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PRESS AND BROADCASTING FREEDOM

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## TV workers under attack

The Government's decision last month to ask the Monopolies and Mergers Commission to report on restrictive labour practices within the television industry contrasts sharply with its attitude to Murdoch's takeover of *Today* last year. Instead of using the Fair Trading Act to curb the concentration of media ownership, the Government is using the legislation to 'soften up' the industry for deregulation: a strategy which will lead to greater and greater monopoly control with serious consequences for programme standards.

The Government's announcement comes at a time when the ITV companies are themselves seeking massive job reductions and an end to existing agreements as they prepare for the possibility of a franchise 'auction' in 1992. Under the threatened new system franchises will go to the highest bidder and existing franchise holders are anxious to be in the strongest possible position to compete.

They are also keen to demonstrate their ability to 'deal' with the unions themselves, hoping thereby to strengthen the hand of the Home Secretary who is known to be a lot less enthusiastic about the 'auction' idea than the PM.

The obscurity of the clause, Section 79 of the 1973 Fair Trading Act, underlines the political nature of the Government's decision.

Roy Lockett, Deputy General Secretary of ACTT, said: 'The Employment Act, which becomes law in the summer, contains a series of draconian measures on trade union membership and the closed shop. It is therefore difficult to understand this sudden and specific reference to the MCC of trade union membership arrangements in television and film production.'

'This has more to do with the Government's political agenda in broadcasting than with collective agreements.'

The general approach of the Govern-

ment to the future of broadcasting has been characterised by a desire to maximise profitability in order to encourage private investment. This is evident already in the 'lighter touch' of Cable Authority — which has since been demanding even fewer regulations — and in the Government's approach to satellite.

Legislation which will restructure British broadcasting, due later this year, is certain to include a greater degree of commercialisation and an easing of regulatory controls designed to increase the potential for commercial profit. Programme quality will suffer as a result.

Meanwhile the dispute at TV-am continues. The ACTT conference during the weekend of 16-17 April voted to maintain the dispute though an emergency motion calling for industry wide action was defeated.

Since the dispute started programme standards at TV-am have declined. Andy Eagan, ACTT Education Officer, told Free Press: 'Your readers can help by phoning TV AM if they spot particularly poor coverage and complaining.' To be effective this should not be done glibly but only when genuinely sub-standard material goes out.

CPBF members are also urged to send messages of support and money to the sacked workers and to visit the picket line at Camden Lock.

### New titles!! Discount prices!!

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## Film seizure condemned

CPBF has condemned the seizure of untransmitted video tape by the RUC following the deaths of the two British Army corporals on 20 March.

In a statement to the press, Wendy Moore, National Secretary of the CPBF commented:

'The Campaign believes that the BBC and ITN should not be forced to hand over material relating to the coverage of the deaths of two soldiers in Ireland at the weekend.

'At stake is the ability of broadcasters to report safely and freely.

'Handing over the material will, endanger the lives of news teams covering future events in Ireland; inhibit broadcasting organisations from covering sensitive issues; and, indirectly, provide the government with yet another stick with which to beat the media.

'In the end it will be the public who will lose out if journalists are prevented or inhibited from covering incidents through fear of being attacked or embroiled in court proceedings with either the police or a government intent on obtaining recorded material.

'In these difficult times, when Press Freedom is under assault from many quarters, it is vital that broadcasting organisations are able to report sensitive matters. Forcing them to hand over material will be a serious blow to media freedom.'

## Model Resolutions

Use the model resolution  
in Free Press 43 (copies  
available from the office)  
to establish CPBF aims as  
the Policy of your political  
party branch/trade union/  
organisation.

## Inappropriate images of Africa

The Rome-based Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) has just concluded a worldwide report into the way that the outside world perceives Africa in the aftermath of the 1984 famine.

The Images of Africa Report is the result of work begun at an FAO international symposium in Rome last May. A series of national reports were undertaken by various Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) who looked at the coverage of Africa by the different media and charities in their respective countries.

The report shows that an almost entirely negative impression of Africa has been created by the extra attention that has been lavished on the continent since October 1984. Most people

now seem to believe that Africa is a place of unmitigated famine and terminal dependency, which can only be helped by the generosity and good nature of the people of the west.

The report lays the blame for this on the stereotyped images fed to people by the media and by charities' fund-raising activities, and puts forward several recommendations on how to change these perceptions.

Perhaps the most radical is the suggestion by African NGOs that they will in future refuse any foreign assistance raised through the use of 'inappropriate' images, which would certainly make some charities reconsider the sorts of fund raising material they use.

