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JOURNAL OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR
PRESS AND BROADCASTING FREEDOM

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Membership offer

Next Spring the CPBF celebrates ten years of campaigning for media freedom.

To mark the event the campaign is launching a special membership offer. New members who join before 30 March 1989 for two years will receive:

- A free copy of *Spreading the News* by Frank Allaun (Spokesman, 1988, normal price £4.95)
- The chance to win £30 worth of books from our new catalogue
- Contributions held at 1988 rates for the two years.

Further details from CPBF, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG.

Jubilee Issue

Right of Reply Bill revived

Labour MP Tony Worthington, who came second in the ballot for Private Member's Bills in December, is to take up the issue of the right of reply.

The Worthington Bill will be based on Ann Clwyd's Unfair Reporting and Right of Reply Bill published earlier this year.

It will seek to establish a Press Commission empowered to receive complaints from the public and, where appropriate, require a newspaper to print a right of reply. The Commission will be made up of representatives of the newspaper industry, journalists and members of the public.

The Commission will also monitor the press and issue advice on standards.

In addition the Bill will establish the right to legal aid for individuals wishing

to pursue actions of libel. Currently the prohibitively high costs of such actions rule them out for most people.

Ann Clwyd's attempt to get the right of reply onto the statute books last February foundered at its second reading. This time, because Tony Worthington has come out so high up in the ballot, the Bill is guaranteed a second reading.

The huge response which Ann Clwyd's Bill received has enabled the Campaign both to refine the proposed legislation and reformulate some of the supporting arguments. The new version of the Bill will be launched on 19 January at a press conference at the House of Commons.

Majority

If the Bill is to clear its second reading on 3 February CPBF members will need to start lobbying now. The Bill has to gain a majority with at least 100 MPs voting.

Here is what you can do:

- Write a letter to your MP asking him/her to support the Bill and vote for it on 3 February.
- Visit your MP at a local surgery and urge support for the Bill in person.
- Get your local trade union branch, political party or other organisation to write a letter of support to Tony Worthington copied to local MPs.

A briefing pack on the Right of Reply is available on request from the London office of CPBF. Please let the campaign know of any contact you have with MPs on the Bill.

This will be the sixth attempt to establish a legal right of reply in Britain. The right of reply already exists in a number of European countries including France and Germany.



● Tony Worthington, MP.

CPBF grows in N. Ireland

The Hurd broadcasting ban has generated fresh interest in the activities of the CPBF, an Anti-Censorship conference in West Belfast was told on 3 December.

The Belfast branch of the Campaign is planning a major public meeting about the ban to coincide with a meeting of the NUJ's National Executive in Belfast in January, and has already begun to build membership through showings of the banned film *Mother Ireland*.

A Derry branch of the Campaign is also on the cards, former National Council member Gerry McLaughlin told the conference.

Attended by about 100 people, including observers and press representatives from America, Canada and Australia, the conference was organised by the West Belfast local paper *Andersonstown News*.

Chairing the event former MP Bernadette MacAliskey said that the time had come to 'revive old skills and dig out the old Gestettners' to make sure that information about the ban and events on the streets of Northern Ireland were not ignored.

Author Liz Curtis, who described how news from Ireland had been systematically censored by the authorities for generations, called for the collection and dissemination of information about how the ban was operating. Media unions, and organisations such as the NCCL, CPBF, and the Troops Out Movement, are keen to receive such information, as is the Labour Party shadow spokesperson on the media Mark Fisher, she said.

Mike Jempson, speaking for the CPBF, described the history and wide-ranging concerns of the Campaign. He urged those who felt they were unfairly treated by the media to take out complaints under the NUJ Code of Conduct and demand the right of reply.

For a full report on the implications of the ban turn to page 2.

Protest over Irish censorship

On 19 October the Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd, banned the broadcasting of 'direct statements' made by supporters or representatives of a number of republican and loyalist groups in Ireland. They are the IRA, Sinn Fein, Republican Sinn Fein, the Irish National Liberation Army, Saor Eire, the UDA, Red Hand Commando, the Ulster Freedom Fighters and the Ulster Volunteer Force.

The new restrictions prevent the supporters of these groups from providing any broadcast comments directly though it will still be open for Sinn Fein and the UDA to contest elections — local, parliamentary and European — and it remains legal for their candidates and supporters to be reported during these elections.

