

CAMPAIGN FOR PRESS & BROADCASTING FREEDOM

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

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AGM DETAILS

The 1988 AGM of the CPBF will be held on Saturday 19 April at Rm 3A, University of London Union, Malet Street, London WC1 7HY. Nominations for the National Council must arrive at the offices in Poland Street by 25 March.

Motions for the AGM must be submitted by the earlier date of 26 February. Full details have been circulated to members and affiliates and are available from the office.

NEW ORGANISER

Nancy Jaeger's successor as North West Campaign Organiser is Granville Williams. Granville was one of the original management committee members who was instrumental in setting up the NW campaign.

He has a professional background in journalism and teaching media and

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communications studies, as well as political campaigning and organising skills.

Granville has already met with officers of the Campaign in London to plan ways in which greater co-operation between the Manchester and London offices can be achieved over the next year.

Granville will take over fully in the North West in March.

NEW ADDRESS

The NW Campaign, as well as gaining a new organiser, has also moved premises. The office is in the same building but in a different room. The new address is:

North West Campaign
 Room 244 Corn Exchange Building
 Hanging Ditch
 Manchester M4 3BQ

The telephone number remains unchanged at: 061 832 6991.

NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

As we move into a new round of trade union and party political conferences, CPBF members are encouraged to get the local branches of organisations of which they are members to adopt resolutions on media policy.

The model resolution in Free Press 43 (page 5) can be adapted to suit local

needs. Additional copies of the model resolution can be obtained from the office.

Make 1988 the year your trade union/political party adopts CPBF policy on the media.

Edited for National Committee by SIMON COLLINGS. Copy for Free Press 46 should arrive at the office by 15 March 1988.

The next issue of Free Press will include details of CPBF's new publications catalogue.

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JOURNAL OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR PRESS AND BROADCASTING FREEDOM
 No. 45 FEBRUARY 1988

Psst! More spy revelations...

After initially seeking to ban press coverage of the content of Anthony Cavendish's memoirs, the Government has now modified its stance on this latest spy book.

In so doing and allowing some sections of the book to be quoted the Government now appears to be engaged in a rethinking of its approach to 'secrecy'.

The announcement by the Home Secretary that the Government proposals on reform of the Official Secrets Act will follow broadly the line of Shepherd's ill-fated Private Members Bill is evidence of the same process.

How far the Government's attitude to this area of policy is being modified we can only wait and see. Meanwhile we reproduce here some of the Cavendish 'revelations' as they appeared in the Glasgow Herald on 7 January when they prompted the Government to seek an interim interdict in the Scottish Courts.

On Wilson . . .

"It was always very clear to me from things he said that Maurice was somehow involved in the sudden departure of Harold Wilson from the premiership."

"I believe that something may have come into his hands and that he showed it to the Foreign Secretary, James Callaghan.

"That this coincided with the culmination of a long-standing MI5 campaign to discredit the Prime Minister, a campaign originally fired by a CIA theory based on evidence from Golitsin, a discredited defector, merely served to increase Wilson's distaste for intelligence matters and intelligence people in general.

"Maurice did tell me, however, that he had to admit to the Prime Minister that there was a section of MI5 which was unreliable. Whether or not MI5 were tied to the PM's resignation, weird and disturbing things were undoubtedly happening within MI5 at this time, particularly in Northern Ireland, and there is no doubt that the serious campaign against Oldfield was started there."

On vetting . . .

"Tony, I have been lying about my positive vetting," he said bleakly, and added 'I have just



Photo: Carolyn Letham

● Mike Power, CPBF vice-chair with Ann Clywd, MP, at the House of Commons press launch for the Bill.

Tories talk out Right of Reply

Ann Clywd's Unfair Reporting and the Right of Reply Bill failed to get its scheduled second reading on Friday 5 February following an organised move by Conservative MPs to prevent it being debated.

The Bill was 'talked out' by lengthy contributions from Tory back-benchers on a preceding item, a noncontroversial private members bill on the use of seat belts.

With the Right of Reply Bill attracting a wide measure of public and cross party support, the Government clearly decided not to risk a debate. The Bill has been rescheduled for 26 February but its chances of succeeding now look slim.

Cowardly

Describing the Tories' procedural manoeuvre, Ann Clywd said: "This is a cowardly move by the Government to deny MPs the chance to debate an important extension of consumer rights."

"It is clear that Mrs Thatcher and her Government are more interested in protecting Mr Murdoch and their other allies in the media than in protecting ordinary people who fall victim to inaccurate reporting."