Another suggestion is the exchange of journalists between north and

south, and the possibility of training African journalists in Europe so they can produce copy that would have more chance of being used by European editors. It also suggests organising annual workshops between northern journalists and southern NGOs, to try to increase the journalists' awareness of how things look from a less Euro-centric perspective.

One strand of thought common to all the contributing agencies was that unless the public are presented with more accurate images of what is going on, their misguided perceptions are going to lead to continued inappropriate responses.

Copies of the report can be obtained from Oxfam Education Dept., 274, Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 7DZ.

## New Nation Banned

The outspoken 'alternative' paper the *New Nation*, has finally been banned, as the current crisis threatens to bring the church in South Africa into headlong conflict with the state. The *New Nation* is published by the South African Catholic Bishop's Conference and the government claims it publishes "subversive propaganda". Its editor, Zwelakhe Sisulu, son of jailed ANC leader, Walter Sisulu, has now spent sixteen months imprisoned without trial.

One of the main reasons for the *New Nation*'s success up to now has been its close contact with the grass roots community organisations that have just been banned, so its closure wasn't entirely unexpected. As the only channel now left open to the black majority, the established church is facing a government determined to silence the last bastion of opposition. Archbishop Desmond Tutu has been asked by Botha to choose "between God and the communist ANC".

### Banned

The country's biggest daily, *The Star*, said in an editorial: "The closure of the *New Nation* comes as a chilling reminder of the lengths to which the government is ready to go in its attempts to impose thought control. After this, no other newspaper is safe."

The supposedly 'reformist' credentials of P.W. Botha have come to look increasingly hollow in the light of recent electoral pressure on the ruling national party from the far right. Botha's only response to accusations of liberalism has been to show that he can

be as draconian as the best of them, by outlawing the only legal channels of black protest.

One of the banned groups, the Detainees Parents Support Committee (DPSC) declared last year: "The South African government realises that without international news coverage of events in South Africa, international pressure on them will wane. Our aim is to break this blanket of silence".

DPSC's success can be partially measured by its inclusion in the ban against the organisations imposed, according to Botha, "to protect people who were being intimidated by them". There must be an awful lot of prison governors who can sleep soundly these days without waking up to a pile of requests for information concerning the detention of children.

Peter Moszynski

## Estonian media chief purged

Robert Rislan, Estonian Communist Party head of ideology and propaganda has been sacked for failing to keep the lid on Estonian nationalism in the wake of Glasnost.

K.G. Vaino, Estonian Party Leader, told the Republic's Central Committee: "Many people are unable to distinguish democracy from demagoguery, Glasnost from licence, criticism from slander, ignorance of historical events from a strong dislike of socialism and its values".

Too much Glasnost had allowed "various anti-social activities, including Estonian nationalism and even

The Paris based International Federation of Newspaper Publishers (FIEJ) has awarded its Golden Pen of Freedom Award to the Palestinian cartoonist assassinated in London last July. Naji Al-Ali was the Arab world's most popular and outspoken cartoonist, and as such he managed to upset just about every regime in the Middle East.

The FIEJ board described Al-Ali as one of the "small number of great cartoonists since the end of the Eighteenth Century... who used his drawings to attack tyrannies wherever he saw them". This is the first time that this award has been conferred on either an Arab or a cartoonist, and in conferring it, FIEJ stated that it "also wishes to recognise those other Arab journalists forced to live in exile because the only side they agree to take... is that of integrity and truth."

people hostile to socialism, to enter on the political scene."

The fear that Glasnost would open up a Pandora's Box of nationalism among some of the Soviet Union's many ethnic minorities seems to have been realised with recent events in Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The real fear in the Kremlin doesn't seem to concern nationalism in the Soviet Republics so much as the effect that this might have in reawakening Greater Russian nationalism, a barely-dormant chauvinism that could wreck Gorbachov's program of "restructuring" once and for all.

Peter Moszynski

## Cartoonist awarded prize

# TUC Women's Conference debates media

Media sexism and the threat to broadcasting from deregulation are on the agendas of the TUC general council and women's committee following decisions taken at the 1988 TUC women's conference in March.

The conference called on the general council to protest about the sleaze-filled *Sunday Sport*, to support legislation aimed at giving the right of reply to people who have been misrepresented by the media, to publicise the danger to television and radio from government plans to reduce public controls, to campaign to defend pay and employment conditions in the industry and to ensure that changes to broadcasting are debated at this year's TUC congress.

### Sexism

The women's committee was meanwhile asked to look at specific legislation to curb media sexism, in cooperation with the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, media unions and interested Labour MPs. The committee was also urged to explore the effect that deregulation of broadcasting will have on the portrayal of women and on the pay and working conditions of women in television and radio.

