was compiled from other cuttings.

'There is no free Press on this earth,' he declared. 'They are controlled by a handful of powerful men, whether in this country or the Eastern bloc... where at least they are honest about government control of the media.'

Hilary Kingsley, Mirror TV writer, pointed out that he had taken money for his reminiscences.

'Only because I was told it would be written anyway, so I might as well,' said the actor. 'None of this stuff about Dirty Den and Coronation Street matters anyway, when we are constantly lied to by the media about the Belgrano, the whole Falklands affair... the list is endless. We live in an ocean of propaganda.'

Kingsley said: 'Popular papers are in the entertainments business. I am not a social worker or a righter of wrongs. My job is to write about things the public care about and they care about people in their favourite TV programmes, at least as much as they do about Margaret Thatcher.'

C4 changes at the top

The Adam Smith Professor of Political Economy at Glasgow University is one of three new five year appointments to the Board of Channel 4 announced by the Independent Broadcasting Authority.

Prof David Vines is already a member of the Academic Panel at the Treasury, a Fellow of the Centre for Economic Policy Research and serves on the Social Research Council.

He is joined on the C4 Board by Ms Eleri Wynne Jones of the Welsh Fourth Channel, who has worked for the Marriage Guidance Council for twelve years. George Russell CBE, Chief Executive of Marley plc and a former member of the IBA, takes over from Sir Richard Attenborough as Deputy Chair at C4.

What chance of an end to political censorship with a hung Parliament. MICK MURPHY looks at a study of Dublin opinion.

Section 31 revisited

Appeals from the trades unions and from a group of leading artists, headed by Sean O'Faolain, were ignored in January when the order banning Radio Telefis Eirean from interviewing members of Sinn Fein and other 'subversive' groups was renewed.

The order, under Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act, ensured that during the recent general election Sinn Fein candidates could neither make election broadcasts nor be interviewed.

There is strong opposition to S31 among those who have to work under its shadow. A survey recently undertaken by Niall Meehan and Jean Horgan of Dublin's National Institute for Higher Education shows that this opposition is reflected on the streets. The survey aimed at providing 'scientifically based empirical evidence of public attitudes' on which to base discussions on restrictions of freedom of expression.

It shows that a majority of Dubliners (53%) disapproves of S31. 73% of respondents thought that candidates should be allowed to speak on RTE dur-

ing a general election campaign, on election issues.

A similar majority thought that Sinn Fein should be allowed to express an opinion on RTE when a news story affects it. Under S31, trade union officials and local councillors who are members of Sinn Fein may not speak on RTE on matters affecting the people they represent. A large majority of Dubliners finds this unacceptable. 83% of respondents thought that local and trades union issues, while 71% said that no TD (MP) should ever be subject to S31.

Asked if they wanted to be told every time S31 affects a programme, 78% said yes. At the moment, mention of the use of S31 on a programme is 'haphazard and infrequent'. According to a 3-month survey carried out by the Repeal Section

The Letters and Review pages have been held over for lack of space. Deadline for the next issue is May 1st.

Inedible evidence

Despite name changes, the case examined in an edition of the BBC2 series Indelible Evidence entitled "Windfall" (30 Jan), was clearly about the conviction in 1979 of Thomas McGrath, accused of murdering two part-time UDR officers in 1976.

The programme suggested that his conviction stemmed from evidence built up around forensic examination of a half eaten apple. In fact the judge made no reference to forensic evidence in his summing up, and based judgement solely on McGrath's "confession", obtained under interrogation at the notorious Castlereagh Holding Centre where his father had also undergone brutal treatment.

Ironically, McGrath claims that he had been undergoing dental surgery in Hertfordshire for an abscess on his lower jaw at the time of the killings. But alibi evidence was not heard in court.

McGrath's sister, who lives in England, has objected to both the portrayal of her brother and the "case" against him as presented by the programme.

She has drawn attention to the fact that casts were taken of his teeth while he was undergoing interrogation, raising question about when and if he ever bit the apple which was alleged to have been found at the scene of the murder.

The programme's presenter, Ludovic Kennedy, has promised to look into the issues she has raised.

With the backing of SDLP MP Seamus Mallon and Fr Denis Faul the family did consider taking legal action about the film, and are still considering an appeal against McGrath's conviction.

Members concerned about those who languish in Irish and British gaols solely on the basis of "confession" evidence may wish to contact their MPs, making reference to the McGrath case.

