

FREE 30p
PRESS

JOURNAL OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR
PRESS AND BROADCASTING FREEDOM

No. 49

October 1988

Lords' ruling welcomed

The Campaign welcomed the Law Lords' decision to allow the publication of *Spycatcher*, but fears that the government's White Paper on secrecy could make a mockery of that decision.

The Campaign believes that the government acted in an authoritarian and censorious manner in banning *Spycatcher*.

The widespread opposition to the original ban and the fact that organisations and individuals defied the ban, clearly influenced the decision. The Campaign hopes the government will think twice before taking similar actions.

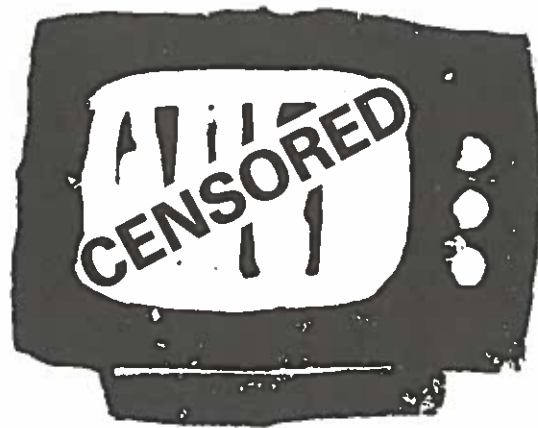
The campaign calls on the government to withdraw the provisions in its White Paper on Official Secrets which seek to impose an obligation of lifelong confidentiality on government servants. It also supports the view that government employees who leak information should be able to plead that they did so in the public interest.

Tom O'Malley, CPBF spokesperson said: 'If the White Paper proposals become law, then the government would be able to ban books like *Spycatcher*, and a lot more, with impunity. The White Paper proposals would make a mockery of the Law Lords' decision.'

'The whole episode reveals the government holds the principles of media freedom and the citizens right to know in contempt.'

Consultation paper on media ownership plus conference report

see p.4&5 for details



Television on trial

When Kenneth Asquez announced to the inquest in Gibraltar that he had 'made up' statements broadcast in *Death on the Rock*, ministers and newspapers seized on the claim as another stick with which to flay both Thames TV and the IBA. The *Sunday Telegraph*, on 25 September, even went so far as to suggest that Thames should have its franchise revoked.

For both the ITV company and the IBA, who of course faced earlier criticism over the screening of the programme, the row over *Death on the Rock* could not be happening at a worse time. With the Broadcasting White Paper due out shortly and franchises up for renewal in 1992, Thames must be deeply worried about their future.

It is hardly surprising then that they have bowed to pressure and announced an enquiry into the programme to be conducted by Lord Windlesham, a former Northern Ireland Secretary. The IBA's defence of the programme is certain to have strengthened views in the Conservative Party that the Authority should be abolished.

Thames needs a credible public figure to clear their name. Lord Windlesham, who as a former chairperson of Associated Television defended the *Death of a Princess* documentary, may prove to be a good choice. Undeniably Thames and its journalists feel they have truth on their side.

Confused

Yet all this begs the question how we have come to a situation where such an unprecedented enquiry is taking place. Asquez's claim that the statement he provided for Thames was 'made up' is at best open to doubt. Details from this statement which were neither used in the programme nor quoted elsewhere and which were not mentioned by any other witness, were confirmed by the evidence of Soldier 'C' at the inquest.

When challenged on this by the Coroner, Asquez was unable to explain himself saying that he was confused. So doubtful was the Coroner about Asquez's behaviour at the inquest that in his summing up he directed the jury to consider Asquez's original statement as evidence. Pizarello said: 'I have to tell you to consider the discredited evidence of Mr Asquez ... you must consider whether he is telling the truth in the statement he gave to Randall, or whether he is telling the truth about it now.'

Randall, who was accused by Asquez of putting 'pressure' on him has sworn an affidavit in which he denies the allegations.

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The French experience

Invited guests were absent at this year's Edinburgh International Television Festival. Sir William Rees Mogg, chair of the Fledgling Broadcasting Standards Council declined an invitation, and Andrew Neil, *Sunday Times* editor, stopped his media team attending. Neil's reason was a spoof ad in the TV Festival magazine for a *Sunday Times* journalist to contribute to 'its expanding media coverage'. Candidates 'should possess an uncritical enthusiasm for the views and vested interests of their proprietor'. The spoof ad ended, 'The *Sunday Times* is an equally opportunistic employer'. Obviously an editor without a sense of humour.

For those who did make it to Edinburgh a warning note was sounded. The vision of a diverse deregulated broadcasting future is flawed.