The action was demanded by two motions from the National Union of Journalists. The NUJ called on the conference to support 'Shelve It!', the campaign to restrict *Sunday Sport* to the top shelves of news-

agents shops, alongside other sex-based publications such as 'Men Only' and 'Penthouse'. The NUJ said *Sunday Sport* and similar publications promoted sex discrimination.

The motion, which was seconded by the National Union of Civil and Public Servants and carried by an overwhelming majority gave the conference's backing to the Right of Reply bill sponsored by Ann Clwyd MP, with help from the CPBF.

Wendy Moore, NUJ delegate and CPBF secretary, told the conference that a recent survey had found that most people do not believe what they read in tabloid or quality newspapers and that something had to be done to rescue standards.

The NUJ also proposed an emergency motion on broadcasting, condemning TV-am's sacking of 229 technicians who had been locked out following a dispute over staffing levels. The motion, which was seconded by the technicians' union, the Association of Cinematograph Television and Allied Technicians, said TV-am's action was part of a concerted attack on pay, employment conditions and programme standards in broadcasting, instigated by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

### Wapping

NUJ delegate Denise Searle said there was a strong parallel between TV-am's dismissal and Rupert Murdoch's sacking of 5000 printworkers when he moved production of the *Times*, *Sunday Times*, *Sun* and *News of the World* from Fleet Street to Wapping.

The NUJ's motion attacked government plans to auction off commercial radio and television stations to the highest bidder. Searle said that would give priority to profits with little control over the quality of broadcasting.

Local commercial radio stations would no longer have to provide a news service under the govern-



Moore: 'Rescue Standards'

ment's proposals. The Independent Broadcasting Authority currently demands that at least a third of television is 'serious non-fiction'. This requirement is to be axed, said Searle, leaving television companies free to use more cheap programmes, such as chat and game shows and soap operas.

Successful bidders in the television station auction are likely to be the wealthy media barons like Murdoch and Maxwell.

## Irish Free Press

The Irish Free press photo agency last month (February) produced its first news-sheet, *The Irish Free Press* (IFP).

It contains news of the situation in Ireland with photographic coverage of important events, including political, social and economic problems in Ireland. The IFP is based in Belfast and pays particular attention to the North.

Last month's issue included a report on the death of Nobel Prize winner, Sean MacBride, and an article on Fianna Fail and the Anglo-Irish agreement.

For more information on the IFP, write to: IFP, 33a Donegall Street, Belfast, Northern Ireland, BT1 2FN.

## Hearts and Minds

The exhibition of Irish Cultural life in London, *Hearts and Minds Anam Agus Intinn* has moved to the Cockpit Gallery.

This photo-text exhibition has been widely displayed with the direct result that a booklet has been produced incorporating Joanne O'Brien's photographs from the exhibition together with a text by Jack O'Keefe.

Booking details from the Cockpit Gallery, Princetown Street, London, WC1. Tel 01-405 5334.

## Women as authors

**In Other Words: Writing As A Feminist** edited by Gail Chester and Sigrid Nielsen, Hutchinson, £5.95.

I once shared a house with a poet. He tended to have his nose in a book, often scribbling notes; he was forgetful of everyday chores (we did them for him); he had once had a poem published in *The New Statesman*. Naturally we called him a poet. It was only later that I realised the extent of our gender-typing: had Jamie been a woman, he would never have achieved such a revered and restful position in our house.

Labelling is as gender-based in writing and publishing as anywhere else; this is one of the issues addressed in this anthology, which aims to "provide practical support and encouragement for any woman who writes". It does this by giving space and respect to a very wide variety of writers and forms of writing.

Some of the contributors have had work

published (and some, like Sarah Maitland and Suniti Namyoshi, are well-known), and some have not. Several write about fiction, a few about poetry, but there are also essays on non-fiction writing, translation, letters, and tape-recording (this last one written by Kirsten Hearn, who is blind).

The editors have not been shy of sensitive issues: writing erotica is discussed by Eileen Cadman, and lesbian sexuality by Anna Livia.

Most of the contributors are written with an emotional honesty which places the writers' feelings and personal experience firmly centre stage. While appreciating the need to share personal feelings in this subject, I found reading straight through the book a little overwhelming for this reason.

But dip into it, bit by bit, and be sure not to miss the wonderful piece (my favourite) on Scottish women's writing, by Joy Hendry.