The CPBF has condemned the Government's move for the following reasons:

It is undemocratic

The ban is a direct assault on the British public's right to know what is going on in Ireland. It has been imposed without consultation with MPs, the broadcasting authorities or journalists directly involved.

No thought has been given to the consequences for those citizens who have endorsed the programme of a legal political party by electing Sinn Fein members to represent them.

It prevents journalists from operating impartially

Confusion about interpretations of the ban (witness the plethora of conflicting centrally and locally issued guidelines

within the BBC and IBA) means that broadcasters will increasingly be forced to make *ad hoc* decisions about what is to be broadcast.

Not only does this encourage self-censorship but it transfers the responsibility for political censorship to people whose job is defined in statute as to 'inform, educate and entertain' and to operate on an 'impartial' basis.

The credibility of journalists, both to readers/viewers/listeners and to those whose lives they are reporting, depends upon some acknowledgement that they will strive to report events impartially.

It is political censorship

The government has used executive powers to forbid citizens from expressing political views that run counter to Government policy.

The way it is framed the ban could be used to silence members of the public

Movement were told that broadcasters were unsure whether they would be able to talk to them or quote them in future.

The ban is both *specific* (eg. it covers named organisations) and *open ended* (it also covers *anyone* considered likely to make statements which support or invite support for these organisations).

This imposes enormous strains on broadcasters (does it mean they may not broadcast the views of anyone who favours a united Ireland or who simply does not agree with government policy on N. Ireland?); and invests the Home Secretary with immense power to decide who else should be banned from the airwaves.

It is discrimination

Whatever its intention, both in terms of the communities it seeks to silence and the media to which they can gain access, the ban is discriminatory — it only ap-

What you can do:

- Protest to the BBC and IBA when you see a programme affected by the ban. Send copies of letters to your local MP and the CPBF.
- Organise public meetings and/or petitions about the ban.
- Organise a local screening of the film *Mother Ireland* banned by Channel 4 under the new restrictions.

whose views and political affiliations are not known to the broadcasters. On the day of the ban Birmingham BRMB programme-makers decided to drop a phone-in programme, and a planned interview with Bernadette McAliskey (who is not a member of any of the banned organisations) during her lecture tour of Britain; the local Troops Out

plies to the broadcast media, leaving the written word untouched.

The Home Secretary says that it puts broadcasters on a par with print journalists, but the media are different — with different functions, and using different techniques and technologies.

Journalists will be expected to check the political convictions of interviewees and eye witnesses before transmitting what they say. Since anyone can lie about their political affiliations this places journalists in an untenable position.

There will be a tendency to assume that anyone from a Catholic/Nationalist or Protestant/Unionist area in Northern Ireland automatically supports a banned organisation; and that any person with an Irish name will be viewed with suspicion by the media unless they publicly denounce the banned organisations.

The NUJ and ACTT are both trying to monitor the ban. Also keeping a close watch on events is Information on Ireland. They are producing a series of briefings on the effects of and reactions to the ban. For further details send an SAE to Information on Ireland, PO Box 958, London W14 0JF.

asked for a number of cuts which were agreed by the producers. Initially there was no request to cut the Farrell interview.

However, in the light of Government pressure on broadcasters after the screening of Thames TV's *Death on the Rock*, Channel 4 asked the programme makers to a meeting to discuss further cuts. While they were at Channel 4 the ban was announced rendering further discussion of the programme academic.

As well as ruling out the Farrell interview the ban affects other material of an historical nature, thereby rendering the programme as a whole unviable.

Copies of the original, uncut version of the programme are available on video from Derry Film and Video, Tel. 0504 260326.

Channel 4 film banned

One of the first casualties of the Home Secretary's ban on interviews with supporters of named Irish groups was a 52 minute documentary entitled *Mother Ireland* made for broadcast on Channel 4. It was written and directed by Anne Crilly and produced by Derry Film and Video.

The programme was completed and given to Channel 4 on 2 March. It explores the development and use of images and music which personify Ireland as a woman in Irish culture and nationalism and contains an interview with Mairead Farrell, one of the IRA members killed in Gibraltar on 6 March.

The programme makers were unaware of Farrell's involvement with the IRA at the time the interview was conducted.