Christine Ockrent, the first woman to give the McTaggart lecture, drew on her experience in France's fast changing industry, where she worked for the privatised TF1 channel until she resigned in disgust. She argued that deregulation is inevitably damaging to broadcasting standards: 'We have indeed more channels than we used to, but we seem to have less consumer choice as programming recipes to reach the largest possible audiences are of course the same,' she said.

She also gave an insight into 'the new breed'. These are the men who tell you blank in the eye that there is no reason why a TV station should run differently to a pipes factory... (the major shareholder in FT1, the Bouyges company, is a construction group). They have goals, but no standards. Programmes are not discussed in terms of quality, but in terms of commodities and figures. Judgement comes in with the ratings the following morning.'

The issues Christine Ockrent raised — quality, standards, the need for regulation of broadcasting — came up again in several sessions, but a chilling insight into the 'new breed' of men in British Broadcasting came in a session, 'TV in the Nineties'.

The audience heard Jim Styles, Managing Director of Sky, Rupert Murdoch's satellite company, say its new £15m TV Centre would be a non-union operation. Answering the charge that he would be seeking to lower programme standards by expecting cheaper production, Styles said, 'The challenge to you people is to accept that price doesn't necessarily relate to quality'. Work that one out.

Another satellite mogul, Bob Hunter of 'NOW', BSB, presented a bleak future for effective trade unionism: '... we welcome unionisation. It will depend on three points — that there is a single union, a no-strike agreement and total flexibility.'

People uneasy at the future of broad-

casting the 'new breed' might herald bravely expressed their views. Michael Waring, Head of Drama at BBC Birmingham, spoke with evident unease in the session, 'The Censorship of Commerce'. The introduction to the session in the Festival magazine summed up the dilemma: 'Governments are not the only censors in today's media... Will good TV drama be restricted or stimulated by the dictates of commerce?'

Michael Waring (production credits include 'Boys from the Black Stuff') worried about the tendency in the BBC to produce safe drama. 'Will the new system drive out the risky innovative scripts that require a lot of work?' he asked.

And so to the final session, The Memo to Maggie, designed to influence the White Paper on Broadcasting. The memo was discussed and amended by a depleted audience (partly because of the feeling, as one cynic suggested, 'she won't read it anyway'). The concerns expressed in the memo are ones about broadcasting standards and quality that the CPBF also shares. Ultimately, though, memos aren't enough. The arguments need to be debated with a wider audience, and support won for the public regulation of broadcasting. Otherwise the new breed of broadcasters will be up and running in Britain.

Granville Williams

International News

Article 19, the International centre on Censorship, has sent a letter to President Roh Tae Woo of South Korea urging him to relax censorship practice in the Republic.

The Republic of Korea was host in Seoul this year to the 52nd International PEN Congress, an event which celebrates the common aspiration that writers, journalists and publishers share towards securing freedom of expression across frontiers.

Article 19 has requested President Roh Tae Woo to:

- Release all writers, publishers, poets and journalists imprisoned solely for the peaceful expression of their beliefs and opinions.
- Remove the existing regulations that require foreign publications to be licensed.
- Repeal the provisions of the *National Security Law*

(NSL) punishing activity deemed by the Government to be 'aiding the cause of anti-state elements'. Widescale self-censorship has resulted from the abuse of this law.

● End the banning of more than 1,000 pop songs previously prohibited as being critical of the government and in the future allow musicians to perform their work freely.

● End the confiscations of books and the censorship of films and plays pursuant to the recommendations of the Korean Ethics Committee for Public Performances.

Writer and politician Albert Mukong (55) was arrested at the Cameroonian border on 16 June as he was returning home to his country from a visit to Nigeria. The reason for his arrest was his refusal to

apologise for an interview he gave to the BBC World Service, Network Africa during elections held in Cameroon in April.

The London based Committee for Human Rights in Cameroon reports that when Mukong was asked why he had not stood for election, he had replied that the Cameroon Government had prevented him from standing.

Many political detainees in Cameroon are never charged or tried but simply held for years in internment camps. However, the Cameroon Government is planning to bring Mukong to trial. Rather than the trial being held in Yaounde though, where there will automatically be more public and international interest and access to the proceedings, the government has decided to try Mukong in his own town of Bamenda, away from it all.

Amnesty International has taken up the case.

Send protests to — His Ex-

cellency President Paul Biye, The Presidential Palace, Yaounde, Cameroon, West Africa with copies to His Excellency the Ambassador, Cameroon Embassy, Holland Park, London, W11.

Since the launch of Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* ('restructuring') and *glasnost* ('openness') three years ago, the differences between the various levels of freedom of expression in the countries of the Soviet block have become increasingly obvious.

In Central Europe, the recent selective 'rehabilitation' of some well-known exiles by Moscow was followed by similar moves in Poland and Hungary, but not in the GDR and Czechoslovakia.

