

CAMPAIGN FOR PRESS & BROADCASTING FREEDOM

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

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Labour Daily on tape

The CPBF publication 'Labour Daily; ins and outs of a new labour daily' is to be made available as a 'talking book' for the blind and print handicapped. The book will be recorded by the Sound Recording Board of the Royal National Institute for the Blind. This is the first CPBF book to be made available in this form.

Office space to let, Holloway Road

Cheap and cheerful, in a building with a number of other small businesses, community groups, etc. My space is on the 2nd floor and shared. There is a goods lift during office hours, but no disabled access. I work as a freelance in publishing and am active in the campaign.

Other spaces are also available, including more expensive accommodation on the ground floor.

For further information phone 01 607 4463.

New Editor

From this issue Free Press has a new editor in the person of Simon Collings, formerly the Secretary of the Campaign. He has a tough act to follow with Mike Jempson having done such an impressive job with Free Press over the last few years. Our thanks to Mike for the good work he put in.

Media myths

The CPBF is distributing copies of a special issue of *Links*, the quarterly publication of Third World First, on the subject of 'media, myths and misunderstanding'. The issue includes articles by CPBF members Mike Jempson, on the right of reply, and Marc Wadsworth, on racism. Also featured are articles about understanding media, the New International Information Order, women, the Falklands and Guatemala. It was produced to coincide with a three day conference entitled 'Altered Images' which took place in April.

Third World First is a development education organisation based in Oxford with local groups active at universities and colleges around the country. *Links* No. 28 costs £1.50.

NUJ Black journalists conference report out

The report of the NUJ Conference 'Print Journalism and Black People' which took place in December 1986 is now available.

The report includes the full text of the key note address given by Kofi Hadjor and entitled 'For a committed black journalism'. Also in the document are papers on organisation, training, employment and recruitment and reports of workshop discussions around these subjects.

The report contains a wealth of ideas and suggestions for the NUJ to take up. Copies can be obtained from the NUJ, 314 Grays Inn Rd, London WC1X 8DP.

Black workers enquiry

Agreement is likely to be reached shortly on both the composition of and the terms of reference for the enquiry into the 'sacking' of the two black workers earlier in the year.

The National Council has written to the Black Rights Defence Committee asking them to nominate two individuals from a list of names supplied earlier to the Campaign. In turn the National Council is to nominate two other individuals for the panel.

The enquiry is being set up in response to allegations of 'racism' following the termination of the contracts of two black workers in February as result of the funding crisis facing the CPBF.

Edited for the National Council by SIMON COLLINGS. Copy for FP42 should reach the Campaign Office by 10 July.

FREE 30p PRESS

JOURNAL OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR PRESS AND BROADCASTING FREEDOM
No 41 June 1987

Next issue: A strategy for the Tories third term
plus special News on Sunday report

Report exposes Fleet Street lies

An interim report on Media Coverage of London Councils exposes Fleet Street for pedalling lies about the activities of London's local authorities.

Stories like the one about Hackney Council which according to the *London Standard* (27. Feb. '86) banned the use of the word 'manhole' because it was sexist. The story was taken up by the *Star*, the *Sun* and regionals like the *Cumberland Evening News*, and the *Peterborough Evening Telegraph*.

In fact the council has never banned or even discussed the word 'manhole'—and one of the main sources for the story, 'sewage worker Tom Jordan' has never been employed by the council.

The report was conducted by the media Research Group at Goldsmiths College, on behalf of the Association of London Authorities. It found that "not one of these stories is accurate" and some "appeared to have been conjured out of the air; the rest, although loosely connected with some... fact are misleading."

It forms part of a larger study which will be available later this year.*

Guilty

The most guilty papers are, as would be expected, the *Sun*, the *Mail*, the *Mail on Sunday* and the *London Standard*. The stories are hung up on a disablist rhetoric ('loony', 'barmy') and characterised by a contempt for working people and a vicious brand of sexism and racism.

They are meant to undermine public support for those councils who are trying to tackle serious issues in a humane way with limited resources. The number and intensity of these stories seemed to have increased in late '86 and early '87, and have the hallmarks of an orchestrated pre-General election Campaign.

Nancy Walker,** in a similar study of Fleet Street's attack on anti-racist initiatives in education and local government, showed how the same papers operated—often using writers who have well known personal connections with central figures in the Conservative Party:

"Editors select their target, send journalists to research the stories and then withhold publication until the timing is right in campaigning terms. Once a paper published a 'race' story, no matter how trivial others are likely to follow the trail. And so the same 'news' item... can be run in different papers."