Channel 4 viewed the programme and

Secrets Bill tightens gag

The Campaign for Freedom of Information has launched a major campaign against the new Official Secrets Bill which replaces Section 2 of the much discredited Official Secrets Act 1922. The campaign opened with a public meeting in London on 15 December at which representatives of all the major parties spoke.

Those opposing the Bill from the Conservative benches include Jonathan Aitken, himself prosecuted under the Official Secrets Act in 1970 and acquitted, and Richard Shepherd who took up the issue of official secrets reform in a Private Members Bill earlier this year.

The Official Secrets Bill, which was published on 30 November, has been presented by Home Secretary Douglas Hurd as a liberalising measure. In fact it has as little to do with freedom of information as the Broadcasting White paper has to do with consumer choice.

The Bill's sixteen clauses contain provisions which will:

- make it an offence for any member of the security services to disclose information in his/her possession as a result of his/her position — even if untrue
- prevent disclosure of any information relating to defence or international relations
- remove the right to a public interest defence
- prevent members of the public who have been approached by the security services from revealing the fact

Trades Council to join Shelve It

Trades Unionists from Redditch have joined the call for *Sunday Sport* to be classified as pornography. Activists want newsagents in the town to place the newspaper on their top shelves alongside *Playboy* and other girlie magazines.

Redditch Trades Council made the call in support of a resolution from the Birmingham Branch of the National Union of Journalists.

The Council is affiliating to Shelve It — the national campaign against *Sunday Sport* — and planning to leaflet newsagents shops on Sunday mornings.

- make it illegal for newspapers to publish 'protected' material even if it has previously been disclosed abroad.

The legislation is designed to plug legal loopholes which have caused the government considerable embarrassment in recent years.

For example, under the terms of the Bill, Clive Ponting who was charged with a breach of Section 2 after supplying Tam Dalyell with papers about the sinking of the *Belgrano*, would have been convicted. At his trial Ponting argued successfully that he had acted in the public interest and was acquitted.

Spycatcher would also be banned and newspapers would be prevented from repeating Wright's allegations.

Other actions which the Bill would have outlawed include Cathy Massiter's disclosure of telephone tapping in 1985, ITN journalist Jon Snow's revelation that he was approached by the security services to spy on colleagues and Alastair Hetherington's exposure of false MI5 allegations against journalists he wanted to hire when controller of BBC Scotland.

Not only will security service personnel be prevented from disclosing information but writers and journalists will also be caught in the new legislation. A number of books currently on the market would be affected.

A series of regional meetings are being organised to coincide with the Bill's passage through Parliament. Speakers will include Des Wilson and Sarah Spencer, General Secretary NCCL. The Campaign for Freedom of Information are also encouraging groups to set up additional local meetings.

Details of the regional rallies are:

Bristol	3 February
Nottingham	8 February
Cardiff	13 February
Leeds	15 February
Glasgow	16 February

Dates for Manchester, Southampton and Newcastle have still to be confirmed though are likely to be towards the end of February. For further information contact Laura Thomas, Campaign for Freedom of Information, on 01-278 9686.

Oxford NUJ Branch and the CPBF are organising a local meeting in Oxford on 14 February at which Maurice Frankel, Director of CFoI will speak. Details from Simon Collings, Tel. 0865 251454.

A political sacking?

Veteran Scots actor Alex McCrindle had a promising career as a BBC reporter after the War — until he was banned. Today McCrindle is still waiting for an explanation.

McCrindle was first employed as a reporter on a series called *Crisis Report*. Colleagues included Wynford Vaughan-Thomas and Louis MacNeice. *Crisis Report* was followed by *Progress Report*. It was half way through this new series that McCrindle was summoned to see Lawrence Gilliam, head of features.

Gilliam told him he was being made redundant because the programme was over budget. A few weeks later McCrindle was offered work by producer Farquarson Small, but the offer was then withdrawn. Small said he was under instruction not to employ McCrindle. He could not say why. Neither could Gilliam provide any enlightenment.

Producer Joe Burroughs was more forthcoming. Over a drink he told McCrindle that Denis Healey, then Secretary to the Economic Information Unit of the Cabinet, had complained about McCrindle's reporting.