Teresa Stratford

## History and politics of women's magazines

**Inside Women's Magazines** by Janice Winship, Pandora Press, £9.95.

Janice Winship says in her preface that she wanted her book to have something of the comforting feel of a women's magazine. To a large extent she has succeeded, though I did sometimes find the scatter boxes of information distracting from the main argument. What she has achieved very well is to bring together feminist theory and cultural studies theory and present them in an accessible form, using the medium of women's magazines as her case study.

The clarity of the style makes this book particularly useful for those who need a painless introduction to straightforward ideas which are too often presented as unnecessarily complicated.

The majority of the book describes and analyses women's magazines from their roots in the eighteenth century up to 1986. In the last chapter, the author tries to cram in all her

political feelings about current trends in British magazine publishing and where they might lead.

This is frustrating, both because there is no space for her to elaborate these ideas adequately and because I want to take up the issues, but do not feel we have any suitable forum. This obviously bears out her concluding plea for the production of more and different types of magazines for women, feminists, and all people interested in the subjects thrown up by a concern with sexual politics.

Women's magazines have suffered for a long time from a heavy concentration of ownership — something the Campaign is committed to fighting against — so we're obviously not going to solve that problem soon. So until the necessary Sugar Parent arrives with the cash for the launch, content yourself with this entertaining and thought-provoking read about what already exists.

Gail Chester

## The means of production

**Modern Newspaper Editing and Production** by F.W. Hodgson, Heinemann, £12.95.

Written with great clarity and painstaking detail, F.W. Hodgson's latest text book for budding journalists provides an invaluable if uncritical guide to the inner-workings of newspapers.

He provides a comprehensive account of the modern production process, from the first telephone call to the first copy off the web offset.

A potted history of the arrival and application of new technology in newspapers avoids awkward questions about the economic consequences for those whose livelihoods are disappearing, and about the concentration of ownership that accompanies capital invest-

ment in the latest electronic equipment.

Hodgson takes us through the word/image processing of the subs desk and the layout artist, and flags up warnings about the dangers of the cliché and the easy answer. He admits to the existence of 'common' cultural standpoint in most editorial offices — but has little to say about the gaps between news rooms and the 'actualities' they cover.

Sexism and racism do not appear in the index, and 'stereotypes' gets one mention. With so much remaining unsaid, there is room for another volume — but so long as the book is subjected to critical analyses by those who dip into it, this will be an enduring text book.

Mike Jempson

This month CPBF launches its new Publications Catalogue offering members a wide range of recent titles on the media at discount prices. Only those books recommended by our reviewers have been included.

Sales of books through the catalogue have provided CPBF with a steady income over the years and it is expected that the inclusion of new publications will give a boost to sales. It is now three years since the last update.

Members who know of places where the mail order catalogue could be usefully distributed should contact Tom O'Malley at the Poland Street office or Granville Williams in Manchester.

In this issue of Free Press we review just some of the exciting new titles now available through the catalogue. Remember, if you are a CPBF member, you are entitled to a 15% discount on any purchase. The catalogue is available from CPBF, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG.

# ESSENTIAL READING

## Advertising

**Great Expectations: Advertising and the Tobacco Industry** by Simon Chapman, Comedia, £4.95.

"The point that seems to be missed by anti-smokers is that the industry is not concerned with whether people smoke or not, but it is interested in competing for the custom of those adults who have chosen to smoke."

The breath-taking duplicity of the tobacco executive who mouthed these words finds an echo in the condescension of those lefties who believe that only non-smokers can be truly progressive.

Neither appear to be concerned about the fact that we are addicts, locked into a degrading and death-inducing habit which we would love to kick. Nor do they acknowledge that it is working class smokers, and the new markets of the third world, which keep the tobacco barons in business.

Cigarette advertising is the key to these markets, as Simon Chapman's book neatly illustrates. Despite the denials, the cant and the secrecy which surround this aspect of the tobacco industry the connections are obvious.

Writing from Australia, where the current agit-prop craze of defacing fag-ads first caught on, Chapman provides plenty of ammunition to challenge the hypocrisy of the advertising and tobacco industries.

Companion volumes on the diversion of health resources to combat the effects of smok-

ing, and the negative impact of tobacco growing on food production in the third world would complete the profiles on these death dealers.

In the meantime, and in the wake of the ad-ban that followed the Kings Cross disaster, it is the tobacco companies, rather than the wretched smokers who should be treated as social pariahs. The rest of us need all the help we can get.

Mike Jempson

**Understains ... the Sense and Seduction of Advertising** by Kathy Myers, Comedia/Methuen, £5.95.

"The Left ignores image-making at its peril" is the conclusion of Kathy Myers in this stimulating polemical book.