Despite its lack of progress in the House of Commons the Bill has attracted a wide measure of public support since its publication on 20 January. Both the Bill and the preceding Green Paper generated a wealth of constructive and helpful comment.

Many members of the public also wrote in with examples of personal experiences of misrepresentation and misreporting.

Organisations and prominent individuals who have supported the legislation include John Pilger, Bruce Kent, David Yip, the Institute of Public Relations, the London Chamber of Commerce, the London Baptists Association and a number of trade unions and local authorities. Norman Willis issued a press release pledging TUC support.

The Bill also received a considerable amount of media coverage including a Right of Reply Special and Comment on Channel 4, a

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The International Press Institute has just published its annual World Press Freedom Review in the latest edition of the monthly IPI Report. This comprehensive 32 page survey lists the various developments in press freedom internationally, with detailed reports on events in 78 countries around the world.

In its introduction the IPI's director, Peter Galliner, describes 1987 as a 'very mixed year'. 'In between the bad news of murders and arrests, of scandals, persecution and harassment and at the same time the heartening phenomenon of glasnost, there lies a seemingly inevitable trend which has developed over the past twelve months... the growing number of conflicts between the media and the courts in democratic countries.'

Among the few positive developments

Nicaragua's gamble for peace

One of the few tangible achievements of the central American Peace Accords to date has been the reopening of the Nicaraguan opposition paper, La Prensa and the radio station, Radio Catolica. A joint communique issued by President Daniel Ortega, together with La Prensa's owner, Mrs Chamorro and director, Mr Madrigal speaks of contributing to the 'climate of peace and understanding that the country needs to advance in the process of national dialogue and reconciliation.'

I spoke with Nicaraguan Ambassador to the UK, Signor Francisco D'Escoto, who was little more forthright in describing the gamble that his government was taking.

'Although we are continuously attacked by US mercenaries, the peace agreement calls for us to establish democratic freedom, so Nicaragua has taken many steps in accordance with these accords. These measures are very impressive in the face of the military situation. You must remember that we are still facing a war of aggression, and La Prensa was being financed by the enemy.'

This La Prensa link has since been exposed by the Ingate revelations of Col. Oliver North. There is no way any other member of the international community would allow an enemy to control sections of the media during wartime.

I mean, can you imagine the Germans being allowed to control British newspapers during the first or second world war?

Peter Moszynski

Press freedom round the world

by Peter Moszynski

listed are the reopening of Nicaragua's main opposition paper, La Prensa, and the radio station, Radio Catolica, and the establishment of a new opposition daily in Chile: La Epoca. The election of the Spanish Biochemist Frederico Mayer Zaragoza as Directory-General of UNESCO in place of the controversial Amadou M'Bow is seen as a hopeful break in the impasse that has paralysed the activities of that beleaguered organization.

Unfortunately, but perhaps not unsurprisingly, the majority of last year's developments have been negative. South Africa is only the most noteworthy example of a regime stifling dissent by clamping down on freedom of expression. The Pretoria government is now empowered to close down any paper for three months or require pre-publication approval of articles.

Six black journalists, including Zwelakhe Sisulu, editor of New Nation, now languish in apartheid jails. Eight foreign journalists have been expelled and hundreds of others refused visas, while one of South Africa's most respected white liberal newsmen, Anthony Heard, was dismissed as editor of the Cape Times.

Thatcher's favourite African leader, Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya, has made dire threats against Amnesty International, and banned all Scandinavian reporters, following the extensive coverage given to Amnesty's allegations of torture in Kenya in those countries. Four foreign correspondents were beaten up while covering riots by Nairobi university students. One, Lindsay Hilsom, of the BBC and the Guardian, had her spine broken.

In Fiji life has become very difficult for journalists following Col. Rabuka's second coup: two newspapers have been closed and strict censorship imposed. Fifteen correspondents have been expelled from Tibet, and sweeping press restrictions have been imposed in Malaysia, including the closure of several papers. Rajiv Gandhi has taken

to propping up his increasingly unpopular regime with raids and other measures against the press reminiscent of his mother's Emergency.

South America's traditional mistreatment of journalists continues unabated in the two remaining Dictatorships, Chile and Paraguay, whilst in supposedly democratic Colombia things have got so bad that a one day strike of all the country's media was held after the assassination of Guillermo Cano, one of the country's most respected editors. Over the past ten years 25 journalists have been murdered, and ten more journalists' names appear on a Death List published by one of Colombia's many Paramilitary groups. The situation in Colombia is worsened by the terrifying power of the Drug Barons, but they aren't the only culprits.