To highlight this situation 25 exiled Czechoslovak writers have issued a statement calling for the abolition of censorship and the rehabilitation of banned works.

Media ownership debated at TUC

Media ownership was the subject of one of three motions on press freedom at this year's TUC Congress. Conference endorsement of the motion gives the General Council the job of coming back to next year's Congress with a programme of action. The motion, which was proposed by Brenda Dean, General Secretary of SOGAT, states:

'Congress calls up the General Public, in consultation with other interested parties, to identify the action necessary to establish a genuinely free and diverse press in this country.'

The General Council should give consideration to the following:

- (i) the continuing concentration of the newspaper industry into the ownership of individuals, especially those who neither reside in nor have United Kingdom citizenship;
- (ii) a restriction on the number of national, regional and local newspapers which can be owned by one individual or corporation and the introduction of measures aimed at reversing the existing concentration of ownership by compulsory divestment;
- (iii) the introduction of an advertising levy to ensure that the reporting of facts and the expression of opinion is not affected by the ability to raise advertising revenue;
- (iv) a legal obligation on wholesalers and retailers to accept any lawful publication and arrange for its proper supply and display subject to a reasonable

handling charge; and

(v) the establishment of a new publicly-owned newspaper origination printing and distributing facility, available for hire to groups within our society.'

The other two motions on press freedom were, from the NUJ, on the freedom of information, and from BETA, on public service broadcasting.

The NUJ motion calls on the General Council to campaign for legislation which ensures the right to know and recognises the right of journalists to protect their sources. It also calls on the TUC to oppose the Home Secretary's proposed reform of the Official Secrets Act and to conduct an enquiry into the state of media freedom in this country.

The BETA motion condemns government attacks on public service broadcasting and urges the General Council to draw up a policy for 1989.

Fringe meetings at Blackpool

The Association of Liberal Trade Unionists organised a fringe meeting on 27th September at the Democrats Conference in Blackpool. It was standing room only to hear Harry Conroy, NUJ National Secretary, and Granville Williams, CPBF, speak on the threats to press and broadcasting freedom in Britain today. Practical ideas to challenge the Tory plans for broadcasting,

campaign for the Right of Reply, and to discuss the CPBF consultative document on ownership and control were well received. After a lively discussion, the Chair, Janice Turner, received enthusiastic support for the idea of a joint national conference with the CPBF on the issue of Censorship in the Media. A collection of over £40.00 was made for the CPBF.

Two fringe meetings at the Labour Party Conference were well supported. On Wednesday 5th October an audience of over 150 crowded in to hear Mark Fisher, Shadow Minister for Arts and Media; Pat Healy, ex Times and NUJ Executive, and Frank Allaun speak on *BAD News: Media in the Age of Murdoch*. A literature stall sold over £100.00 worth of CPBF publications and several people joined the Campaign.

Another encouraging feature of the meeting was the number of Labour MPs who attended and contributed. We are getting our message across, and building support.

Another packed meeting on 6th October heard Clare Short MP, Julie Grant, Campaign Against Pornography, and Kathy Darby, CPBF Women's Group, speak on *Tabloid Porn: A Woman's Place in the News?*

A *Sun* reporter (with his Conference Media badge removed to avoid identification presumably) was in the audience. He beat a hasty retreat when invited to comment on the points Clare Short made in her talk.

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Time and time again the transcript of the inquest bears out evidence presented in the Thames film. A recent study by David Miller, of Glasgow Media Group, shows that the same standards cannot be claimed by those papers which now accuse the Thames journalists.

Towards the end of his report entitled *Truth on the Rocks*, Miller comments: 'It is clear that, as well as repeating official misinformation and adding their own distortions, much of the British media have played down or ignored inconvenient issues.'

The most glaring examples of this disregard for the truth Miller claims, are evident in the coverage relating to *Death on the Rock*. They include the 'smearing' of key witness Carmen Proetta and attempts to discredit the pro-

gramme makers themselves. Not surprisingly, amongst those indulging in this mud slinging are the *Sun* and the *Sunday Times* whose proprietor's interests in seeing existing TV companies besmirched and the public service ethos undermined have been well served in recent years.

By asking the questions they did, many of which still remain unanswered, and by their refusal to bow to pressure not to show *Death on the Rock*, Thames angered the government. They are now being made to pay the price.

Commenting early in the controversy Mrs Thatcher said 'trial by TV or guilt by association is the day that freedom dies'. Some might feel that her sentiment applies equally to trial of TV.

Will anyone dare risk the government's wrath next time?