Bye, bye plastic bullets

Belfast actors have responded to the IBA/Channel 4 banning of a cabaret act about plastic bullets from the youth programme "Turn it Up" in January, by issuing their own judgement on the ban.

Members of the Hil Hil TV drama group said "whether republican or loyalist, political or not, we believe the majority feeling in the Six Counties is opposed to plastic bullets. We find that we have been censored."

Their 12 minute slot included an interview with a man hit in the face by a plastic bullet when he was 12.

Commenting on the IBA ruling that it contravened Section 4 of the Broadcasting Act ('likely to encourage or incite to crime or to lead to disorder, or to be offensive to public feeling') they said "We find this statement ironic because, in our own experience plastic bullets are likely to encourage or incite to crime, or to lead to disorder. Plastic bullets are offensive to public feeling."

In the absence of Jeremy Isaacs the item had

31 Committee, listeners were alerted to the use of S31 in only 3% of cases.

57% of Fianna Fail supporters interviewed disapproved of S31. Fianna Fail leader Charlie Haughey said in January that, if elected his government would 'review the situation and take advice from the security forces and see whether any particular changes were necessary.' This is hardly an unequivocal commitment to change. Now he is Taoiseach, and with the slimness of majorities, it would be over-optimistic to expect Haughey to dump S31, at least for the time being.

Meanwhile in New Zealand public anxiety public anxiety is rising about the implications for press freedom of new emergency powers sought by the Government, allegedly to deal with international terrorism.

The new laws would allow the police to determine what constitutes an "emergency situation", and seek prime ministerial approval for blanket restrictions on the media, the interception of telephone lines, access by whatever means to any place, and the use of the military.

Under the headline "Any excuse to censor", a leader in the Wellington Evening Post on Feb 7, commented that the proposal "appears to have no parallel, even in Britain."

In an unprecedented move, all sections of the media have combined forces to oppose the proposed legislation which is now before a Select Committee.

ILP
magazine

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MJ

LEFT HOOK

Labour controlled London councils are hitting back at the 'loony left' smear tactics used against them by much of Fleet Street.

The London boroughs are sick of the barrage of articles in newspapers like the Daily Mail, Daily Express and Sun claiming that they have banned black bin liners, stopped staff calling each other 'sunshine' and told playground leaders to teach children to sing 'baa, baa black sheep' instead of 'baa, baa black sheep'. The councils reckon that these stories and numerous others are lies and distortions and have organised a campaign to highlight the problems coordinated by the Association of London Authorities which is collecting examples of misrepresentation and compiling leaflets to debunk them. These leaflets will then be circulated to the general public and Labour councillors in other parts of the country who

An unholy alliance won the Greenwich by-election: the pollsters and the media. Unconvinced by its own propaganda that given enough rope the left will hang itself, the right-wing press strings along its readers with lies, half truths and fantasy.

DENISE SEARLE explains how some victims are fighting back.

have sometimes questioned the activities of their London counterparts as a result of hostile newspaper articles. The campaign was launched at February's Labour Party local government conference in Leeds. Margaret Hodge, chair of the ALA and leader of Islington Council, attacked the 'gutter journalism' of the 'rabidly right' press which has been waging a war against left wing councils. "They work on the theory that if you say something often enough people believe it's true" she said. Hodge claimed that there were three times as many journalists as councillors in Brent and they

spend their time trying to dig up dirt about the council. "If they don't find anything they just make it up" she said. A major reason for the ALA campaign is the likelihood of a general election in the near future. The association fears that Fleet Street lies will be used to put people off voting Labour by portraying left wing councils as hotbeds of outrageous policies, and giving the impression that this is the sort of thing Labour does when it is in power. The ALA wants to correct the 'loony left' image as quickly as possible, which is why it has embarked on its own campaign rather than using the NUJ's

Ethics Council or taking libel action. One of the association's aims is to win the right of reply as often as possible so councils can put their side of the story. Part of the activities will be to publicise the achievements of councils like Brent, Haringey and Islington which are often under fire from the press.

"We are aware that in presenting innovative and radical policies we have to take care to present them in a way which can't be misrepresented" Hodge explained. As yet the ALA does not plan to link up formally with the CPBF to promote the campaign, although an official stressed that the association was a supporter of CPBF's aims.