The Goldsmith's report gives detailed instances of this technique in operation. A technique which is deliberately designed to manipulate and damage.

Journalists have a responsibility to the public and their trade not to produce this sort of material. CPBF members should obtain copies of the report to help debunk the myths spread by Fleet Street.

The report provides glowing evidence of just how badly needed are reforms of the way our press is run—the need for controls on ownership, and a statutory Right of Reply.

Get it. Read it. Use it.

Tom O'Malley

* £2 from Media Research Group, Goldsmith's College, University of London, New Cross London SE14 6NW.

** N. Murray 'Anti-racists and other demons: the press and ideology in Thatcher's Britain' *Race & Class XXVII*, 3 (1986).

Lesbian and gay Christians attacked

Richard Kirker, an ordained deacon, runs the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement from a (locked) office in St Botolphs Church, Aldgate. Kirker is a responsible man of considerable integrity; LGCM is a responsible, progressive organisation. It offers advice and support and sells solely scholarly works—by appointment only.

So what did Diana Core of Childwatch make of this when she visited him? According to the 'News of the World': "A sickening trade in gay sex and child porn books has been uncovered—in a church!... behind a closed door are such titles as *The Joy of Gay Sex* and *Sexual Experiences between Men and Boys*..."; "Fury at 'vicar of filth'" screamed the *People* (3. May. '87). All of which was taken up by Geoffrey Dickens, MP, to fuel his campaign to purge the Church of its gay vicars; he warned "one day one of their clergy is going to give a child Aids."

Richard Kirker has been publicly labelled a paedophile. The LGCM has been accused of "peddling kinky gay books". And once again the mechanisms for securing any kind of right of reply, even to clear his name let alone put the case for the LGCM, have proved woefully inadequate.

Kirker feels that for the sake of LGCM and the future of gay rights in the Church he may have to issue a libel writ—but getting advice on this alone has already cost him several hundred pounds. If he goes ahead, a defence fund will be launched.

Julienne Dickey

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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● Andrew Lumsden

TUC Women's Conference calls for media reform

The principles included in the CPBF's media manifesto formed the basis of a major motion agreed at the TUC Women's Conference in Blackpool in March.

A comprehensive resolution proposed by the NUJ and seconded by the National Communications Union committed the TUC Women's Committee and the General Council to a wide-ranging campaign to reform the media in Britain. Among the principles taken from the CPBF manifesto were:

- a legal right of reply,
- a Freedom of Information Act,
- workers' participation in press and broadcasting organisations,
- greater accountability to the public.

The motion also condemned the style of the new, semi-pornographic Sunday Sport newspaper; and opposed the publication of Page 3 'pin up' pictures, although the appropriate way to tackle this problem was left open.

The NCU added a clause drawing attention to the abuse of telephone communications through 'information services' such as Pet Line, and calling for proper controls.

In a lively debate, an amendment from SOGAT attempting to restrict the ownership of media in this country to British citizens was rejected by the conference. It was pointed out that such a demand would not only be racist, but also did nothing to tackle the problem of monopoly ownership of the media, as Rupert Murdoch's cynical exchange of citizenship demonstrated.

This decision puts the Women's Conference at odds with TUC Congress itself; but shows, perhaps, that women trade unionists are less prepared to go along with a simplistic, xenophobic response to the issue.

Kate Holman

Manchester audience debates the state of the gay and lesbian press

Homophobia rules O.K.

One obvious question hung about politely until almost the end of the latest Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom's series of public debates at Manchester's Cornerhouse.

If 10 per cent of people are homosexual and if the media consistently misunderstand/misrepresent that large minority, why don't 10 per cent of journalists protest openly?

The question came from the floor to Andrew Lumsden, who was a Telegraph and Times journalist before he "came out" and edited Gay News until it folded in 1983, and until recently an associate editor of The New Statesman. He spread his hands in despair.

"We have behaved appallingly and not done what we should have done," he said.

Lumsden opened the talk, headlined 'Homophobia Rules OK, by quoting from a comment by Ray Mills of the Star on publicity for the event.

Lumsden had been abbreviated in a CPBF press release to "Ass. Editor of The New Statesman" and Mills had quoted this with the remark "Don't miss this discussion. The speakers appear to be particularly well-qualified."