The pattern of ownership of the media poses one of the most serious threats to press and broadcasting freedom. In the British newspaper industry ownership has become more concentrated than in any other Western European country. Such a monopoly places immense power in the hands of a tiny number of people. For the rest of us it imposes a severe restriction on the free flow of information, curtails free expression, limits choice and stifles debate. The media monopoly strikes a major blow at democracy.

The newspaper industry is the most extreme example of the problem. But it also exists in the magazine, books, film and broadcasting industries.

The pattern can, however, be reversed. The Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom is proposing a formula which would begin to tackle the problem.

The Campaign is seeking:

- a limit on the number of publishing and broadcasting interests owned by any one person or company
- a Media Enterprise Board to promote, advise and help to fund new and innovative media projects.

Three main trends now dominate the pattern of ownership of Britain's media. Each section of the media has become more and more controlled by a handful of owners. These proprietors are at the same time building up extensive empires across the different sectors of the media. And the same media moguls are stacking up more and more shares in other areas of commerce — some of them leading to disturbing conflicts of interest.

Over the last 40 years ownership and control of the British media has become more and more centred in the hands of

Ownership and control pack

A pack of materials prepared for the Ownership and Control Conference is available from the CPBF.

The pack includes:

- The text of Brian Gould's speech outlining Labour's plans for media reform.
- A chart prepared by the NUJ showing who owns what.
- Details of the kind of laws which operate in other European countries, the US and Australia.

Available from the London office, price £2.45 inc. p&p.

Consultation on media ownership

We publish here the text of a consultation paper on media ownership launched at the CPBF conference on 24 September. *Free Press* readers are invited to respond to the proposals outlined. Your observations could help us in drafting a Private Members Bill to go forward next year. Send comments to Tom O'Malley at the Poland St. office.

fewer people. Four large companies now own seven of the 11 national daily newspapers. The four giants are Robert Maxwell's Mirror Group; Rupert Murdoch's News International; Lord Stevens' United Newspapers and the Mail empire Associated Newspapers. The latter two groups also have extensive interests in the regional and local newspaper field. All four companies dominate the Sunday newspaper market.

For these big operators major interests newspapers offers two important benefits:

Profit ... money, and not concern about press freedom or high journalistic standards, dictates the media scene. Owners treat the media market as a game of monopoly — launching and closing newspapers, hiring and firing staff as economics see fit.

Power ... even more important than profit, big selling newspapers give their owners a strong voice in national politics — a platform from which to push their political views. Proprietors don't flinch from using that voice to protect their assets and tell us, their readers, what to think.

Although most promise editorial independence, in reality they frequently interfere in the day to day news content of their newspapers and exert pressure on editors and journalists to toe their favoured party line. Generally they express support for the party which best serves their commercial interests. This means the press is severely skewed right-of-centre politics — in opposition, often, to the views of its readers.

At the same time the proprietors are anxious to maintain the status quo and stifle any opposing viewpoints. They therefore feel compelled to undermine and attack alternative voices, whether

from trade unions, parties of the centre or left or single purpose campaigns. The result is a daily menu of bland, partisan, narrow-minded and unrepresentative print.

The monopoly is reflected in all areas of publishing. A handful of big chains own most local newspapers. The magazine industry is dominated by a few large operators. And book publishing and selling is also monopolised by a small number of big companies. In all, between 1969 and 1986 nine multinational conglomerates bought up more than 200 newspapers and magazines with a total circulation of 46 million.

In broadcasting the pattern is more complex because of the mixture of regulation and 'free market' policies. The BBC runs its two television channels and numerous radio stations under fairly strict undertakings governing quality and independence. ITV is made up of 15 independent companies under statutory regulation. But in so-called 'independent' radio, where free market forces are encouraged, the tendency towards monopoly is clear. Of the 48 Independent Local Radio stations only four are truly independent. The rest are linked to three big companies.

The monopoly affecting local radio — and print — could soon be extended to public broadcasting too. The Government plans to remove the regulations which currently guarantee us some measure of quality and independence on ITV channels. Media analysts fear this will pave the way for the ultimate privatisation of the BBC too.

It is clear from looking at other sectors of the media that loosening regulations leads to increasing monopolies. Both Rupert Murdoch and Robert Maxwell are understood to be keen

to extend their interests into British broadcasting. If the Government gets away with its plans, our broadcasting services could soon become just like the tabloids.

The pattern of ownership between sectors of the media has become more and more web-like. Proprietors buy up interests in not only all aspects of British media but throughout the world. Media academics predict that by the year 2000 all of the world's communications could be owned by just seven companies.

Media proprietors also have extensive shares in a range of other industries from gas to transport, film to football. Media moguls have a finger in every pie. Such involvement poses potential — and sometimes real — conflicts of interest.