Anyone wishing to help combat the 'loony left' councils image should send examples of press misrepresentation to Patrick Kelly at the ALA, Room 692, The County Hall, London SE1 7PB (01-928-7770).

but had not delved into hers - she had raised money from Murdoch during the dispute. They helped to write her script, which harangued the pickets, but were quick to reassure me that this was entirely accidental and they hadn't backed off because of the views I was likely to express . . .

Where do they get them?

Much earlier in the Wapping dispute a Breakfast TV researcher descended on us to get background on the problems caused by police roadblocks.

An architectural assistant with no previous journalistic experience, she had got her job through a friend. She was in a terrible rush, as bewildered by dockland as we were by her accent, and happily used our phone to apologise for being late for her dinner engagement. We never saw her again. A TV crew did turn up to film the first residents march of the dispute, but it was never used - so the second residents' march became the first in the eyes of the media.

15 years ago I remember remonstrating with a TV crew who stood outside the doors of an elderly couple on our estate and mouthed off about how it was wrong for council tenants to have such good views of the river and Tower Bridge when the property could fetch a high price on the open market.

No wonder working people distrust the media. In Thatcher's world such arrogant, selfish, and insensitive attitudes hold sway. Wapping has been colonised by people with the money to think like that, making local people refugees in their own backyard.

If we are not driven out by developers we will be driven out by the media hype. Perhaps that explains why I am packing my bags and heading for Bristol . . .

It is not the job of journalists to be popular, but I look forward to the day when journalism does not mean scraping the barrel for stories that will sell papers, but simply and honestly recording ideas, events and people in a humane and informative way.

In the meantime, and in a fresh pair of hands, FREE PRESS will continue to draw attention to the unacceptable face of the British media.

The right-wing Freedom Association have abandoned their libel action against former CPBF Secretary John Jennings over an article he wrote in FREE PRESS in 1983.

This is a vindication of the principled stand taken by John, at considerable personal risk, to defend his comments about Freedom Association attitudes to the fascist Pinochet regime in Chile.

He described the FA's withdrawal from the case as 'a humiliating climbdown'. They had described his original article as 'an outrageous and disgusting libel' and claimed that he had called them 'racist and/or fascist'.

In fact John said in his article, 'One word of warning. Don't call them racists or fascists. They are sensitive souls and get very upset - they may even sue you.'

The FA did just that, engaging top libel lawyers Messrs Peter Carter-Ruck and Partners and demanding a public apology, an undertaking not to repeat the same or any similar defamatory words, damages and the costs of their court action.

A John Jennings Defence Fund was launched, with generous contributions from Campaign members, and for

Freedom Association get nothing as they abandon Libel case.

SWEET FA!

the last three years John's family, and the two small family firms who then handled typesetting and printing for FREE PRESS, have lived under the threat of ruination if the FA won.

In the event the FA withdrew without a single concession to their demands.

Celebrating his victory John Jennings paid tribute to the support he had received from the CPBF and throughout the

labour and trades union movement. Their response had been 'magnificent' he said.

John, who works for the print union SOGAT, is now preparing a booklet explaining the background to the case which will go to all those who contributed to the Defence Fund.

Once his costs have been met, Defence Fund Trustees will decide on how to apply the balance. The most likely outcome is that donors will be offered

● The Press Council recently found against The Sun for the way Shan Lancaster handled a story about use of the children's book 'Jenny Lives with Eric and Martin' in Inner London Education Authority schools.

The Sun alleged, in its own sensational and prurient style, that the book, which attempts to explain male gay relationships, was available in London junior schools. The Press Council said that its treatment was "exag-

gerated and misleading" - only one copy of the book was stocked by the ILEA, held at a Teacher's Centre for specialist use.

The Press Council commented that the Sun's graphic handling of the story had given far wider publicity to the book than the ILEA. It upheld a complaint from David Northmore, who pointed out that the ILEA's Chief Executive had ruled that the book was not suitable for general use in junior schools.



John Jennings, former secretary of the CPBF.

the choice of the return of the unspent proportion, or its donation to suitable charitable or campaigning causes identified by the trustees.

* In 1983 the Freedom Association tried to block the Campaign's application for a grant from the GLC. An early day motion backing their efforts was put down in the Commons, supported by Billericay MP Harvey Proctor, whose anti-immigration views are well known.

The FA's Norris McWhirter tried unsuccessfully to obtain an injunction to stop the Campaign's public showing of the Zircon film in London earlier this year.

Ending a three year stint as FREE PRESS Editor, Mike Jempson confesses to an even more jaundiced view than before.