Lumsden quoted more heterosexual mockery from the Spectator and said: "I sometimes get beside myself with anger at the casual but constant stream of insults we get from the opinion formers. But as Oscar Wilde wrote in 1980, "there is much to be said in favour of modern journalism... it keeps us in touch with the ignorance of the community".

He recalled that when the Gay Liberation Front became a force in London, from America, around 1970, he had suggested to the Daily Mirror's editor of the day (probably Tony Miles) that the Mirror should cover the spread of the phenomenon. The editor, who he did not name, said nobody outside London would be interested.

Those words helped prompt him to start Gay News, as "an alternative to pretty-boy mags like Films and Filming, which was a closet operation—an excuse to run very sexy pictures of men".

He recalled that in spite of the Listings section being run by a woman, Jo Hodgkinson, it was used 99 per cent by men.

Andrew Lowrey, a full-time worker for Manchester's Gay Life magazine, said his magazine had launched to fill the gap left by Gay News, whose demise was "a massive blow to what likes to think of itself as the gay community".

But he went on, "since its total mono-

poly of gay publishing disintegrated, there are a far greater variety of gay magazines existing, although nationally there are still only seven that can claim to be regular and established and of those only two are for lesbians as well as gay men. One problem is that we are very dependent on straight people advertising."

Another problem his magazine faced, he said, was being kept on the pornography shelf by newsagents. Also, journalists working for it were not taken seriously by fellow professionals.

Julienne Dickey, a lesbian with special responsibility for researching and organising on behalf of homosexuals for the CPBF, said: "The tradition of seeing homosexuality as the opposite of the norm penetrates the whole of society". "To some extent, the media just reflect that. But there is an extent to which it is deliberate, because homosexuality is seen as scandalous and sensational and therefore very profitable.

She spoke approvingly of a French law requiring legal publications to be displayed and sold and called for a limit on the number of papers one person could own and a right-to-reply law.

A critic from the floor suggested that what purported to be a campaign for freedom appeared to be concentrating exclusively on legal controls of existing media at a time when publication was becoming cheaper and easier and minorities would benefit more from advice and training. Several of the audience agreed that attack was the best form of defence.

Lumsden leaves New Statesman

Lesbians and gay men used to be able to say "There is only one out gay journalist working in mainstream media". But with the redundancy of Andrew Lumsden from the New Statesman, even that is no longer true.

It seems that Lumsden, being gay, is too close to those issues to be "authoritative" about them.

So now the woefully inadequate coverage of lesbian and gay affairs is to be left entirely to those greater "authorities" on the subject: heterosexual journalists, the majority of whom range from ill-informed to downright homophobic.

Another nail in the coffin of press freedom; another silencing of the voice of dissent.

Julienne Dickey

Northern Newsreel launch fifth video bulletin

Since early 1986, Northern Newsreel has been producing a regular, half-hour magazine style programme to cover current debates and issues not traditionally represented by mainstream television and to develop its use within trade unions, education, community and campaign groups.

The bulletins are available four times a year, by annual subscription and the latest programme, BULLETIN NO. 5—Spring '87, was released in early March. This, the fifth of Northern Newsreel's



International festival of film and video

The International Network of Progressive Film and Video is now seeking entries for its FIRST ANNUAL 1987 INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF PROGRESSIVE FILM AND VIDEO. The festival will be held during mid-October 1987 in San Francisco, California. Entries must be received by 1 August 1987.

Entries should reflect social, political, economic, cultural, or ethnic conditions, events or issues worldwide. Special attention will be given to those that explore new forms of film/video making and establish a basis for cross-cultural unity and identification. A portion of the festival will be dedicated to U.S. and international labor struggles.

INPFVO is a non-profit, member-supported organization that promotes the use of progressive film and video as tools for social change and education.

For more information, please call or write INPFVO, P.O. Box 4862, San Francisco CA 94101. (415) 285-8941.

Television fights back

"The theme of this year's Edinburgh International Television Festival will be 'Television Fights Back'," says Greg Dyke, Director of Programmes at TVS and Chair of the 1987 Festival Advisory Committee. He outlined the issues concerning the television industry that will be the focus of this year's Festival.

"We are living through one of the most remarkable periods in the history of broadcasting in this country," he said. "Within five years our broadcasting system could be pulled apart and replaced by something that very few of us—broadcasters or viewers—will like. At the same time, broadcasters are under ever increasing political pressure."

half-hour videotapes contains five items, from 5-10 mins each, including: *WHO PULLS THE STRINGS?*—a look at regional development, the power of the multinationals and the efforts of local authorities.

BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH—performances from Britain's best known dub poet and a chance to hear his latest single "FREE SOUTH AFRICA"
AS (not) SEEN ON TV—some good news from the trade union movement: details of battles which have been won.

The last item is a new feature which Northern Newsreel intend to make a regular short item in future Bulletins, highlighting "success stories" about gains which are being made within the trade union movement particularly those which are being ignored by the mainstream media.

They would like to hear from trade unionists who may have examples for future Bulletins. Contact: Northern Newsreel, 36 Bottle Bank, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE8 2AR.

"When we have reached the stage where the party in government monitors an early evening drama series looking for what they call 'political bias' and certain newspaper editors look for every opportunity to attack television, and in particular the BBC, it is time for programme makers to publicly fight back."

"We need to tell people the value of our broadcasting system and the value of the programmes we make."

"We need to meet the criticisms head on. At Edinburgh we intend to fight back in a constructive way."

The Festival will run from Friday, August 28 through to Monday August 31.

Fawcett Media Committee

The latest issue of the newsletter of the Fawcett Society, announces the launch of a new media campaign designed to change the impression created by the media that "it's the men who know it all."

The intention is to get more women called on as expert commentators in the broadcast media.

"Television and radio news programmes," the newsletter says, "rely heavily on comments from experts—sociologists, doctors, economists, political scientists and so on. Nearly all of them are men."

"Of course there are often fewer female than male experts in these fields, but that's only part of the reason for their under-representation. Producers and editors invite the people who they know or who their friends know; they tend to go back to the tried and tested individuals and sources... All of which usually adds up to a man."

The broad outline of the campaign being put together by the Society's Media Committee is research, drawing up a list of female experts and campaigning.

The committee has appealed for help with the first of these which involves monitoring present coverage. If you would like to help contact: Ana Novakovic, 5 Colville Hoses, Talbot Road, London W11 1JB.

Letters

Pen pals for peace

On Monday 2nd March I was visited by an Inspector and Sergeant from Leeds Police. They said: "In July 1985 you received some correspondence from Duncan Campbell. Are you willing to make a statement regarding the request you received in that letter—plus any information you may have supplied to him?"

They said the enquiry was via the Metropolitan Police. I replied: "I do not wish to make a statement." (This is exactly what they said as I typed it in their presence.)

If any other members of the Campaign for Press & Broadcasting Freedom who have corresponded with Duncan Campbell have had similar visits, I would be very glad to hear from them. We could even start a new group—Duncan Campbell's Pen Pals for Peace!

Christine Dean
Member: Otley Peace Action Group
West Yorkshire

Reader's letters

I was pleased to see some of my October letter in the recent issue.

Your point about taking action oneself is well made. For what it is worth, I have nagged the Guardian, on and off, for years, about more space for readers' letters. You may remember that a few years ago they went up to a full page on Saturdays. I cannot be sure it was influential but I had just been pressing as eloquently as I could for something like that.

I have been having a similar go at the New Statesman's new Editor.

Oliver Owen
5 Rochester Mansions
Hove
Sussex

ALTERED IMAGES

Media, Myths and Misunderstanding

Articles examine images of the Third World, Black people and women in the British mass media and provide alternative options for improved presentation of the issues. Contributions from CPBF's own Mike Jempson and Marc Wadsworth with other articles and interviews including:
—women and media (Margaret Gallagher)
—Live Aid (Adrian Hart)
—Falklands/Malvinas (David Miller)
—the press in Guatemala (Julio Godoy)
—the New International Information Order
—book reviews, and more

Links number 28 from Third World First
28 pages, A4, ISBN 1870169751, 1987

To obtain your post free copy send your cheque for £1.95 made payable to 'Third World First' to Box FP, 232 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1UH

Gill Ursell, reports on a recent Manchester University Seminar.

Broadcasting in the 1990's

Once a year, under the auspices of the University of Manchester, a symposium on broadcasting is held at which assorted broadcasting professionals and academics debate the important media issues of the day. This year the symposium's theme was *Patterns of Power in Broadcasting*, and the audience was notable for an unusually high number of overseas participants from continental Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia and the Americas.

They by and large were hoping to learn from the British way of coping with a problem which is also theirs — viz. the destabilisation of existing national broadcasting institutions in the era of satellite systems.

A year ago, following the 1986 symposium, I wrote in a *New Society* article of signs of fear among BBC and ITV staffs. They had identified as a potential enemy the satellite barons of free enterprise, poised ready to spray programmes like acid rain down on the British nation, corroding standards, audiences and cultural institutions alike in an insouciant search for megabucks.