We are faced with two possible scenarios for the future. If current trends are allowed to continue unchecked, Britain could end up with every aspect of its culture and communications held in the fists of a few very powerful multinational corporations dictating all we read, see and hear.

The alternative is to take back media control for the public, ensure that public interests dictate media economics and news content and encourage free-thinking and diversity.

A healthy democracy needs media which are challenging and inquiring; which question and criticise the government, state forces and the establishment, and which offer equally and impartially all shades of opinion. The media should act as an independent public watchdog not as a guard dog acting on behalf of powerful corporate interests.

There are three basic planks to a policy introducing democracy into the media. They are a law to restrict ownership; a body to foster enterprise and a

right of distribution for all publications. Various models can be drawn up. The Campaign is proposing for debate the following formula:

No one person or company will be entitled to a holding interest in more than:

- (a) one national daily title
- (b) one national Sunday title
- (c) one regional newspaper title
- (d) 10 local newspaper titles (including free newspapers)
- (e) one television station (including cable and satellite)
- (f) one radio station

Owners exceeding the legal limits will be allowed up to one year to divest themselves of their interests.

A Media Enterprise Board will be set up to promote diversity in the media. It will oversee the divestment of interests. But it will be essentially an enabling body. It will offer expert advice and financial guidance to new print or broadcasting enterprises. It will enter into contracts with some new enterprises, offering loans and, in some cases, start-up grants in return for guarantees on the quality and diversity of news content and good practice in employment.

It might set up or organise a central printing facility. It will be financed by public funds. Additional finance could be raised through an advertising levy on the media. The MEB should be independent of the government but report regularly to Parliament. Its members will be appointed by the government from nominations sought from a range of consumer, employer and employee organisations. Its membership must be as representative of the society as possible.

A right of distribution will apply to all newspapers, magazines and books (subject to existing legislation).

Labour launches media proposal

More than two hundred delegates were present at the CPBF conference on 25 September to hear Brian Gould MP announce Labour's plan to control monopoly ownership in the media.

'The state of the press in Britain is a national disgrace,' Gould told the conference. He pledged that Labour, if elected to power, would act to raise standards, encourage diversity and remove the threat of concentration of ownership.

Central to Labour's policy would be moves to limit the number of newspapers any one organisation might own to three, restrictions on ownership across different media and enforcement of fair competition rules. Gould also said that legislation along the lines of Ann Clwyd's Bill would be enacted as well as a Freedom of Information Act.

Gould was joined on the platform by Aidan White, General Secretary of the IFJ, fellow Labour MP Mark Fisher, and Gareth Loxley, economist and writer.

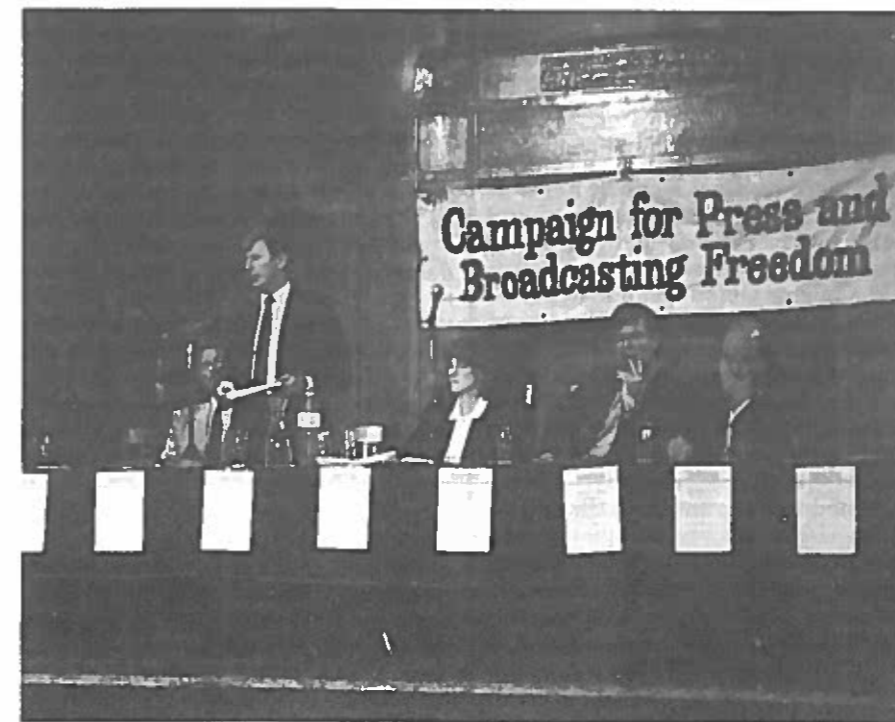
Aidan White stressed the international dimension to the problem. He said that the IFJ had embarked on a detailed study of Murdoch's News Corporation to highlight the issue. He said the IFJ had selected News Corporation not only because it was the biggest and most ruthless of the multinationals but also because it represents a blueprint of things to come.