Media madness

Some of my best friends are journalists. As a juvenile I always wanted to be one. Now I shudder at the likely response when I tell people what I do.

Why are journalists held in such poor esteem?

At 5am on Feb 18 an arsonist fire-bombed two flats on our pre-war Wapping estate. Luckily for one friend, who removes his hearing aid at night, the petrol failed to ignite. The others, a family of five including my 8 year old god-child, had to scramble onto the roof from their fourth floor maisonette to escape. They moved in with us. It was not just shelter they needed but protection from the press.

When they agreed to an interview with the local paper, the reporter seemed more interested in the marital status and age of the mother than the fact that she had been unable to dial 999 because the phone cable had melted.

Quoting a fire-fighter, the first agency copy about the fires said the motive was not racial because one family was black but the other was "English".

A photographer sent down to get pictures of the black victims left disappointed. The story dropped from the headlines only to reappear with an obscene new twist on the front of the Express two days later.

Under the banner "Guard for Eastender Anita in firebomb horror", it implied that anarchists were responsible, and claimed that police were investigating links between the bombings and Class War leaflets saying that wealthy newcomers to Wapping, like Angie of Eastenders, whose picture dominated the story, should be "introduced to Dr Marten (boots)".

Ignoring 1,500 council tenants in Wapping who live in unprotected homes, the Express announced that "like most blocks" except ours (wrongly described as "St Mathilda's"), Anita Dobson's flat has electronic surveillance

and full-time doormen. Her bodyguard "Big Val" (a woman) was described as "her brother".

No attempt had been made to contact the families whose homes were attacked. When challenged the reporter said that the actual arson attacks were not national news, unlike an alleged threat to a TV star. Little thought was given to the inference that our council estate was an easy target, or that everyone in Wapping now lives in luxury flats.

More Wapping Lies

The day before the first anniversary demonstrations outside Murdoch's Wapping printworks I was offered the Channel Four "Comment" slot the following Monday. They seemed relieved to have found a local resident willing to speak, but became hesitant when I said I would criticise police handling of the dispute and the lies told by a senior officer on TV. Would I mind finding them a woman instead? I was glad to oblige, but after several more calls I was left with the impression that they had settled for me. I even pointed out that I would have to get someone to pick up my kids from school because of their inflexible recording arrangements - eliciting the response that people always complain that they don't get a say, then find excuses when offered a chance.

I prepared a script, rewrote it after the horrendous treatment of the local residents march that fateful night (which went unrecorded in the press), only to be told on the Monday morning that my services were not required. They had found a woman via a local vicar.

C4 had wanted to know about my background

Staff go in cash crisis

As reported in the last issue, the CPBF is facing a severe cash crisis.

As we went to press there was still considerable uncertainty about the of funding from the Richmond-based London Boroughs' Grants scheme that took over responsibility for grant aid after the abolition of the GLC. After long delays a reduced budget was set, but the status of the Campaign's application remained unclear.

As a result of the cash crisis it has not been possible to extend the fixed-term contracts of our two part-time anti-racist workers, Perminder Dhillon-Kashyap and Kofi Hagan. Their contracts ended on 28 February.

A replacement has not yet been sought for the Campaign's Administrator Davy Jones, who also left in February. His post is funded through the Staff Appeal Fund, the balance of which will be carried forward to the new financial year.

Protective notice has been given to the remaining members of staff, Tom O'Malley (full-time) and Julianne Dickey (part-time). Unless the Richmond scheme resolves its own impasse, their employment will cease on March 31.

Priority will be given to maintaining the administration of the Campaign.

Members are urged to contribute to the Staff Appeal by using the adjacent form. If 100 members were able to guarantee £5 per month the Campaign would be in a position to employ a full-time Administrator for one year.

● Since our two black workers were given notice, a Black Rights Defence Group has been formed, calling for their reinstatement in full-time posts and alleging racism on the part of the Campaign.

The Finance and General Purposes Committee has decided to invite an independent inquiry into these allegations following the failure of other attempts to resolve the matter.

1987 STAFF APPEAL

The Campaign desperately needs £10,000 to sustain its expanding workload over the coming year. Without the resources to employ staff the range of our activities will be seriously curtailed. If you are in work - why not make a monthly donation to assist the Campaign. Every little helps.