How, they asked in 1986, were they going to respond to the threat? What would the British government do to avert it? Interestingly, sadly, the 1987 symposium revealed them to be still asking the first question but now to feel threatened by HM Government as well. The penny has dropped among broadcasters that market freedom in the cultural industries constitutes—for the politicians at least—an invitation to ever greater political surveillance and interference.

Ever since the size of the television audience first terrified the politicians, they have been wanting to get in on the broadcasting act. Now a mixture of recession and satellite free enterprise are giving them the excuses to do so. Under the twin banners of "ensuring value for money" and "protecting the national interest", governments of the electronic epoch can muscle right into the heart of broadcasting management.

This prospect is viewed with considerable disquiet by the Great and the Good whose presence on the BBC Board of Governors and on the IBA has hitherto been regarded, at least by them, as nearly ideal in ensuring the public accountability of British broadcasting.

The Great and the Good of the public boards are almost invariably elderly (average 55 going on 60 years), white, Anglo-Saxon, male Radio 4 listeners. Women (51% of the population) have a roughly 25% representation; black people none at all; trade unionists get on only if the Home Office civil servants

remember to put them there, and there's a distinct absence of boat rockers.

But in the new era perhaps even these unrepresentative representatives are going to look increasingly attractive, as public service broadcasting shrivels under the combined pressures of government intervention and market competition. The indexation of the BBC licence, the prospects of commercially driven national radio channels, and even a hived off Channel 4, add up to a real threat.

And this without the extra factor of satellite broadcasting, the continental experience of which is not encouraging. Belgium, for example, now has 20 TV channels. American material fills up to 80% of the airtime on some of these channels and it is sometimes possible to pick up Dallas on seven of them simultaneously. The Flemish minorities are refusing to receive Sky and Superchannels because of the threat to their domestic production.

Can the extra-terrestrial invasion be contained? Currently both the EEC and the Council of Europe are giving their attention to the question. Two lobbies are evident: one lobby wants the new media purely as vehicles for advertising; the other is concerned to protect existing domestic systems. Unregulated market conditions suit the former but not the latter.

Both the Council of Europe and the EEC seem agreed that some form of regulation is desirable but what they are proposing differs one from the other, and both from the national regulatory frameworks with which they must sometime be compatible.

The Council's proposal is for a Euro-

pean convention binding all broadcasters, whether national or transnational, to certain standards in programme content. The EEC's draft directive on the other hand reflects an almost schizophrenic effort to preserve national cultural identities while pursuing policies of market freedom and the harmonisation of rules within the community.

The result is a package of highly specific regulations which broadcasters in this country have so far viewed with considerable alarm and equivocation.

The various interests up to now bound together in the British broadcasting institutions are visibly fragmenting in their efforts to assess the new developments.

At this point no-one knows whether it will be the Council's convention or the EEC's directive which will prevail. All that can be said with reasonable certainty is that economic power does seem to be consolidating but at an international rather than a national level.

In response the "representative bodies" which negotiate that power in the name of "the people" are also shifting upwards and outwards. Where previously the public boards stood as a buffer between broadcasters and politicians in representing "the public interest", now governments are moving between broadcasters and audiences so as to represent "the national interest". That, in defining the national interest, politicians will act in ways partisan goes without saying. That has been well demonstrated in recent years by the present Government.

That the public, who were not really in on the act before, will not really be in on the act in the future, perhaps also goes without saying.

Tebbitt turned over

Norman Tebbit's attack on the BBC coverage of the USA bombing of Libya has been dubbed a document with "little academic credibility" and "partisan and even dishonest". These were the conclusions drawn by Len Masterman, lecturer in Media Studies at Nottingham University in his *Television and the bombing of Libya*.*

He analysed the BBC 9 O'clock News and ITN's News at Ten for 15 and 17 of April 1986 in the light of the report produced by Conservative Central Office (CCO).

Masterman found that the BBC's coverage on the night of the bombings was surprisingly comprehensive — examining the story from sixteen different angles, using 47 different sources and extending the length of the News by 23 minutes. The BBC story contained 50% more information than ITN's on a simple word count.

The report is a clear indictment of the arguments used in the CCO report. It provides valuable analysis for use in discussion and debate. The CCO report is exposed as an overwhelmingly political intervention, not a proper academic exercise. Reading it reveals just how serious the Tories are about discrediting the BBC and preparing it for privatisation.