Gareth Loxley explained how information, unlike other commodities, can be repackaged over and over again. This inevitably brings those seeking to maximise re-use, and hence profits, into conflict with the regulators. He said that the key to campaigning against media monopoly was convincing people that 'information' is a different kind of 'product'.

Mark Fisher paid tribute to the CPBF without whom, he said, these policies would not have got off the ground.

For a future Labour Government, he said, a crucial test would be the economic viability of any proposed legislation. 'We fool ourselves,' he said, 'if we think the media can be broken up into cottage industries.'

Later delegates reconvened to hear contributions from James Curran, Barbara Gunnell, NUJ joint-president, and Alan Sapper, General Secretary of ACTT.



Putting the record straight

Press coverage of lesbian and gay issues has served only to reinforce ignorance, promote discrimination and in some cases, encourage violence, according to a new survey.

The survey conducted by Haringey Council and published by the Association of London Authorities, shows that most of the press has ignored the discrimination and violence suffered by lesbians and gay men in Britain.

Staff at the council's lesbian and gay unit monitored the feminist and gay press for a five month period during the debate on the controversial clause 28 of the Local Government Act.

Stories about the sacking of gay employees, harassment by police, attacks on property owned by gay organisations and violence against gay men and lesbians were covered in some details.

But reports on these incidents, including a series of brutal murders of gay men and the rape of a lesbian were entirely absent from the mainstream murders.

Other items missed by the national papers included fabrication of evidence against a headmaster, the refusal of a police force to distribute anti-AIDS leaflets, the sacking of three gay workers by a major supermarket chain and the banning of books and plays by local councils frightened by Section 28 of the Local Government Act.

Cllr Graham Nicholas, co-chair of the ALA's Lesbian and Gay committee said,

'This digest clearly shows what a distorted image we get of lesbians and

Mirror libel abuse

Mirror Group Newspapers have agreed to settle their libel action against *Everywomen* magazine without costs, because they have 'no wish' to force the magazine into liquidation.

The September issue of *Everywomen*, a national current affairs magazine for women run by a small independent co-operative, was removed from newsagents all over the country following a High Court injunction obtained by Mirror Group solicitors Mishcon de Reya against the magazine, its editor and distributors.

The article in question was about the Marje Proops advice column in the *Daily Mirror*, and was very critical of the content. In one case a woman who had been shocked and distressed to find pornography hidden by her husband was told that using porn was probably a legitimate response by men to women's sexual problems and that she could

Images of disability

One in three of the population, according to official sources, is 'appreciably disabled'. Whatever the definitional issues involved here, it is quite clear that a substantial number of people in our society, drawn from all walks of life, have disabilities.

But what is our image of disability and disabled people? Furthermore, how are the images people have of disability formed and how does television portray people with disabilities?

These are some of the questions this new study by the BRU, with Dr Guy Cumberbatch of the University of Aston, will seek to answer.

Funded by the BBC, IBA, ITVA and Channel Four, the study will be the most systematic attempt so far to examine the issues of disability presented by television. It will look at disability in the news, in current affairs, in plays, in soap operas and programmes specifically about disability. It will ask a number of key questions:

- What type of disablement makes the news?
- How frequently do people with disabilities appear in the news?
- Do the disabled appear in plays and soap operas as characters or as objects of disability?
- How do other characters in plays and soap operas react to disabled characters? And do the reactions reflect real life reactions to disability?

gay men through the press.

'It is a welcome counterpoint which I hope will go some way to combatting the unreasoning prejudice and hatred which has become the standard response of so many people when the question of lesbian and gay rights is raised.'

Patrick Kelly

"learn something" from it about sex. In another a young woman who had suffered years of sexual abuse by her stepfather was told to continue keeping it secret, with no information offered about where to get help.

The Mirror Group had previously offered to settle only if *Everywomen* had paid their costs — which would have wiped them out.

"Our readers expect us to take a strong and critical line in relation to what's going on in the media as well as in current affairs generally. We are delighted to have survived the Mirror Group's legal action and we plan to take up more questions about press freedom, pornography and the responsibilities of the major media proprietors towards women," said Christine George and Barbara Rogers for *Everywomen* magazine.

● What place does disability have in the rest of television output?

A major part of the study is concerned with the audience reaction to televised portrayal of disablement. But one in three of the audience for television has some form of disability. How do people with disability view the portrayal of some one with their own? Are they closer in their estimations of the reality of disablement to non-disabled people if the disability is shown as different from their own?