We start by learning how the advertising industry grew in the UK and how it operates today. This raises the question, is advertising capitalist propaganda? Or is market research and the selling of ideas the fastest way forward in modern politics?

The argument is by no means clear, but the contradictions are given full analysis, ending with a surmise on the politics of consumption.

Well illustrated, this book adds to the debate about how the media can influence change.

## Portraying women

**Boxed In: Women and Television** edited by Helen Baehr and Gillian Dyer, Pandora, £7.95.

We see many more men than women on television, yet, because men carry authority while women are used to denote sexuality, any of these male figures fade into a background of "knowledge" and "experts", and the viewer may well imagine that s/he has seen a reasonably equal proportion.

Women and men are presented to us on television according to terms of reference which are so pervasive, we only notice when there is a departure from them (like the expert on "The Secret Life Of Paintings", a woman), and this applies to fiction as well as documentary and news programmes.

As the contributors to this book show, encouraging exceptions have almost invariably been due to women in influential positions on production teams (the writers of "Tenko", the producer of "Eastenders"). One result of representing "men's genres for women" (as Charlotte Brunson puts it) however, is that the effect on female viewers can be miscalculated, as the large lesbian following for Sharon Gless demonstrates (she was cast in "Cagney and

Lacey" to give the pair a more heterosexual appeal).

This book aims to give an "in-depth look at women's relation to television", and its strength lies in making connections between management policy, industrial processes and consumer behaviour in this field. As Sue Stoessel shows, women are generally discriminating in their viewing habits.

That these are often not taken seriously by men is a factor in the domestic politics described by Anne Gray. The parallel with dominant (male) attitudes in television companies is evident from Rosalind Coward's discussion of recent programmes made by and for women, and in Joy Leman's history of women's programmes in the '50s.

Loretta Loach describes the difficulties in campaigning for change, but she also mentions the Jobfit scheme, originated by the ACTT, as a means of enabling more women to work in television in non-secretarial jobs. This book emphasises that until there is structural change in the broadcasting industry, we will continue with little exception to see the current narrow range of images of women on the screen.

Teresa Stratford

## Getting into TV

**A Woman's Guide To Jobs in Film and Television** by Anne Ross Muir, Pandora, £6.95.

Anne Ross Muir begins by highlighting the problems that women have in finding work in films and television and by suggesting some of the reasons for this. Most of the book is given over to the sorts of jobs available in the industry and covers a fairly comprehensive range.

Each chapter looks at a different job and gives a practical breakdown on the hours, working conditions, and the qualifications required. There is also advice on books to read and how to prepare for the particular job.

What makes the book different from many career guides is the personal accounts of the

jobs given by women already working successfully in that area. So you get an overall picture of the advantages and disadvantages of the jobs, the problems of sexual harassment and discrimination, plus the difficulties of dealing with a home life and a demanding job.

It does look at areas that have traditionally employed women — make-up, production assistant, for example — but it is particularly valuable in the chapters on jobs where women are in a minority. The women working as lighting electricians, engineers, camera operators, etc. provide much-needed role models.

The book also contains useful lists of addresses, relevant courses, and a glossary of technical terms.

Kathleen Darby

## Radio guide

**Understanding Radio** by Andrew Crisell, Methuen, £4.95.

Andrew Crisell is so totally enamoured of radio — all radio — news, drama, light entertainment, phone-ins; and writes so eloquently about the medium, that one cannot help but like him for his enthusiasm.

The book is primarily intended for students on media and communications courses but the author also hopes to enlighten those with a "practical interest in programme production". Sadly, this latter category are unlikely to be influenced by his idealism. "Indeed," he

writes, "it is possible to discern a therapeutic function not only in phone-ins but in all kinds of sound broadcasting."

Nevertheless, Mr Crisell sets out excellently the "distinctive characteristics" of radio and as a theoretical introduction it is a lucid, profound and comprehensive book.

There is no analysis of Independent Local Radio. The author confines himself to BBC programmes but only because, as he says, these are more widely known.

Michelle Benn

## CPBF gets going in South West

A Steering Group formed at the inaugural meeting of the South West CPBF in February is planning fund-raising, recruitment and campaigning events throughout the region over the coming year. National Council Chair Tony Lennon (BETA) chaired the meeting which adopted standing orders based on those used by North West CPBF.

At present the SW Steering Group is comprised of Carole Bémant, Jane Day, Jo Doyle, Mike Griffiths, Mike Jempson, Caroline Mitchell and Richard White whose other activities include involvement in community radio, community & media arts, media unions, and local publications and women's groups. An early priority will be to link up with groups opposed to Clause 29 of the Local Government Bill.