The BBC had brushed aside the complaint but Healey had gone to his boss, Stafford Cripps, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Cripps had in turn contacted the Director General of the BBC, Sir William Haley. McCrindle was then dismissed.

Despite taking the issue up through Equity McCrindle has had no work from the BBC as a reporter since that time. He now fears that the new secrecy legislation could mean that the truth will remain hidden forever.

Pogues censored

The NUJ have produced a poster using the slogan *Truth — The First Casualty* to protest against the Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd's, ban on direct access to the airwaves by representatives of republican and loyalist bodies in Northern Ireland.

One preposterous consequence of the ban has been a circular from the IBA saying songs by the Pogues, 'Streets of Sorrow/Birmingham Six' should not be played because 'they indicate a general disagreement with the way the British Government responds to, and the courts deal with, the terrorist threat in the UK'.

The Pogues are outraged. Their manager said the IBA ban 'stank of McCarthyism'.

International South African journalist shot

Veliswa Whlawuli, a journalist working for *Grass Roots*, part of South Africa's 'alternative' press, was detained on 16 October, seven weeks after being shot by a sniper outside her shack in Guguletu. Veliswa, who was left for dead, lost her right eye in the attack.

Veliswa recently appeared in the controversial documentary *Suffer the Children* which exposed the plight of children in detention in South Africa. Extracts from the programme, including the interview with Veliswa, were subsequently used by the South African Broadcasting Corporation in a Government made film seeking to refute the BBC's allegations.

Veliswa says she is convinced whoever fired the shot intended to kill her but she does not know whether the attack was linked to her appearance in the BBC programme.

An 18 year old Soweto youth was shot dead in similar circumstances on 27 January after appearing in a CBS documentary *Children of Apartheid*.

A recent issue of *Grass Roots* included an interview with the eldest of Veliswa's two sons, Brian (15). He said: 'I feel bad when I see other children with their mothers and mine is not around. It is wrong that my mother should be in jail.' Write to your MP asking him/her to take up Veliswa's case with the foreign office.

Palestine protest

The New York based Committee for the Protection of Journalists (CPJ) and Article 19 have written to Israeli Defence Minister, Yitzak Rabin, to protest the continuing detention of Palestinian journalists. At least 12 journalists are currently in administrative detention and 7 others have been arrested since March and are still being held.

Since the Palestinian uprising began last December, some 39 Palestinian journalists from various publications and news agencies have been detained for two days or longer. Those placed in administrative detention have generally been incarcerated for six-month terms without being charged or tried.

The CPJ and Article 19 want all journalists either released or charged with offences that are recognizably criminal and granted fair trials.

White Paper threat to standards

The Government's White Paper on Broadcasting presents a major threat to quality, standards, balance and consumer choice. TOM O'MALLEY draws out some of the implications of the proposals.

The Government's White Paper on Broadcasting was published at the beginning of November. In the past both Conservative and Labour administrations have conducted lengthy enquiries into the future of broadcasting which have produced important policy proposals based on a serious attempt at consultation.

In contrast this Government has established two enquiries, Hunt (1982) and Peacock (1985/6), with narrow remits and short timetables, both widely recognised at the time as being designed to deliver conclusions which had already been reached.

The origins of the ideas contained in the White Paper are to be found in the publications and submissions of advertising agencies such as Saatchi and Saatchi and in the more directly political writings of the Adam Smith Institute. (See *Switching Channels*, CPBF, 1988 for a fuller analysis of the genesis of the White Paper).

The Government has not only failed to conduct a major public enquiry into the future of what is beyond doubt the most influential medium in our society, but it has ignored the findings of researchers who have examined the assumptions underlying the broadcasting system as it has developed in this country, and the economic, political and social justifications put forward by the advertising and political lobby in favour of deregulation.

Proposals

Breaking with tradition the White Paper has very little to say about how to make the new breed of TV, satellite and radio contractors deliver a universal and high quality service to consumers.

The new Independent Television Commission (ITC) will be required to operate with a 'lighter touch' and will be required to auction franchises to the highest bidder. There is a basic contradiction here: if the government really wants to maintain standards why does it make the ability to outbid other con-

tenders in a cash auction the ultimate arbiter of who gets franchises? The stated goal of maintaining standards is contradicted by the method.

The 1981 Broadcasting Act requires the IBA to ensure that programmes broadcast by the Authority are of a 'high general standard in all respects' and provide 'a proper balance and wide range in their subject matter.'