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A/c _____

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Please say the Co-operative Bank plc, 1, Islington High Street, London N1 9TR (Code 08-90-33) for the account of The Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom (A/c No 50508701) the sum of: £ _____ (amount in figures)

_____ (amount in words) on the _____ day of each month, from _____ date _____ (month) 1987, until countermanded by me.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please return this form to CPBF, 9 Poland St, London W1V 3DG.

MIKE JEMPSON and JOHN SHUTTLEWORTH have been sifting through responses to the Media Manifesto and assessing its impact.

Filling in the details

Bungling by the government, the BBC and the Freedom Association has helped to spread support for the CPBF - every showing of the Zircon film has been accompanied by distribution of the Media Manifesto.

Meanwhile comments have been pouring in to the Campaign Office, proving that we have touched a nerve if we haven't discovered a formula to right the ills of the modern media.

Many respondents have complained about the tone of the Manifesto, from those who dislike the 'un-freedom connotations' of words like 'accountable', 'allocate', 'sanctions' and even 'democratic control' (OO, Hove) or the 'Socialist Worker-style' of terms like 'workers' participation' and 'media conglomerates' (JM, Southsea) to those who feel it is 'screaming and imperative' (FB, London).

'Too many sodding words' was how RD (Kettering) put it, while LB (Bristol) felt it to be too 'strident' and called not for 'indignation' but for 'careful evidence presented impartially'.

Improving the style and tone is something that can be dealt with when the Media Manifesto booklet is written, but in its draft form the document was intended to be provocative. If its language was an affront to some, at least it got them to spell out their views on the media.

Several people called for 'concrete evidence' (DC, Belfast) and 'a practical shopping list of legislation' (FB, London) to back up the eight demands, something that can only be done in a longer and more reflective document.

Much of the evidence and the legislative changes have been spelled out in books published or promoted by the Campaign over the years, particularly in 'Bending Reality' (Pluto) which rehearses both the arguments behind the media manifesto and some of the legislative changes that might flow from it, and Mark Hollingsworth's 'The Press and Political Dissent' (Pluto).

One of the most encouraging aspects of responses to the Manifesto has been the broad spread in terms of both geography and range of views. Even WN of Birmingham, and BF of Newmilns, who saw it as a charter for censorship,

must admit that the Campaign has created an opening for people to express their views about the media, and been remarkably open about the reactions.

Some saw it as utopian (JN, Camberley; PA, Leicester), others as a much needed statement about basic human rights (MN, Kidlington; PH, Penzance).

Many felt that it should get a much wider airing - particularly in schools and colleges.

Production and distribution of the Manifesto has stretched the Campaign's resources to the limit - so any help with promotion of the eventual booklet will not only be gratefully received but also give some indication of just how committed people are to seeing changes brought about in attitudes to the media, let alone greater access and accountability (those words again).

Media research

The desire for information and detail comes over from many respondents - CL, Brighton, wants 'fact sheets on particular features of the media suitable for teachers in media and social studies', something the Media Research Trust might like to take on - while others draw attention to omissions - 'conservationists/minority little power "green politics"' (IW, Malvern), 'ageism' (TS, Tel Aviv), animal rights (JB, Birkenhead).

In six months the Manifesto has stirred up a great deal of energy and enthusiasm for change in the relationship between 'consumers' and the media. The Campaign evidently chose its moment with some precision - seldom has the media been under more scrutiny by government, opposition parties, the public and the media itself.

Special Branch raids on the BBC, like the appointment of an accountant as 'independent' Director General of the BBC at a time when the government insists that market forces are the true indicators of what the public wants, has brought home to people that media freedom in Britain is more of a myth than a mission.

The ludicrous content of many tabloid papers, the bitter Wapping dispute, and the extraordinary price/circulation war between the three London daily papers emphasises that the profit motive comes long before any concern with transmitting news and information for newspaper proprietors.

Deregulation of the airwaves

Getting our priorities in order

To judge by the number of mentions given to each of the eight Media Manifesto demands in the many responses we have received so far, it would seem that the arbitrary order in which they were first set out could now be rearranged.

The Manifesto provides us with a political agenda for election year, but with more limited resources than we have grown used to, the Campaign will need to concentrate on those issues felt by the membership to require most attention.

One of the functions of the Campaign's 'Legislating for the Media' conference on April 4 is to determine priorities.

What follows is not a definitive order, but an indication of the importance accorded to each demand by those responding so far. (Previous position given in brackets).