The Review deals with many more such instances throughout the world, and also points to another worrying trend: the increasing concentration of ownership and control in the hands of a few powerful media 'Barons', such as Maxwell, Murdoch, Hersant and Berlusconi. This trend represents an entirely different challenge to press freedom internationally, and could have grave implications unless halted or reversed.

Further details: Adam Feinstein, managing editor of IPI Report, (01-636 0703).

Article 19

1988 is the fortieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 19, the recently founded international anti-censorship pressure group that takes its name from the nineteenth article of the declaration: ('Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers') is celebrating this anniversary by publishing a handbook on censorship and freedom of opinion around the world. This book, which examines the records of fifty representative countries, should be available in the spring. Article 19, 90 Borough High St. SE1 (01-403 4822)

Peter Moszynski

THE latest news of detained Malawian poet Jack Mapanje is that he is being held in Mikuyu detention centre near Zomba. He is in good health, despite a bout of malaria, is being well treated, and his university salary, which had been stopped, has been restored. Recent rumours that he was to be charged with sedition appear to be groundless.

Speculation within Malawi about the reasons for Mapanje's arrest is focusing on the role Dr Dzizani Kadzamura, Principal of the Chan-

Mapanje—protest grows

cellor College in the University of Malawi where Mapanje is Head of the Department of English. Kadzamura is the brother of Cecilia Kadzamura, President Banda's official hostess, and nephew of John Tembo who is now openly campaigning to succeed Dr Banda.

The background to Mapanje's arrest is the increasingly bitter dispute over the succession to Dr

Banda who is probably in his ninetieth year. Banda's repudiation of Cecilia Kadzamura leaves John Tembo as his preferred candidate. Tembo is South Africa's candidate too, and it may be significant that Mapanje's arrest coincided with a visit to Malawi by South African Foreign Minister Pih Botha. But Tembo is widely disliked in Malawi and cannot command

the support of either the Congress party or the army.

Politicians and the police in Malawi are reported to have been stunned by the speed and the extent of international protest at Mapanje's arrest and especially by the many hundreds of letters which have poured in. There are indications that this protest is helping to ensure that Mapanje is well treated.

Women's Group course

For the past term, we have been running a WEA evening class at the Kingston Women's Centre: *Images of Women in a Multi-Cultural Society*. We feel that an effective way of countering media sexism is to actively encourage other women to campaign against it.

The course has brought together several women in the Kingston area who are now forming their own group. It has been remarkable in bringing together women from different cultures. Although we have found that, as tutors, meeting the different needs was demanding, comparing various cultural experiences has been really interesting.

We are planning to run a similar course at a different venue next term.

Evelyn Reid
Teresa Stratford

New Videos

Northern Newsreel's eighth video bulletin - Winter '87 features an extract from The People's Account, a full-length documentary by Ceddo Film & Video Workshop, recently banned from broadcast by the IBA, which investigates the uprisings at Broadwater Farm in Tottenham, in the Autumn of 1985.

It also includes reports on how the Trade Union movement is facing up to the challenges of the '80s, takes a hard look at the current debate on single union and 'no strike' deals, examines the tabloids view of left-wing councils and features a five-minute drama item Amandla Ngawethu, focussing on the struggle against redundancy by a Trade Union based in the North-East, which seemed hopeless, until inspired by a South African speaker from the UDF.

Northern Newsreel has been in production since early 1986. A regular feature of each bulletin has been an item which looks at 'Aspects of Racism'. Each of these items, which cover: Racism at work, immigration law, young people and racism, unemployment and fascism, the particular difficulties of elderly people from ethnic minorities, racism in the North and one woman's experience of racism and sexism in the North-East - have now been compiled on to one VHS videotape called Aspects of Racism. From: Northern Newsreel, 36 Bottle Bank, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE8 2AR.

Say no to VAT on books

Plans to put VAT on books and other publications in all EEC countries by the end of 1992 are actively being considered by the European Parliament and National Governments.

The European Commission's draft directive suggests that each member state would be forced to impose between 4 and 9% VAT. In reality, this would increase book prices by almost double the rate of VAT imposed because lower sales lead to increased unit costs.

The European Committee Against Taxing Books has produced a leaflet criticising the proposals. Apart from the effects on literacy levels, educational institu-

Sexuality and AIDS

Policing Desire: Pornography, AIDS and the Media, Simon Watney, Comedia, £6.95.

For a distressing and incurable condition, AIDS has been treated with a remarkable lack of compassion by the media in general and by the tabloid press in particular. AIDS' public profile (unusually high for a medical condition) carries strong notions of moral justice against gay men and heroin addicts, but only hazy ideas of what AIDS patients actually go through.