These obligations, coupled with the powers given to the IBA, and the fiscal arrangements governing the ITV/BBC duopoly (i.e. of competing for audiences not for revenue) have underpinned the system of broadcasting in this country.

The Government's definition of standards for the future is, in contrast to the current set of positive obligations, overwhelmingly negative. Chapter 7 of the White Paper, headed Programme Standards, is in fact about policing the new system for matters which ought to be excluded from transmission.

The effect of the proposals in the White Paper on quality and choice will be devastating. The changes seem to be driven by a desire to free advertisers from controls and programme makers from programme making obligations. The enabling legislation which has, since the 1950s, produced high quality services is being dismantled.

Current affairs, information, education, entertainment, programmes of high standards across the schedules have been explicitly dropped. The internal evidence in the White paper makes a nonsense of the Government's assertion that it is intent on preserving standards.

Revenue

The downward pressure on programme standards consequent on the relaxation described above will be dramatically accentuated by the increase in the number of services competing for advertising revenue. These services include Channels 3, 4, 5 and possibly 6, local MVDS services, extra

DBS services, hundreds of radio stations and channels beamed from abroad on Astra and Eutelsat.

There will be more and more companies chasing similar quantities of advertising, so they will drop standards to minimise costs and up revenue. This is what has happened in the US. Nothing in the proposals will stop it happening here.

The absence of money to spend on programmes will have an effect on employment in drama, documentaries, news and current affairs.

In addition, the plan to drive the BBC towards subscription and to undermine the licence fee will mean that BBC services will not be universally available. Poor people will not be able to purchase the high quality programmes they get now for the cost of the licence fee. The nation will become divided between the well off, with the surplus income to purchase high quality programmes and those doomed to accept cheap advertising financed programming.

The financial regime proposed by the Government will, therefore, depress programme quality and deprive sections of the public of high quality programming.

Material is readily available about the likely growth in advertising and its effect, under differing conditions, on income for programme making. Unfortunately for the Government, much of this evidence questions or contradicts the governments position, and shows that under-regulated expansion will lead to a depression of standards.

Satellite

The White Paper admits that the Government's cable policy, based on the free market provision of an expensive technology hasn't worked. There are considerable doubts about whether the cost of new satellite dishes, encrypting equipment for subscription, new aerials etc will prove attractive to the consumer, especially if they can get higher quality services from the existing duopoly at a lower price.

In one sense the rapid attack on the BBC and ITV system in the White Paper is to try and force the consumer into purchasing satellite equipment by destroying or severely undermining the quality of services s/he can currently obtain.

The Government does not want to repeat the widely recognised debacle of cable where high entry costs put off investors and low programme quality put off consumers. To get around the latter the Government is driving the standards of most other services down.

Satellite may take time to arrive but in the meantime the Government will have used its future arrival as a justification for lowering standards and choice in terrestrial broadcasting.

BBC

Because the Government is no longer

going to oblige contractors to provide proper programming, it needs to cover itself against the obvious charge that its plans will lead to a decline in standards. The publicity and fuss about the Broadcasting Standards Council has been designed to mislead the public into thinking that the Government will protect standards.

In reality the BSC will have no real powers, like the IBA has at the moment, to force companies to show high quality programmes. The BSC will simply act as a negative force, promoting the censorship of material it deems unacceptable.

The BSC is acting as a smokescreen for the Government to confuse people on the most sensitive of the issues raised by the White Paper, the inevitable decline in standards.

Standards

The thrust of the White Paper is to narrow choice, reduce standards and lower quality. It fails to provide a coherent programme for expanding media choice whilst maintaining standards. It has been shaped with the needs of a narrow constituency of the advertising industry and media multinationals in mind. There is no sound evidence that the public will benefit.

If the proposals are implemented we will become an information poor society with the best standards of broadcasting ditched in favour of a narrow, unadventurous, low quality form of programming.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor

This is a belated response to your invitation to contribute on porn and censorship, and to the two articles in your August issue.

Wendy Moore starts by treating pornography, sexism, and negative portrayal of women as synonymous. That is highly questionable and therefore unpersuasive. Then she takes it as axiomatic that porn causes rape. It is not. The question is important but it needs arguing, not begging.