1. The Right to Know (1)
2. The Right of Reply (8)
3. Access & Accountability (3)
4. The Right to Fair Representation (2)
5. Facilities for All (7)
6. Freedom of the Airwaves (6)
7. The Right to Make Contact (5)
8. Workers' Participation (4)

If you have yet to express your views on the Media Manifesto, send in your comments now with your own version of a 'Hit List' for the Campaign.

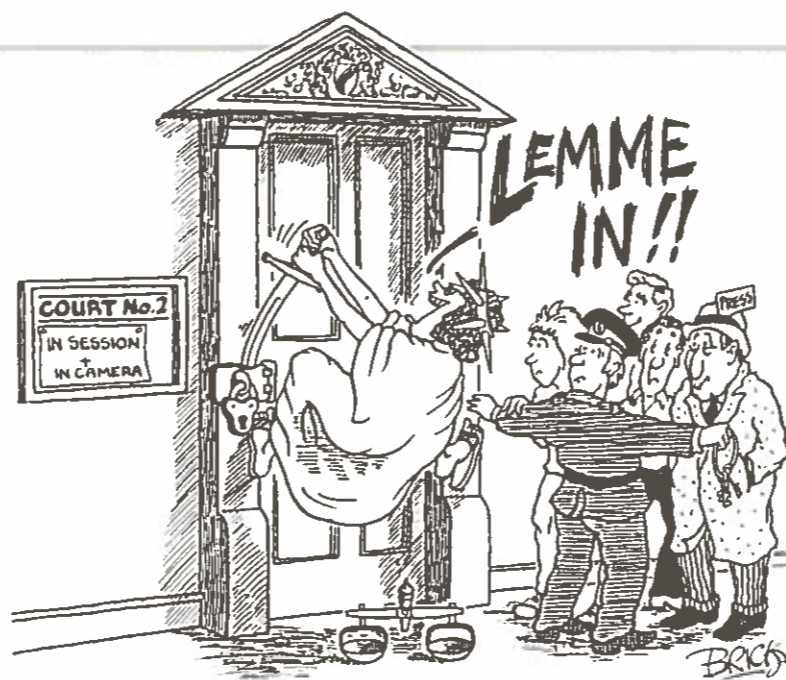
heralds a new era of satellite warfare: we shall soon be bombarded with messages from whichever dominant ideology can muster the cash to fill airtime with 'popular' programming (two guesses).

Crucial issue

If the Campaign's language is extreme, it is because conditions are extreme. If we are to maintain and extend any semblance of democracy, autonomy, and freedom of choice about international relations, then understanding and regulating the media may be the most crucial political issue we have to tackle during and after the forthcoming General Election.

The Media Manifesto is an attempt to bring people together around the notion that those with economic power do not necessarily know what is best for us, and should not be allowed to dictate how and what information and entertainment we receive.

It is an exercise in giving voice to those who are not normally heard, and a chance for those at the receiving end to assert their rights against the unrepresentative and undemocratic behaviour of the media. Hopefully some political parties will begin to take note of our dissatisfaction, and recognise the importance of listening to what the powerless have to say.



The little things

Several commentators have highlighted 'little reforms' which could make a qualitative difference to the way the media operates.

These are the sort of things that members might like to raise by writing to national and local papers, the Radio Times and TV Times, and the various audience response programmes.

Simply by asking the question you can build a groundswell of support, and alert media managers that there are different, and preferable, ways of doing things.

"Editorials" always infer that they represent their vast readership - "the Mirror says"/"the Sun says": lets have the (leader) writers, whether individuals or panels, identified," writes LC, of London.

"Every day thousands of letters-to-editors are scrapped unpublished. This is not only a frustration of free communication, but an enormous wastage of ideas, criticism,

goodwill and creative popular energy. A Campaign priority could be the expansion of readers' letters space, and then taking this absolute veto power away from the Editor, in favour of some more democratic mechanism," OO, Hove.

"Stress the issue of lower postal rates for printed matter" NS, Lymm.

"In China they have local "news boards" on which anyone can write

their news & opinions... Why not CPBF boards in every shopping precinct?" LC, London.

"The CPBF should have a policy on the reporting of sport in nationalist (etc) terms," NM, Loughborough.

Try taking these sorts of themes up, and pressing local and national media publishers on the 'rights of the consumers' - are we supposed to be merely sponges or are we allowed to think and respond for ourselves?