So I was glad to see this book by a member of the excellent Terrence Higgins Trust, whose practical, consistent help to people with AIDS, largely unreported, is a powerful challenge to the panic around this subject.

I was, however, disappointed by this book, and one reason is the way it is written. Simon Watney's style is so heavily embroidered, with long clauses and piled-up adjectives, that the reader can become lost in the decoration.

It is frequently necessary to go back and re-read a sentence, in order to find out exactly what the point was. I suspect that many readers will not do this, and that Simon Watney will consequently get away with the many inaccuracies and dubious assertions that his book contains.

For although he is fairly clear when writing about media treatment of gay men, the book aims to discuss wider issues of sexuality, and representation, and I found these badly done. I don't think it's expecting too much from a book which has 'pornography' in its title to look for a description of what the writer means by this term, yet this is nowhere made clear, despite extensive criticism of other people's theories around pornography.

He is also disappointingly vague when discussing right-wing arguments; I felt that more needed to be said about notions of what is supposed to be acceptable pornography (*The Sun*, 'men's magazines'), and what is not (gay and lesbian sexual representation).

tions and libraries and the book trade, a tax on reading will result in:

- Fewer books being brought: fewer will be published. Quality books and minority interests will suffer.
- Self education (gaining knowledge and understanding through reading) will be discouraged.
- Reduced export of books, which hampers the international exchange of ideas.
- Higher research costs: essential information, reports and monographs will be more expensive.

S. Hall

Simon Watney evidently feels very strongly about this subject, but I find his anger and vehemence all too similar to the kind of tabloid reporting about which he is so scornful. And the unfortunate choice of cover design (a man's naked buttocks) makes the association between AIDS and anal sex, which he is so anxious to refute.

Teresa Stratford

Media Myths

Women, Media and Crisis: Femininity and Disorder by Michèle Mattelart

Brought together under the above title, this book comprises a collection of discursive essays all written between 1971 and 1982. They mostly date from the early seventies and were originally written in Spanish.

Part One is a learned critique of the myths generated by women's magazines and television serials—particularly those produced in or imported to Latin America. The second section of the book enlarges on this theme while concentrating on the grievous effects that mass media advertising has on women everywhere. 'The only criteria used are sales, prestige...'

The essay entitled 'The Myth of Modernity' is painstakingly thorough in its description of how '... modernity has its own particular way of entering the world of the individual.'

The last section deals at length with the contribution/manipulation of bourgeois women towards the overthrowing of the Allende government in Chile in 1973. The essays in this book have been written with great objectivity but little imagination.

Michelle Benn

Showing off

Hi! My name is Mike Jempson. I'm a freelance journalist.

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Oh yes, and I've just read a book. 'The Art and Business of Creative Self-Promotion for Graphic Designers, Writers, Illustrators and Photographers' by Jerry Herring and Mark Fulton. Its published by Watson-Goptill at £18.95, but mine was a review copy!

New national gay paper established

by Peter J. French

IN A PERIOD when we, as gay men and lesbians, are at the receiving end of a right-wing moral backlash, more than ever we need to unite to defend the gains we have made, and to campaign for more gains in the future.

With the gutter press using AIDS to try to push us back into the closet, and trying to discredit Labour councils that are promoting positive images and equal opportunities towards lesbians and gay men, we need to maintain our visibility. Indeed, we need to increase our visibility.

The Gay Pride March is excellent, but comes only once a year. It is to be welcomed, therefore, that now, for the first time in several years, a new national gay paper has been established. It is called 'The Pink Paper', it is free, and is issued weekly.

Readers

There are a number of things that make 'The Pink Paper' different from most other gay papers and magazines. First, the paper will involve readers, and there will be meetings in different parts of the country where readers can contribute their ideas.

Secondly, 'The Pink Paper' will not only be reflecting gay life, but will be serving the gay communities. For example, some of the profits will be going to gay organisations and charities, such as Gay Switchboard.

Third, this is the only national gay paper which is also for lesbians. Most gay papers and magazines are, unfortunately, owned and staffed by, aimed at, and read by gay men. This is reflected in the reports and advertisements. However, 'The Pink Paper' is attempting to build links between gay men and lesbians.

SW Campaign launch

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Witch hunt

Ronan Bennett had no conviction or outstanding charges against him and his declaration of interest had been cleared by the Speaker's office, but before he could begin work the 'News of the World' had phoned Jeremy Corbyn and asked 'why he had employed a known terrorist'. When the reporters were asked where they had got their

information they said that they had 'seen the files'. Following these unauthorised leaks an innocent person was hounded out of the House of Commons by a press witch hunt.