Another strong deterrent to acquiescence is her reserving the term 'erotica' for lesbian material. And the presumption that that is different, not to be looked at as critically as she says hetero erotica ('porn') should be. That amounts to grinding a special interest axe, and you cannot expect automatic sympathy from the ordinary CPBF supporter.

Cannot lesbian erotica be porn? Degrading? A threat? If a difference between porn and erotica is used polemically should it not be defined, for the argument to grip?

Wendy seems confused. What

Regional meetings

The CPBF, in conjunction with the Public Service Broadcasting Committee of the ACTT and BETA, is organising a series of regional meetings about the Broadcasting White Paper during February.

The following people should be contacted for details:

Cardiff	Mike Jempson,
Bristol	SW CPBF, 0272 652341
Newcastle	Martin Spence, Northern Newsreel, 091 477 3604
Birmingham	Bob Burkitt, Film & Video Workshop, 021 233 3423
Manchester	Granville Williams,
Liverpool	NW CPBF, 061 832 6991
Oxford	Simon Collings, 0865 251454
Sheffield	Colin Lewishon, contact via NW CPBF
London	Tom O'Malley, 01 437 2795

Arrangements for meetings in Plymouth, Belfast, Nottingham, Glasgow, Aberdeen and Norwich have yet to be finalised. Contact Tom O'Malley for more information.

The CPBF will be publishing a full response to the White Paper early in 1989.

have richness and whiteness to do with porn?

True, she goes on to be more positive about non-threatening, equal sex, and also agrees that any law must include a definition of the porn it applies to. But her message remains garbled.

Teresa Stratford makes some of the same mistakes. Dworkin's quoted statement is exaggerated and out of proportion. Using it is counter-productive.

A suggestion: might it be a way round the censorship conundrum to go instead for some kind of a 'health warning'. For example, 'Is this the sort of thing you'd be happy to know your daughter's teenage male friends were reading?' That is not to say one should rule out any and all censorship.

Feminists frequently overlook that mens' love and respect for their female children is an enormous countervailing force. It should be allied with, not alienated.

Yours sincerely,
Oliver Owen

Book Reviews

Feminism and Censorship—The Current Debate edited by Gail Chester and Julianne Dickey, Prism Press, £5.95.

In 1986, the Women's Group of the CPBF sent out questionnaires designed to assess the extent of women's understanding of media sexism and the range of opinion as to what strategies might be used to ameliorate the situation.

At about the same time two mainstream women's magazines—*Woman* and *Just Seventeen* published results of their own readers' surveys on this issue with particular regard to Clare Short's Page Three Bill.

Whilst the responses to the questionnaire were not representative since they came from mainly white and middle-class women, the overall impression was of widespread discontent about the treatment of women in the media—though there were no really positive ideas as to possible strategies, long or short-term which might be implemented to deal with the situation.

As a result of these questionnaires and the confusion and anger that was apparent in women's responses, Gail Chester and Julianne Dickey decided to edit this provocative and stimulating series of articles by women both in and outside the CPBF (with whose views they did not always themselves agree) to allow a diverse and comprehensive expression of women's attitudes to the many different aspects of Censorship.

Whilst some of the articles discuss Pornography in particular as the most central and extreme manifestation of media sexism—reference is made to the ordinances drawn up in the US by feminists Andrea Dworkin and Catherine Mackinnon since these have been cited as a possible model to emulate here, many other areas are cogently and incisively explored.

Women, freedom & censorship

The women's group of the CPBF has for some time been concerned that the high level of debate around the issue of pornography has largely been dominated by the Right. In response to this concern we have been developing an initiative from the Left.

We recently felt the need to consult and involve other women's groups—and it is with this in mind that we held a conference—entitled 'Women, Freedom and Censorship'. Over 60 women from many different viewpoints and organisations came to the London Women's Centre for a day of workshops

and discussions. There are articles on the historical background to Censorship and the role it has played in the past in the banning of certain material as well as accounts of contemporary Censorship in Ireland in Noreen O'Donoghue's 'The fate of "Out for Ourselves"—the Lives of Irish Lesbians and Gay Men'.

Sona Osman and Pratibha Parmar argue against race relations legislation as a model which could be used against Pornography since they consider that this legislation is both a failure and inappropriate. Barbara Rogers argues that the reform of the Libel laws could mean that they be used as a means of defence against various forms of media trashing.