### Media racism meeting

Despite installing extra seats for SW-CPBF's January meeting on racism in the media, there was no room for latecomers. Some 70 people packed into the Watershed Media Centre to watch the Ceddo films 'We are the Elephant' about the politicisation of black youth in S. Africa, and 'The People's Account', banned from C4, in which Black residents of the Broadwater Farm estate, and Brixton and Handsworth told about being on the receiving end of racist police and the

media.

Babs Williams of ACTT who works at Chapter Arts in Cardiff spoke about the problems facing Black people seeking work in the media. She was joined on the platform by Peter Courtier of Bristol CRE and Mike Jempson of the NUJ (standing in for NUJ President Lionel Morrison and Haringey Councillor Martha Osamor) for a discussion about how to combat the institutional racism that hinders accurate representation of the Black community in Britain.

The CPBF won several new members and many new contacts, and hopes to work with the Black community and Bristol NUJ on a programme of action to improve Black representation in both employment and coverage in the local media. Bristol NUJ recently voted £25 per quarter towards the George Viner Award scheme to help finance the training of Black journalists. CPBF members wishing to contribute should contact the NUJ.

## Campaign premiere

by Mike Jempson

Post Zircon, Spycatcher and Stalker, you would have thought the media might show some interest in the premiere of a controversial film about an IRA hero, 15 years after it was banned amid a flurry of public debate (see 'Life of an Irish patriot', p.7).

Despite a series of CPBF/Watershed press releases, some lobbying, and a lengthy statement made to the Press Association, few of the nationals gave the Michael Collins film a mention even though Anglo-Irish relations were top of the news agenda at the time.

The Daily Mail predictably sought to re-invoke the original ban, and The Mirror found room for a paragraph on p.33.

Some regional papers did use the PA copy but local media in the South West and the Belfast Telegraph preferred to concentrate on the threat by some Watershed catering staff to walk out because the Sinn Fein had been invited to send a speaker to the weekend conference on British media coverage of Ireland.

An alleged bomb threat on the weekend an exhibition on Anti-Irish racism went up was then cited as evidence that staff had legitimate fears — but no-one seemed certain of whom (an IRA reprisal because Sinn Fein were speaking?). No-one bothered to find out that the hoax caller had ranted against gays in the Watershed bar, and one local radio station even suggested that the fears were because police and army spokespersons had been invited(!).

In the event most catering staff turned up but former Army PR officer Colin Wallace did not (detained on a security contract), nor did the promised Sinn Fein video interview, but Publicity Officer Danny Morrison sent a written statement instead.

The Irish broadcasting company RTE and the New York Times did send reporters to cover the event which was also featured by several Irish newspapers. In the main, the British media stuck to their time-honoured tradition of either ignoring or rubbishing any attempt to provide an alternative viewpoint on Irish affairs.

## Two into one

Readers of Britain's two leading political magazines of the left can hardly have missed, or been surprised by, the announcement that the two are likely to merge in a few months.

From the purely practical point of view this is undoubtedly a good decision. Sales of both journals are below profitable levels and combined are not much greater than their right-wing rival 'The Spectator'.

There may also be good journalistic reasons why the two should join forces. Their styles, though dissimilar, are complementary. The combination of 'The New Statesman's' ideological critique and 'New Society's' social analysis could represent a powerful challenge to the right's hegemony in the printed word.

However, could is the operative word. The merger, if agreed, is proposed not because those involved want to create a powerful new left of centre voice, although no doubt they hope to do so, but because without merger one, or possibly both, publications will collapse.

For those of us concerned with media freedom the merger has a number of worrying aspects. Firstly, it helps to encourage the view, widely held, that there is no 'market' for left-wing journalism. Secondly, any contraction of that section of the media that is both critical of government (regardless of party) and challenges the dominant ideology of the majority of the media must impinge on media freedom as a whole.

Thirdly, both journals have a reputation, well deserved, for being investigative, seekers after the truth. This may be lost if decisions are guided by the market. Lastly, the sum of the two may be less than the respective parts.

Unless the new journal can maintain both the ideological polemic of the 'New Statesman' and the social analysis of 'New Society' it will not only not gain new readers but it may lose many of the existing ones.

John Latham

## Life of an Irish patriot

"Hang up your brightest colours: the life & death of Michael Collins" (ITA, 1972). Written & presented by Kenneth Griffith; directed by Anthony Thomas. Banned for the IBA by Sir Lew Grade in 1973. Premiered by the CPBF in 1988.