Jeremy Corbyn spoke for many of those present when he called for a legal Right of Reply; for new forms of media ownership and an end to the monopolies; and greater access for those who daily see their lives distorted in Britain's media.

Moves to ban 'promotion' of homosexuality

ONCE again, the Tory government are restricting the activities of Labour-controlled local authorities in promoting equal opportunities, local democracy, and a decent level of services. Not content with abolishing the GLC, rate-capping, and encouraging local authorities to opt out of the Inner London Education Authority, the government are now seeking to prevent local authorities from promoting positive images of gays and lesbians in schools and other services under their control.

This will also mean that books about gays and lesbians in libraries will be banned. Lesbian and gay voluntary organisations will be abolished, if they receive funding or other assistance from local authorities.

These latest repressive measures, which are included in an amendment to the Local Government Bill (Clause 27), and proposed by David Wilshire MP, is worded in typical Toryspeak:

A local authority shall not:

- Promote homosexuality or publish material for the promotion of homosexuality.
- Promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship by the publication of such material or otherwise.
- Give financial or other assistance to any person for either of the purposes referred to in (a) or (b) above.

There has never been any question of promoting homosexuality in schools or anywhere else. What local authorities have tried to do is to promote equal opportunities and positive images, for gays and lesbians who are, after all, ratepayers too.

This Bill will fuel prejudices which already exist in the media, and it will deny access to resources for training and publicity. The CPEF and the NUF oppose the Local Government Bill, which is already gagging local authority press departments. The Local Government Bill, and Clause 27 in particular, will have serious implications for freedom of speech and assembly.

The Amendment is dangerous in its own right, but may also be the first step in recriminalising homosexuality altogether.

Even by the standards of previous Thatcherite legislation, this represents one of the most retrogressive attacks on civil liberties in many years.

The Association of London Authorities is considering taking the government to the European Court of Human Rights. The NCCL is also looking at the possibility of further action.

News

It carries more news and more analysis than other freebies, with a section on the arts, and a page called 'Straight Talking', which gives sympathetic heterosexuals the chance to write or be interviewed on matters relating to sexuality and issues which affect lesbians and gay men. I think this is important. We need to make links with people and groups who support gay rights, rather than remain in ghettos.

The first issue carried a list of supporters, which reflect the diversity of lesbian and gay groups, from Gay Switchboard to the Hall Carpenter Archives, and the London Lesbian & Gay Centre to Sappho. There was also a report of a gay man who was sacked from his job at GCHQ in Cheltenham, simply because he was gay, and therefore considered a security risk.

Diversity

'The Pink Paper' is welcomed by the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom as adding diversity to the existing gay press, and for giving the chance to readers to contribute to it. Moreover, in a country where the mass media is virtually closed to minority groups such as lesbians and gay men, and where we are constantly lied about and misrepresented in gutter rags like 'The Sun' and 'The Star', to name just two of the worst offenders, the 'Pink Paper' allows freedom of expression on issues which are not given space elsewhere.

We at the CPBF Lesbian and Gay Subgroup wish 'The Pink Paper' every success for the future, and we hope we can work together to expose the lies and bigotry constantly served up by the gutter press, and certain upmarket papers.

Call for greater access

MORE than 80 people paid £2 each to attend the Campaign's South West launch meeting at Bristol Watershed Media Centre. The meeting was part of a weekend of discussions, screenings of banned films and an exhibition of photographs from Wapping exposing the reality of the police violence on the picket line.

Mike Power

The main event was titled 'What price media freedom?' and was chaired by Mandy Merck from the Campaign's national committee. Six speakers dealt with a range of topics that exposed the encroachments of the state into media freedom.

Jacob Ecclestone, deputy general secretary of the National Union of Journalists said: 'While no overt state censorship exists the government has used political means to gain greater control of the media.' As an example he cited the government's attempt to ban the 'Real Lives' film. It took the action of workers in the industry to force the government to retreat, but such responses are rare.

Monopoly

Ecclestone continued: 'The BBC and IBA governors are appointed by Margaret Thatcher and therefore the Director General is indirectly a Government appointee. That national and local newspapers are bought and sold like groceries by Tory supporters with no attempt to stop them. The Government appointed monopolies and mergers commission has only stopped one takeover in 20 years—in 1981 they did not even refer the 'Times' takeover to the commission.'

'This Prime Minister has used the honours system, the lobby system and the D notice system to suppress dissent, and in a more sinister mood is now using the Public Order Act and the Police and Criminal Evidence Act for the same purpose. Journalists must stand firm and refuse demands from the police for unpublished photographs from demonstrations and pickets, or we will lose any credibility that we have left with the public.'