* Available from MK Media Press, May Cottage, Toad Lane, Elston, Nr Newark (£2.95 inc. postage).

Tom O'Malley

Alternative Information Centre Jerusalem closed

Repressive measures by the Israeli Government against the freedom of expression in the last few years have been increasingly extended to include Israeli individuals and organisations.

One of the most recent and blatant attempts to curb freedom of expression was the closure of the Alternative Information Centre, and the subsequent arrest of its Director Michael Warshavsky.

The West Jerusalem based Alternative Information Centre (AIC) was raided and closed by the Israeli police on 16 February. The centre was closed for six months under the 1980 amendment to the Prevention of Terrorism Act (The Tamir Law). The AIC was founded in January 1985 with three main aims: to produce a regular newsletter, to provide services to journalists and to establish an information centre for individuals and foreign delegations.

Amongst other charges, the centre's director was accused with acting on behalf of the PLO and rendering services to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, charges he vigorously denies. Warshavsky, currently on bail

of \$50,000 awaiting trial, stated that "all the material produced by the centre was legal and had all been passed by the Israeli censor before publication".

The Israeli Journalist Association and many Israeli newspapers, in addition to a variety of international figures, have condemned this violation of freedom of expression.

The situation regarding freedom of expression of Palestinians and Israelis has steadily declined over the last few years. In addition to heavy censorship of primarily Palestinian but also Israeli newspapers and a variety of military and administrative regulations curbing freedom of expression there has been an

increase in repressive legislation passed by the Israeli parliament.

In 1980 the Israeli parliament passed an Amendment to the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance (1948) known as the "Tamir Law" which bans any form of support or political identification with organisations defined by the Israeli Government as terrorist. This law has been extended to encompass any signs of nationalist sympathy or support for the Palestinians right of self-determination.

In August 1986 a further amendment to the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance (nicknamed "The anti-Peace Law") was passed banning contact between Israelis and members of a "terrorist" organisation, which includes political representatives of the Palestinian people.

Initially these repressive measures were mainly directed against Palestinian attempts to express their aspirations and feelings of national identity.

Many papers have been closed down either completely or for limited periods. Palestinian journalists have been detained, deported or even murdered. The recent case of *Akram Hanniye*, the former editor of *Al-Sha'ab*, who was deported in 1987 is the latest example of attempts to silence the Palestinian press.

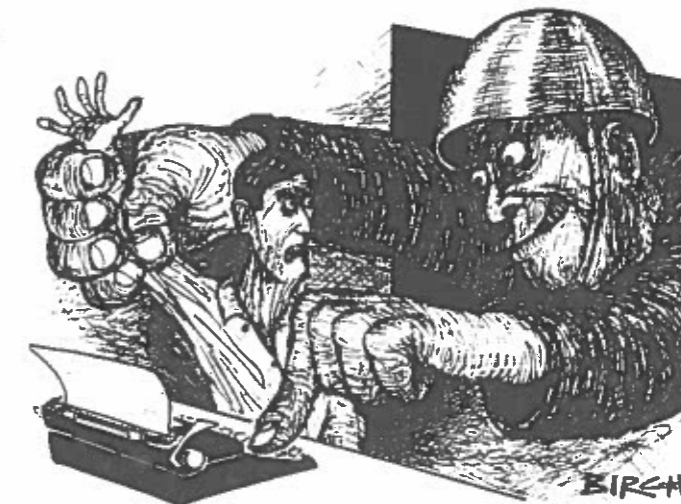
Nigerian magazine shut down

Newswatch magazine, one of Nigeria's leading weeklies, was closed down by the authorities on 6 April, following the publication of a confidential report on the country's future political system. The relevant issue of the magazine was seized before security forces sealed the magazine's office in Lagos, the capital.

The report in question was commissioned by Nigeria's military ruler, President Ibrahim Babagida, in January of last year to examine the possibility of a return to civilian rule by 1990. The 18-member Political Bureau, composed mainly of academics and headed by Professor S. J. Cookey, Pro-Chancellor of the University of Benin, delivered its four-volume report to the government on 27 March after processing more than 27,000 submissions to the debate.

In a country which boasts one of the freest presses in the world, the latest move against *Newswatch* is surprising, more so since the report, which has been the focus of intense public debate for 15 months, appears to contain nothing controversial.

Source: Index on Censorship.



More Sun hypocrisy

A PARTICULARLY nauseating example of SUN hypocrisy was in evidence in its edition of April 28.