There is an increasingly strong sentiment within Britain that television has got it wrong as far as disability is concerned and does not play its proper role in allowing the non-disabled to understand properly the world of the disabled. This study will document how the disabled are portrayed by television and explored what is required to alter present attitudes towards the disabled.

Further information from: Dr David Morrison/Alison Joseph, Broadcasting Research Unit, 39c Highbury Place, London N5 1QP.

Local radio folk protest

Protests are growing in Nottingham against the planned axing of the Copperplate Music Show, a two hour weekly folk music programme which has been presented for the past eight years on Radio Nottingham by Roy Harris. The BBC plans to scrap the show along with the other folk music programmes on the BBC East Midlands Local Radio Network in Leicester and Lincolnshire, in favour of a programme to cover the whole region transmitted by Radio Derby and hosted by that station's current presenters.

Not surprisingly these moves, of which no details have been publicly revealed, have angered folk music enthusiasts in Nottinghamshire where the folk scene is exceptionally active. The county boasts more folk clubs and dance teams than any other in the region.

The Copperplate Music Show has long been a much valued link between them, featuring the widest possible selection of local performers with diary coverage of Nottinghamshire folk events as well as items of regional and national interest.

It is feared that no regional output can even begin to provide a sufficient showcase for the wide variety of local talent, nor offer the breadth of localised news made possible by a town's indigenous programme, of which the Copperplate Music Show is a widely respected example.

Book Reviews

Pornography and Sexual Violence, Evidence of the Links. Everywoman Press £4.95

The book is a transcript of public hearings organised by Minneapolis City Council to contribute to the drafting of an Ordinance to define pornography and to enable individuals complaints relating to pornography to be treated on a civil rights basis.

The bulk of the book is a record of accounts from victims of sexual violence, counsellors working with victims, experts in sociology and psychology and witnesses of sexual assaults. The spoken accounts are in parts quite disjointed due to the emotions felt by the speaker, this makes them very powerful but requires considerable concentration by the reader on a subject which inevitably angers and sickens.

There is no discussion of any of the material either during the hearing (as it was testimony only) or as a conclusion to the book and I felt this to be a considerable shortcoming. With a title as bold as 'Pornography and sexual violence, evidence of the links' I expected some form of critical analysis to place the personal accounts in context and without the book feels half finished, I would have appreciated a chapter drawing on the work of femin-

Computer network

Computers open up whole areas of electronic media to people. One organisation, GreenNet, is offering world wide contact to organisations like Friends of the Earth and New Internationalist magazine.

GreenNet is a global computer network for peace, environment and human rights. It is part of the Association of Progressive Communications which has over 3,000 subscribers across the globe. Those subscribers are offered an information service on a mass of subjects ranging from Central America to marine pollution, from an environmental news service from Greenpeace to the news about the plight of the indigenous people from Survival International. It also has provided up to the minute reports on the United Nations Special Session on Disarmament (III) and contrasting reports from both Soviet and Western News Agencies about the Chernobyl nuclear accident.

GreenNet is a non profit organisation. They can be contacted at 26-28 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ. Tel 01490 1510.

Tim Brennan

ists who have theorised on pornography such as Andrea Dworkin.

The book however is worth reading, it serves as a rightful reminder of the evil of pornography, rightfully strips it of its false glamour and reveals it for the obscene violation of human rights that it really is.

Tessa Palfreyman

According to the Papers: Press reporting on people with learning difficulties by Alison Wertheimer, available from CMH Publications, 5 Kentings, Comberton, CAMBS CB3 7DT. Price £3.75.

At a time when people with learning difficulties are returning to the community, the media should be providing an accurate explanation of policy and proper representation of them as people. Instead, the familiar story of inadequate coverage and damaging stereotypes prevails, especially in the press.

This report monitors a period of six weeks in 1987 when nearly 1500 cuttings were culled from the national and local press. While parents, professionals and politicians were given their space, not once was the opinion sought of a person with learning difficulties, adding to the myth that some people can't speak for themselves.

Journalists were more often wide of the mark (confusing, for instance, mental handicap with mental illness),

Index on Censorship, Vol 17 No 8, September 1988. Price £1.65

"The sad truth is that the very concept of liberty ... is being challenged and corroded by the Thatcher government." Ronald Dworkin's article provides the overview for a series of deeply disturbing articles in *Index* examining in detail the sad state of freedom of expression in Britain.

The magazine normally chronicles the suppression of political and artistic speech around the world, but it now believes there is great danger to the "culture of liberty" in our own backyard.

The range of subjects covered shows, too, the number of fronts on which freedom of expression is under attack. Traditional journalism is represented with articles from John Lloyd, Jeremy Warner and Duncan Campbell; broadcasting by Mark Bonham Carter and Brian Wenham; the curtailment of public protest and picketing by Costaz Douzinas; academic freedom by Roy Jenkins, and attacks on freedom in the culture and personal realms by Adam Mars-Jones, John Mortimer and Stephen Spender.