State manipulation of news and current affairs was attacked by Tony Lennon the CPBF Chairperson and an

Right of Reply

continued from front page

Granada World in Action programme (yet to be screened) and a debate on BBC Daytime Live between former Star Editor Michael Gabbert and CPBF's full-time worker in London Tom O'Malley.

The Today and PM Programmes on Radio 4 also reported the proposed legislation as did a number of national papers including The Sun. The Bill even got reported in the Singapore Straits

official of the Broadcasting and Entertainment Trades Alliance at the BBC. He said: 'The gentlemen's agreement for political balance in the BBC has now gone. They are all nervous Thatcherites now.'

Independents

'Our Campaign wants to open up broadcasting to a variety of alternative views. We object to the political and economic pressures of the Government on broadcasters and the threat to introduce cheap labour through 25 per cent of programming being farmed out to independent producers. Independent producers claim to represent a cost effective, diverse and radical input into the industry, but didn't Eddie Shah say the same about his entry into newspapers?'

Beulah Ainley from the NUJ race relations working party condemned the lack of black journalists being trained and appointed. 'The media presented blacks as being rioters and criminals, they are only interested in sensationalism and are unconcerned about people's lives and conditions' she said.

'White journalists can be genuinely sympathetic but they don't know how blacks feel—if you don't live in a black skin you can't understand', she went on 'we have been criminalised, trivialised and marginalised and our union must keep up the fight for equal opportunities.'

Disability

'People with disabilities are often the most invisible in this standardised society', said Anne Poynton, who produces educational films for the BBC. 'Women have been accused of whining to get their own way. Well they have at least been listened to, so here is a whine from the disabled,' she said.

'We are tired of being treated as miser-

Times.

Ann Clwyd said: 'The response we received from both the press and public show enormous backing for the Bill. Obviously there is growing public discontent.'

'There is real demand for higher standards in the media and for some effective means of redress—the Government will have to meet this in some way or other.'



● Ecclestone: 'Journalists must stand firm.'

able, tragic and wretched, but who can be brave and smile. We want our issues to become visible, we want jobs as employment is power in the media and support must be won for the ACTT policy of an equal opportunities clause in the new independent producers contracts with the BBC for equal opportunities that includes people with disabilities.'

'Genuine press freedom is available in Britain today, but only if you are one of the half dozen or so multi millionaires who own the Newspaper,' said Wendy Moore the Campaign's secretary. 'Also access to the media is available if you have the wealth to allow a legal challenge for libel.'

Right of Reply

'Ordinary people have no real opportunity to redress when they are misrepresented. The Right of Reply Bill, proposed by Ann Clwyd, will, if passed into legislation, be a major step forward for ordinary people.' she said.

Jeremy Corbyn MP for Islington North made a strong attack on the 'cosy powerful relationship between journalists and the Government represented by the parliamentary lobby system. The lobby knows more than anyone else in the House; they make mischief between the front and back benches; have a direct effect on policy and they have destabilised and removed politicians from office,' he said.

Corbyn explained the part played by the gutter press in removing Ronan Bennett who he had employed as a parliamentary researcher. Bennett had been imprisoned in the Maze prison for 13 years having been accused of a police murder in a Diplock court in 1974, but was later acquitted. He had been held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act but no charges were brought and was also acquitted in a bomb trial. Corbyn had required the services of somebody with a deep knowledge of Irish politics to assist his large Irish constituency and help one in particular who it is believed has been wrongly imprisoned for the Guildford pub bombings.

Section 31 renewed

Section 31 of the Irish Broadcasting Act which prevents RTE from interviewing members of Sinn Fein and other organisations was renewed by the Irish Minister for Communications, Ray Burke, on 19 January.

Section 31 is opposed by numerous trade unions (including the National Union of Journalists (NUJ)), civil liberties organisations (including the Irish Council for Civil Liberties), many members of parliament and over 20 local authority bodies.

Radio Telefís Éireann (RTE, the Irish public service broadcasting organisation) staff have had occasion to call strike action over Section 31 on more than one occasion. According to an NUJ report on the effects of Section 31 it has 'generated a climate of fear in RTE'. The most recent public opinion polls have shown majorities against Section 31.

In June 1987 the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) published a report entitled *Censoring the Troubles* which condemned Section 31. The IFJ is pledged to bringing pressure on the Irish government through its member organisations to abolish Section 31.