The 'Baby look at you now!' photo feature on page three showed bare-breasted Corinne Russel (22) alongside a charming picture of her aged 5.

Under the headline "It's kids stuff for Corinne" the text read "Corinne is a big girl now... what boy wouldn't love her to come out and play! But that's enough now you naughty rascals, you can have another Page Three babe tomorrow!"

On page 6, the moralising SUN splashed the NSPCC report on the increase in child molestation under the banner "SEX ABUSE HORROR OF UNDER 5s".

Beside it, the leader column the Sun had a

few words for Camden Council.

"Left-wing Camden Council displayed homosexual leaflets in public libraries.

"Some, which showed naked men in explicit sex acts, were taken home by children.

"Tory Parliamentary candidate Peter Luff wants the council to be prosecuted.

"We agree with him.

"Corrupting youth is a criminal offence.

"The disreputable burghers of Camden belong in the dock."

Seldom can the SUN have so comprehensively eclipsed itself. On second thoughts, perhaps it does every day.

I don't suppose for a moment that Peter Luff wants the SUN prosecuted. I wonder why.

Mike Jempson

A busy year over but...

Another busy year has been completed but financial problems will inevitably mean a curtailment of activities. This was the message which some sixty delegates to the 1987 AGM heard from the outgoing officers.

During 1986/7 Bending Reality was published, Action Stations—a conference on Peacock took place, the Media Manifesto was launched, CENSORAMA was



• Julienne Dickey

organised, international links established and the Media Research Trust set up.

Sub-groups of the Campaign were active around disability, anti-racism, sexism and lesbian and gay issues.

The CPBF started 1986 not knowing if it would get funding from the London Boroughs Grants Unit. In the event it did and during the year staffing reached a record high with two full-time workers, one four-day a week worker and two members of staff working two days a week. In addition the Campaign retained its worker in the North West.

During the year expenditure overtook income leaving the Campaign £7000 in the red at the end of the financial year. The main loss was on the Christmas event—CENSORAMA. Investment in the Media Manifesto has also placed a strain on finances.

At the same time, many Trade Unions, who have been an important source of support in the past are experiencing financial problems of their own.

The real threat to the Campaign's work comes from the loss of grant funding, however. This will inevitably mean a restriction on what work can be undertaken during 1987/8.

One of the casualties is likely to be Free Press itself—despite the fact that in 1985 and 1986 it broke even on advertising income. Recently advertising has begun to dry up, another consequence of the demise of the Metropolitan Authorities. As a result Free Press will almost certainly have to be trimmed.

Row over 'racism' allegations

The AGM opened with a heated debate over the non-renewal of the contracts of the two black workers' in February. The row developed during questions on the Secretary's Report shortly after the meeting had begun.

The two black workers' fixed contracts were ended in February because of a funding crisis which has since deepened.

The row was complicated by the presence of a number of people who were not members of the CPBF who refused to leave the meeting. Debate on the substantive issues of alleged 'racism' within the Campaign only got under way after AGM business was suspended.

The allegations of 'racism' are being considered by an independent enquiry set up by the National Council in consultation with members of the Black Group.

A motion on the order paper relating to this issue which came up later in the day was not taken because the proposer failed to turn up.

Secret justice

Increasingly in Britain today justice is being administered away from public scrutiny. In thousands of cases each year judges are using the Contempt of Court Act to ban journalists reporting court cases.

These disturbing developments were the subject of an NUJ motion passed by the AGM. The motion cited the case of reporters actually being banned from attending the trial of a police informer in Oxford, something which the NUJ believes the judge had no power in law to do.

The case, which had raised important issues about police methods and the administration of justice, could not be reported because of the ban.

The motion called for CPBF members to vigorously challenge every instance of the use of the Act for judicial or state convenience.

Standing orders

Procedure at next year's AGM is to be governed by standing orders which will be drawn up by the National Council. This was an undertaking given by the Chair to this year's AGM.

In the past it has been the responsibility of the Chair to decide on matters where the Rules are silent taking precedent as a guide.

The new standing orders will be circulated with motions next year and will be put to the meeting for adoption at the beginning of the AGM.

Applause for John Jennings

The AGM congratulated John Jennings on his successful defence of the libel action brought by the Freedom Association (see FP40 for a full report of the terms of the final settlement).

The next issue of Free Press will contain a report of the Media Manifesto Conference

Lesbian and gay rights threatened

Lesbians and gay men are facing an increasing attack on their civil rights as media homophobia mounts. Nicola Field of the Lesbian and Gay Group said.