Gaoled for his part in the Easter Rising of 1916, Michael Collins was to become both hero and villain for the Irish republican movement and the British Government.

Evading capture as IRA Director of Organisation and Intelligence, he systematically destroyed the British network of informers, and became Minister of Finance in the first Dail Eireann.

Sent to London to negotiate peace and independence he signed the Treaty that established the Irish Free State and in doing so signed his own death warrant. In the bitter civil war that followed he led the pro-Treaty forces, armed by Britain, and was killed in an ambush by former IRA comrades in 1922.

Leaping into history to bring us a rumbustious tribute to his tragic hero Ken Griffith exposes the hypocrisy, cruelty and racism of British Establishment attitudes towards Ireland.

As on-screen narrator and mimic of the mighty, Griffith gallops from Clonakilty to London, to Dublin, to North Wales, back and forth to London and Dublin again, and then to the lonely road in Co. Cork where Collins met his death.

The portraits he paints are vivid and convincing and his analysis uncompromising — Lloyd George and Winston Churchill and their ilk were devious, dangerous men; De Valera and Cathal Brugha little better.

Griffith goes about his task with such gusto and conviction that the audience (some of who had travelled to Bristol from Birmingham, London, Manchester and Sheffield) were chuckling and gasping by turns as he rounded on the duplicitous British and made links with the latest 'Troubles' with a snarl, a pout or a raised eyebrow.

We seldom see such exuberant, opinionated TV film-making today, a reminder that we lack a truly open and diverse broadcast-

ing system. Love it or hate it, you are left in no doubt about Griffith's viewpoint. He makes no claim to speak for anyone but himself, allowing inspired or infuriated viewers to seek alternative interpretations of the facts for themselves. Now there's an object lesson in the "duty to inform", Mr Birt.

Lord Grade, who as a mere knight banned the film 15 years ago at the behest of a three-man IBA committee, told the Daily

Mail that the Campaign premiere of Griffith's film was "irresponsible". Evidently he believes the British public should rely upon the orthodox, Whitehall-sanctioned version of Irish history.

If you prefer to make your own mind, get hold of a 16mm projector and send off for a copy of this remarkable film to ITC, Cullum House, North Orbital Road, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB9 58L (Tel: 0895-832571, or the National Film Archive, BFI, 81 Dean Street, London W1 (Tel: 01-437 4355).

Mike Jempson

## Sunday Sport — shelve it!

Shelve It! the campaign to restrict the display of *Sunday Sport* to the top shelves of newsagents alongside other pornographic publications, is receiving support from all over the country.

We think that *Sunday Sport* should be kept out of the way of children and people it offends, and judging by the responses we've had, many people agree with us. We already have over 50 members, including the NUJ which is forwarding a resolution to promote Shelve It! at this year's Women's TUC Conference. The NUJ agrees that "exploitative photographs and stereotyped articles about women carried by *Sunday Sport* and similar publications, promote sex discrimination."

Some people have suggested that the campaign should go further, and not concentrate on *Sunday Sport*, but extend to

other tabloids. In the original leaflet it said that "we're not advocating censorship ... we just want to keep smut on the top shelf." We don't believe that this will solve the root of the pornography problem, but it's a start.

What do you think about the campaign? We appreciate any suggestions and opinions you might have, so why not write to Shelve It! c/o CPBF.

PS. We apologise to anyone who was offended by the wording in our original leaflet. Where "articles about masturbation" and "lesbian lovers" were put in the same sentence as "rape" and "obscene phone calls" it might have suggested that we think the former things are wrong. What we actually meant was that the derogatory treatment of lesbianism and masturbation in the *Sunday Sport* is wrong.

Kirsti Corbett

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

This is just plainly and simply a few words of support for the comments of Tony Parker in his letter printed in the Free Press of February. I note the changes away from Labour Party bias even in the same issue.

Your sincerely  
Ian Williams  
Secretary Celtic League  
Cornish Branch

Dear Editor

In answer to Stan Willis' confused letter — the word 'gay' is anything but a 'stupid catch phrase'. Its modern use originated at the Stonewall Riots in 1969 when the demonstrators who had been harassed to breaking point by the police shouted the slogan 'Good As You' — hence the abbreviation GAY.

Yours sincerely  
Doreen Potts

Dear Friends,

Two points. First, reviewing my book Policing Desire Teresa Stratford complains that I don't define "pornography". Since one of the

books's main aims was to demonstrate that the notion of "pornography" is a totally misleading and unhelpful term in debates concerning sexuality, representation and power, I can only conclude that she didn't read it very closely. Nor, if Teresa can bring herself to look at it, does the cover show "a man's naked buttocks" as she states, but a rather sexy girls' bum.