The IFJ report concluded: 'Irish radio and television are subjected to clearcut political censorship, and the defence for exercising that censorship, whether it is put up by present or former Ministers, by journalists or by others, does not stand close scrutiny. We agree completely with those Irish colleagues who pointed out that the most dangerous effect of the present Section 31 practice is the creation of a general climate in which restrictions on the media and free journalism are accepted and defended.'

Irish society might come to pay a very high price for defending restrictive measures which in themselves, as they are practised today, have almost no real effect.'

The Irish Minister for Communications' decision to renew Section 31 is in direct contravention of a pledge made before the General Election in February 1987 by Mr Burke's party, Fianna Fail, and the current Taoiseach (Prime Minister), Charles Haughey, not to operate Section 31 against any elected representative or electoral candidate.

In the early days of the Labour Movement the mass open air meeting was the main means of communication. Technology has changed the forum. Mass access to the spoken word is now through the media of radio and television. It is bitterly appropriate that the centenary year of Bloody Sunday should have seen so many major threats to our current freedoms of expression. It started with the banning of the Zircon programme and the storming of the Scottish BBC by the Special Branch.

Eighteen months previous the Real Lives incident had ended two decades of an increasing liberalisation of broadcasting. Even under intense government pressure the BBC refused to ban the programme. Their refusal forced the Home Secretary, personally and publicly, to intervene. This led to the first-time-ever strike of journalists at the BBC—a strike against censorship; against government interference; and in defence of the freedom of the word.

There then followed a year of attrition, of continual attacks by Norman Tebbit against the BBC. He gnawed away at their confidence, creating anxiety among directors, editors, producers and ultimately achieved the desired aim of all censors and all oppressors—an atmosphere of universal timidity.

The consequence was the BBC decision over Zircon. *This time* it no longer required Government intervention. The BBC succumbed to pressure. They themselves intervened. Self censorship replaced censorship and the Zircon programme was withdrawn.

Self-censorship continued in a sharper way. Ten weeks of planning for a programme on 'Spycatcher' was scrapped to avoid

Norman Buchan MP and Tricia Sumner look back over the past twelve months and conclude that it's been...

A bad year for freedom

confrontation with the Government. The next stage of self censorship is perhaps the most worrying, for it is invisible.

There will be certain subjects on which programmes will simply not be commissioned, on which writers will not submit work, for fear that they will not be 'acceptable'. We can know nothing of these. The tragedy is that self-protection through self-censorship is self-defeating because it merely lowers the threshold at which future censorship will begin.

In February the Government produced its Green Paper on Radio. Like the Peacock Report on Television it argued that we should throw open the airwaves to the mercies of the entrepreneur. At the present time regulation ensures a diversity of opinion, and both quality and diversity of programme.

The Green Paper declares that these obligations—loosely defined as the need to 'inform educate and entertain'—should be removed from the commercial sector. In future they would presumably have only one obligation—to make profits for themselves! But the right of the listener to be informed, the right to know, would be thrown out of

the window.

In April there appeared the Obscene Publications Bill, presented by Tory MP Gerald Howarth. This Bill had tacit Government support and was only defeated or 'talked out' because the general election intervened. The Bill defined obscenity as 'that which a reasonable person would regard as grossly offensive', which perhaps sounds unexceptionable until one examines what this might actually mean.

Who might be regarded as a 'reasonable' person, what is 'offensive' and how 'gross' a degree of offensiveness might be permitted until it became grossly so? How long is a piece of string? is hardly a legal question—yet writers, directors and juries would have to decide exactly that!

But the Bill's promoters were not over-concerned by page three pornography, nor by the glorification of casual violence in Rambo. What they sought to ban was the portrayal of the single, necessary act which is intended to shock, to alert us, for example, to the horrors of war. The result would produce—and is intended to produce—self-censorship through fear and uncertainty.

And, ominously, the Government now intends to bring in its own Obscenity Bill.

But it is not only the spoken word, through broadcasting, that is now at risk, but the written word also. The threat of monopoly links them.

Three individuals—Murdoch, Maxwell and Stevens—control 80% of the popular press in this country. Now one of them, Murdoch, is buying into 'quality' journals—for example 'Today' and the 'Financial Times'—as well as 200 local weeklies.

At the same time Maxwell and Murdoch are buying controlling shares in satellite broadcasting. This is an unprecedented and frightening monopoly position and it poses an unprecedented and frightening threat to any kind of freedom of speech.

This near monopoly control over the publishing of the written and spoken word is paralleled in distribution by the virtual duopoly of Menzies and John Smith.

Against the background of all these developments we have the direct government intervention on Spycatcher. For months we have been witnessing the astonishing phenomenon of a government willing even to face ridicule throughout the world in order to ban an innocuous book.