The motion to which she spoke noted the continuing sensationalist coverage given to AIDS. It called on members and affiliated bodies to exert pressure on the media 'to expose and publicise the widespread discrimination and mistreatment suffered by lesbians and gay men.'

ited as 'weapons' allegedly used by pickets.

He also spoke of restrictions imposed on local residents and inhibitions on journalists trying to do their job. Delegates agreed that CPBF should submit evidence along with the NUJ to the Haldane Society who are compiling material.

John Pinkerton (NGA) thanked all those who had tried to help the print workers. He said that the brutality of police officers was driving a wedge between the police and the public.

In a separate resolution, the AGM agreed that the weakening of the print unions under-

mined the fight for the right to reply. The climate had changed from that in which the project was originally launched. The resolution, moved by John Beck (NGA) proposed that the strategy needed rethinking.

A motion calling for a boycott of the Sun was remitted, however, after several speakers warned of possible charges of censorship. Others questioned the feasibility of organising such a boycott.

One speaker regretted that the boycott campaign operating during the dispute had not taken up the content of the Sun.

Attacks on BBC condemned

Delegates to this year's AGM were unanimous in their condemnation of the Special Branch raid on the BBC in Glasgow when copies of the Secret Society series were seized. They were equally emphatic in their condemnation of the role played by senior Labour Party figures at the time of the raid.

Three resolutions from the ACTT, Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance and NUJ all addressed this subject.

In moving the first of these, Martin Spence (ACTT) said the CPBF needed to be able to respond swiftly to this type of threat. Tony Lennon (ACTT) seconding said the banning of the Zircon film 'had nothing to do with national security' but everything to do with 'political embarrassment'.

Tim Gopsill, moving the NUJ motion, said that Neil Kinnock's early comments had undermined the ability of his union to resist. He said it was important for the CPBF to tell labour what the Campaign expected of them.

He also said that the role of the BBC Board of Governors should not be overlooked.

Tony Lennon felt Labour's 'mistake' should be kept in proportion. 'The CPBF needs

to recognise where its friends are,' he said. But Sean Gray (ACTT) believed it was important that the Campaign 'didn't back off from speaking its mind'.

The AGM went on to condemn attacks on the BBC by Conservative Party politicians in a motion tabled by the NUJ. Tim Gopsill said 'the Tories are trying to exert political control over the BBC'. The motion, which was agreed without opposition, urged members and affiliates to 'identify and draw public attention to attempts to intimidate journalists'.

Other broadcasting motions on the agenda dealt with cable and satellite TV and the new Green Paper on radio.

On the first of these subjects the delegates called for strict controls to ensure protection of copyright, div-

ersity of ownership and protection of employment.

The Green Paper on Radio was condemned as an attack on the principles of public service broadcasting. The resolution said that deregulation would lead to greater monopoly of ownership and a reduction of choice. It went on to call for a campaign for properly funded and regulated radio services under democratic control.

Media Manifesto

A resolution welcoming the Media Manifesto campaign laid down five areas of legislation for priority attention by this year's National Council.

They are regulation of ownership and control; freedom of information; public representation on the boards of the BBC and IBA; a Media Enterprise Board; and an effective complaints watchdog for the media.

A detailed motion on media policy tabled by James Curran was remitted in the mover's absence.

An Irish perspective

The repeal of 'Section 31' of the Irish Broadcasting Act, which prevents journalists from the Republic having contact with members of proscribed organisations, was the subject of one of two motions from Ireland.

Patsy McGarry (NUJ) spoke to the motion and outlined the activities of the NUJ in Ireland on the issue. He said he was 'optimistic' that the offen-

ding section of the Act would be taken out by the new Fianna Fail government.

The legislation has led to absurd anomalies such as Irish journalists not being able to interview Gerry Adams after his election to Westminster.

The AGM noted that the CPBF had already lent support to the Repeal Section 31 Committee in the Republic.

The other motion on Ireland concerned the banning

of a short drama piece against the use of plastic bullets which was to have been screened on the Eleventh Hour on Channel Four.

The programme was banned at short notice under Section 4 of the Broadcasting Act (UK) which covers matters 'liable to incite crime or public disorder'. Madelaine Barnet, moving the motion, said this was another example of Irish peoples' views being censored.

The motion also described an incident in which relatives of people killed by plastic bullets were forbidden to attend a studio discussion by a producer because their experiences were not 'germaine to the issue'.