Second, I was stunned by Stan Willis' extraordinary letter (FP45) asking why you use the word "gay" instead of "homo-sexual". Why not call us "contragenics" and be done with it, or better still plain old "poofers"; like The Sun? Stan is obviously quite right, and two million British men and women should immediately start referring to themselves as "queers" again in order to get letters into The Daily Telegraph. Nice one Stan! Thanks a lot! But I think you may have confused the CPBF with the National Viewers and Listeners' Association. Better luck next time old chap.

Yours sincerely  
Simon Watney  
The Terrence Higgins Trust

## Radical local in trouble

Leeds Other Paper, one of Britain's few surviving radical newspapers, is in financial trouble.

Launched in 1974, the paper made its mark on the political scene with its revealing "exclusives". These included photos that provided nuclear trains were regularly running through Leeds, and investigations into cancer related dyes that led to a Channel Four film.

Accumulated deficits and production problems have brought the paper near to closing. Donations have started to trickle in from around the country, but more money is needed.

To send donations or obtain further information, write to: LOP Supporters Group, 52 Call Lane, Leeds, SL1 6DT (cheques to "Leeds Alternative Publications Ltd")

Kirsti Corbett

**CAMPAIGN FOR PRESS & BROADCASTING FREEDOM**

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

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**CLAUSE 29**

CPBF Women's Group have organised a public meeting on Clause 29 of the Local Government Bill. The meeting will take place on 23 April in Room 2F, University of London Union, Mallet Street. Speakers include Linda Belos and Melanie McFadyen. Julianne Dickey will be in the chair. Entrance fee £1.00 waged, 50p unwaged.

**FREE PRESS INDEX**

We are currently compiling an index to Free Press which we hope to make available soon. Unfortunately, there are three issues missing from our files and we are appealing to readers for help. If anyone has a copy of FP 1, 10 or 13 which they could either lend to the office or send us a photocopy of we want to hear from you.

**LISTENING TO WOMEN**

The Labour Party is organising a conference for 1000 delegates at Hammer-smith Town Hall on Sunday 19 June on the position of women in the arts and media. This follows the publication last October of a discussion paper on this issue. The conference will be chaired by Jo Richardson, Labour's spokesperson on Women.

Anyone wanting further details should contact Mark Fisher, MP, Shadow Minister for the Arts and Media or Kath Nicholls, his research assistant, at the House of Commons, Tel. 01 219 4502.

**UNFAIR DISMISSAL**

*Daily Mirror* SOGAT shop steward, Angela Molloy was sacked in February 1987. Maxwell said that she had lied to members in order to influence a ballot held in December 1986 on an in-house agreement.

Angela claims that what she actually did was carry out her legitimate trade union responsibility to inform members of the pit-falls in the agreement.

She decided to fight against her unfair dismissal. The Industrial Tribunal hearing began on 11 December 1987 and was adjourned just before Christmas, half way through the defence. The tribunal reopened on 17 February.

Angela's legal costs are high. Donations are needed to enable the fight to continue. They can be sent to: Chapel Office GM28, Holborn Circus, London, EC1 1DQ. Cheques should be made payable to "MGN SOGAT Clerical Chapel".

**MEDIA MAGAZINE**

*Overmatter*, a new magazine on the media, has been launched by the journalism students at City University.

Financed by several major media organisations it aims to act as a forum for student journalists to discuss media issues. Each issue is being produced by a different editorial team.

Whilst it is hoped that other publications might support it the students still need financial support to cover the cost of future issues.

New from CPBF

**Out of the gutter**

A survey of press treatment of homosexuality  
 By Gary Armitage, Julianne Dickey and Sue Sharples  
 Price £3.15

Further details may be obtained from *Overmatter*, c/o The Graduate Centre for Journalism, 223-227 St John Street, London, EC1.

**CENSORSHIP**

*Youth in Society*, the journal of the National Youth Bureau, has censored an article on Clause 29 in order to maintain its government funding.

Its author, Peter Kent-Baguley, sees both the clause and the censorship of his article as restrictions on free speech.

He hopes to publish the article in pamphlet form if he can raise the money. Donations and further details from Peter Kent-Baguley, The Old Vicarage, Newchapel, Stoke on Trent, ST7 4QT.

Edited for the National Committee by SIMON COLLINGS. Special thanks to KIRSTI CORBETT and JOHN LATHAM for putting most of this issue together. Copy for FP47 should arrive at the office by 16 May 1988.

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