Members may like to suggest more of these often simple but no less significant challenges to the complacency and condescension (especially when it comes to fielding criticism) of the media. But don't expect others to take action unless you have already. Write with your suggestions, but share the results of your own endeavours too.

DRAFT RESOLUTION

Use this framework, incorporating all or some of its clauses to suit the occasion, to encourage support for the Media Manifesto demands within any organisation/political party/trades union branch to which you belong.

Copies of the Manifesto are still available if you need them.

"This... welcomes the initiative of the Campaign for Press & Broadcasting Freedom in producing and distributing a comprehensive Manifesto for media reform to stimulate public debate about the unrepresentative nature of the communications industries, the urgent need for Freedom of Information legislation, and the threat to democracy posed by the growth of unaccountable trans-national multi-media corporations.

It deplores recent government interference in the editorial independence of the BBC, and Special Branch raids on the New Statesman, the BBC and Duncan Campbell's home, as a further threat to media freedom in Britain; and resolves to campaign for a programme of reform to ensure greater access to and democratic accountability in the media, including:

- a) Freedom of Information legislation; the repeal of the Official Secrets Act and the Prevention of Terrorism Act; reform of the Contempt of Court Act to allow full coverage of the administration of justice; an end to security vetting in broadcasting; and the abolition of the D-notice and Parliamentary Lobby systems;
- b) legislation to restrict the number of publications and media outlets owned by any one company or group of companies, and to halt the concentration of ownership in the electronic media;
- c) the establishment of an integrated Ministry of Broadcasting, Arts and Telecommunications;
- d) revision of broadcasting legislation to ensure elected, representative bodies replace the existing system of appointment to the IBA and the BBC Board of Governors, and the creation of accountable regional Media Councils responsible for the allocation and supervision of TV, radio, cable and satellite franchises;
- e) the provision of accessible media facilities through the establishment of a National Printing Corporation and regional Media Enterprise Boards able to invest in new publishing and broadcasting projects and promote training, funded from a levy on all media advertising, taxation and local authority grant;
- f) bringing British Telecom back under public control and establishing an elected National Telecommunications Council with power to ensure that new technologies (including satellite and cable) are developed first and foremost as a public service, and to regulate international satellite transmissions in co-operation with other countries.
- g) an obligation on all media institutions to publicise and uphold a Code of Conduct covering professional ethics, and to guarantee space for a broad range of opinions on matters of industrial, social and political importance; and the creation of advisory bodies to monitor matters of representation relating to class, sexuality, race and disability in terms of both output and employment;
- h) a Statutory Right of Reply;
- i) legislation to guarantee distribution and display to all legitimate publications;
- j) the introduction of forms of industrial democracy that allow media workers direct involvement in editorial and managerial decision-making.'

LET THE CAMPAIGN OFFICE KNOW HOW YOU GET ON - WHAT VERSION GETS PASSED BY YOUR ORGANISATION - WHAT ARGUMENTS ARE PUT FOR AND AGAINST THE RESOLUTION - WHAT FURTHER ACTION IS TO BE TAKEN - WHAT HELP THE CAMPAIGN CAN GIVE.

NUJ support

The Broadcasting Industrial Council (BIC) of the NUJ has called on the union's executive to let all political parties know where it stands on what has become an important election.

The BIC supports the CPBF view that ministerial responsibility for broadcasting should be removed from the Home Office and dealt with by a unified ministry concerned with the arts and the media.

The SDP/Liberal Alliance favours this change, but there has been a long-running debate about it within the Labour Party.

The replacement of Shadow Arts Minister Norman Buchan, who argues that party policy favours the creation of an Arts & Media Ministry, marks a victory for Gerald Kaufman who wants broadcasting to remain in the portfolio to the Home Secretary.

The BIC says 'it is clearly impossible for the Home Office with its wide range of responsibilities including the Police and MI5 to have responsibility for broadcasting freedom which by its nature, often challenges establishments including the Home Office itself.'

Citing the 'Real Lives' and 'Secret Society' incidents, the BIC speaks of 'a political campaign to intimidate broadcasting journalists', and of direct interference by the Home Secretary with the editorial independence of the BBC.

'It should be recognised that there is an interdependence between the arts and broadcasting. But of particular importance to the NUJ is the role of journalism within the media as a whole,' the BIC report continues.

'We have seen the standards of journalism undermined in the newspaper industry by the concentration of ownership and circulation wars which led to Wapping and the principles of Bingo replacing those of journalism.'