There's much more in this *Index* which makes it required reading for CPBF supporters. We, after all, are part of that important dissenting and cam-

and leaders moralised from a position of relative ignorance.

While most press stories concern people with learning difficulties as recipients of charity, the papers had a field day during the monitoring period debating whether or not the law should prevent a young woman from having children. Aside from the issue of invasion of privacy, where were the voices of people who would be directly affected by the court ruling?

The issues raised in this and other stories are clearly analysed in this useful pamphlet. The author suggests 'cumulative positive coverage' as the way forward, proposing some guidelines for journalists alongside an action plan for people wanting to use the media.

However, the report's scope is limited to issues arising from the monitoring and only scratches the surface of why people with learning difficulties get such a bad press. As well as educating journalists, shouldn't we also be enforcing effective sanctions against persistent offenders? Shouldn't be we looking at employment practices and equal opportunities within the industry?

There was little insight into the nature of reporting on 'community care'. Were there any attempts to put Government policy in a historical context? Any discussion of the general ill-resourcing of public services for the community as a whole?

Despite this limited scope, I would still recommend 'According to the Papers' as concrete evidence of the way things unfortunately are.

Steve Gray

paigning tradition which believes, with Ronald Dworkin, "that government may not censor the opinions or regulate the convictions or tastes of individuals, or what they say or hear or read or write, even when it believes, with however good reason, that censorship or regulation would be in the overall national interest".

Index on Censorship is available from: CPBF, 9 Poland Street, London W1 3DG or NW CPBF, 244 Corn Exchange Building, Hanging Ditch, Manchester M4 3BQ.

Granville Williams

Trouble & Strife

Trouble & Strife is now one of the few remaining autonomous and unfunded feminist magazines with a mass circulation in Britain. But they are facing a financial crisis. They need the support of the feminist community if they are to survive into the 1990's.

For further details contact: Trouble & Strife, c/o Women's Centre, 34 Exchange Street, Norwich.

**CAMPAIGN FOR PRESS
& BROADCASTING
FREEDOM**

*incorporating the Campaign
Against Racism in the Media &
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LONDON GROUP

The inaugural meeting of a London based CPBF group took place on 11 October. A second meeting has now been scheduled for 8 November and all London members are invited to attend. The group will discuss the forthcoming White Paper on Broadcasting, media issues in London and plans for a benefit. The meeting will take place at the offices of BETA, 181 Wardour Street, W1 starting at 6.30. Contact Tom O'Malley for further details.

HUMAN RIGHTS

CPBF-SW played an important part in the Amnesty International 'Human Rights and the Media' event in Bristol from 24 September to 1 October. Aidan White, General Secretary of the IFJ, spoke.

Feminism and Censorship: The Current Debate

Edited by Gail Chester and
Julienne Dickey

Published by Prism Press

£6.95

Available from the CPBF

CPBF-SW steering group meets monthly. For more details contact PO Box 51, 37 Stokes Croft, Bristol or phone (0272) 652341.

UNION NEWS

A number of trade unions have placed bulk orders for the CPBF leaflet, *Is This the Media We Really Deserve?* Recent orders include 600 leaflets for TGWU South Region, 2,000 for NUPE, and 500 for AEU Warrington District. If your trade union wants copies of the leaflet, send orders to:

Granville Williams
North West CPBF
244 Corn Exchange Building
Hanging Ditch
Manchester M4 3BQ

The leaflets are free: all you have to do is cover the postage.

CLEVELAND REPORT

Pauline Illsley of the CPBF has written a pamphlet on media coverage of the Cleveland child abuse affair which the National Committee is currently trying to raise funds to publish. Any members with ideas or cash should contact Tom O'Malley at the London office.

MAKING CONTACT

The relationship between social action agencies and the media in Wales will be the subject of a conference at Dyffryn House, Nr. Cardiff, Monday 28 November 1988.

The conference is jointly organised by The Wales Council for Voluntary Action, The Media Project at the Volunteer Centre UK, and E. Force at BBC/CSV training project. It is sponsored by S4C, HTV Wales, and BBC Wales.

Cost £6.00 including refreshments (some bursaries available).

Transport from Cardiff station can be arranged on the day. Overnight accommodation at Dyffryn House available. Bookings/Enquiries to Howard John, WCVA, Llys Ifor, Crescent Road, Caerphilli. Tel: (0222) 869224.

Edited for the National
Committee by **SIMON COLLINGS**
with assistance from **KIRSTI
CORBETT**. Copy for FP50 should
arrive at the office by
11 November

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CPBF
HERE**

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