From monopoly to censorship, freedom of speech is facing a threat unprecedented in our history. The centenary year of Bloody Sunday should become the starting point of a fightback.

We cannot win our political and industrial aims without first winning the battle of ideas. The freedom of the word is the key. We have moaned too long about Tory domination of the press. It is time that the whole trade union and labour movement put the battle for ideas at the forefront of our campaigning.

"Oldfield, meanwhile, made direct contact with certain leading Roman Catholics and attended off-the-record meetings with various priests, whom he was able to persuade to help him in intelligence gathering in an attempt to break the circle of sectarian violence and political deadlock.

"This caused Maurice many enemies, although it would appear there were soon more to be found among the Protestant ultra-right-wing than among the Catholics.

"It was these, Maurice said, he found just as sinister, if not more so, than those of the IRA. There was obviously something about this in Maurice's mind, for he began to say more than half seriously, in his early days in hospital, that he had been poisoned during his stay in Ireland.

number of homosexuals I knew in SIS (Secret Intelligence Service), it is clear that so did they."

"He thought it possible that the fact that he had lied and admitted lying could be about to become known and would embarrass Margaret Thatcher, for whom he had great respect and who had appointed him to Northern Ireland.

"He had therefore no alternative but to go to Sir Robert Armstrong, the Cabinet Secretary and the PM's unofficial adviser on security matters,

On Ireland . . .

"Once Oldfield arrived at Stormont with the innocuous title of Security Co-ordinator, the anti-Oldfield propaganda increased and was picked up by the Southern Irish press and by the underground press in Britain.

Cavendish revelations

continued from front page

resigned.' I looked at him and saw an old and sick man, sick with sadness and with the cancer eating away inside him.

"I have never before contemplated suicide," he said. "But I am now, and I need to talk to you."

"Slowly, with the help of another drink, he then told me that every time positive vetting had homed in on homosexuality, he had denied ever having any homosexual experiences, even though those he had went back to his youth before the War.

"I assured him that, in his case, I would have done the same. And today when I consider the

Letters to the Editor

Gay or homosexual?

Comrade,

A small, you may think petty, point. Why do you persist in using the word 'gay' instead of the correct 'homo-sexual'? Does the second usage stir the imagination more than the first? Is it some avant garde attempt to join the sheep who latch on to any stupid catch phrase. 'Not a lot' leaps into the mind.

We get the same sort of image distortion with 'Russia' instead of the Soviet Union.

A responsible movement should not sink in using abbreviations just because the non thinking masses indulge.

Letters of criticism to the Telegraph and T.V. still end up in the waste bin. The right of reply in this so called free country is non-existent unless it meets the approval of the establishment.

Fraternally
Stan Wills

Labour Movement bias

Dear Editor,

I have just received my 'October' issue of Free Press and must complain about an advert on the back page, column 1. This promotes 'extra copies of Free Press at the reduced rate of 20p for circulation to Union/Labour Party Branch members.

I joined CPBF on the understanding that it was an all party organisation, not a 'Union/Labour Party' front. I am a member of the Liberal Party but want people from all parties, and those of none, to join or support CPBF. I want Tories to join, Greens, Social Democrats, Scots and Welsh nationalists, and so on.

At a time when the Tories are still entrenched with a large majority in the House of Commons CPBF should be making extra efforts to broaden its appeal. This kind of Labour Party/Union chauvinism totally undermines your claim to being open to people from all parties.

Perhaps you will practice what you preach and print an apology or give the right to reply.

Yours sincerely

Tony Parker

Tony Parker has been invited to contribute to the next issue of Free Press—Ed

Music censorship

Dear Reader,

I am a 21 year old student at a Community College in Manchester. I'm currently studying an 'A' level in Media and Communications. As part of my course I'm making a video about censorship in the music industry. Can you help? I need info/views on incidents concerning the banning of records by radio and TV, on police activity and other legal actions preventing the sale or distribution of music, and on self-censorship by record companies.

Hopefully when the video is completed it will be shown in various venues in and around Manchester and, depending on its success, further afield.

Any help will be much appreciated. Please send any contributions to:

Steve c/o James White, English Dept., North Manchester Community College, Abraham Moss Site, Crescent Road, Manchester M6 8UF.

Thanks.

Steve

1988 STAFF APPEAL

The Campaign desperately needs another £7,000 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.

BANKERS STANDING ORDER FORM

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Please pay the Co-operative Bank plc, 1, Islington High Street, London N1 9TR (Code 08-09-33) for the account of The Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom (A/c No 50508701/50) 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