There is no consensus in this collection, no *one* feminist perspective on the conflicts, paradoxes and dilemmas that exist amongst the women contributors themselves but if as they claim, Julianne Dickey and Gail Chester wanted an 'open and challenging debate' to take place, they have certainly succeeded and in the light of the current overwhelmingly authoritarian and repressive political climate it is also a timely not to say courageous one.

Sylvia Paskin

Spreading the News: a Guide to Media Reform, Frank Allaun, Spokesman, 1988, £4.95.

The sheer awfulness of much of the British press has been dissected with depressing thoroughness by any number of commentators over the past few years, but only recently has there been a comparable degree of attention paid to the question What Is To Be Done? Valuable contributions have included the third edition of James Curran and Jean Seaton's seminal *Power Without Responsibility*, the Campaign's own

and discussions.

It was extremely useful to have a chance to work with the Campaign Against Pornography (CAP), Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW), The Older Feminist Network (OFN) and the Women's Monitoring Network (WMN).

A discussion document is being produced with the ideas, issues and decisions from the conference. Please send an SAE to the office if you would like a copy.

Pauline Lee and Teresa Stratford.

Bending Reality, and now we have Frank Allaun's excellent summary of the various proposals for media reform which have been put forward in recent times.

Having presented no less than three Right of Reply Bills to Parliament, Allaun has himself been deeply involved in the struggle for media reform and Chapter 8, *The People and The Media*, contains a useful summary of the history of the Right to Reply campaign.

But it also goes much further than this to include a concise run-through of Labour's ideas about press reform in the Seventies and Eighties: for example its plans for a Freedom of Information Bill, an Advertising Revenue Board, a National Printing Corporation, reform of the Press Council, and an Open (or Independent) Press Authority.

In particular Allaun shows how Labour's thinking on the press goes beyond anti-monopoly legislation to considering how new publications might be launched and low-circulation ones best protected. In other words, diversity has to be regulated *into* the system (as in the case of Channel 4 for example) at the same time as the monopolists are levered *out*.

Also useful is the brief history of the three Royal Commissions on the Press which opens Chapter 6. Particularly interesting here is the summary of the 'minority view' in the report of the third Commission in which Geoffrey Goodman and David Basnett criticized the Commission for its 'complacency' and called for government assistance to help new titles into being and so sustain a diverse and democratic press.

In advancing their argument for government support Basnett and Goodman pointed to other European countries in which such aid is forthcoming and in his chapter *Media Reforms Abroad* Allaun takes a look at the progress of media reform in West Germany, France, the Netherlands and Sweden. Again, the focus is on Right of Reply and anti-monopoly legislation. The latter was first developed in Germany to curb the Axel Springer empire and was later brought in in France to stop Hersant's growth.

Equally important are the *positive* financial methods which have been employed as a means of encouraging press diversity—in the Netherlands a re-distribution of advertising revenue from radio and television to ailing newspapers, in Sweden a form of subsidy to the various political parties which own or influence the newspapers, and in France the guaranteed right of publishers to have their newspapers and magazines distributed and displayed by newsagents.

It does seem increasingly clear that if we are to do anything about improving the quality and diversity of the press then *economic* reform must be our first priority. Allaun's excellent book discusses a great many questions and

covers a remarkable amount of ground in its 100 or so pages but its greatest value to the Campaign is as a lucid summary of suggested and attempted reform in the all-important area of media, and especially press, concentration.

Julian Petley

Broadcasting and New Media Policies in Western Europe, Kenneth Dyson and Peter Humphreys with Ralph Negrine and Jean-Paul Simon, Routledge.

This is an excellent book for anyone wanting a comprehensive and detailed over-view of the development of cable and satellite systems in Western Europe and an analysis of the ways in which individual national governments have responded in terms of legislation. The main focus of attention is on France, West Germany and the UK, although the first chapter, *The Context of New Media Politics*, does take a broad, pan-European perspective.

The book shows how the arrival of the new media have put public service broadcasting organisations very much on the defensive, and even called the whole ethos into question, across the whole of Western Europe. It analyses the emergence of the new media moguls such as Murdoch, Maxwell, Hersant, Berlusconi, Bertelsmann, Springer and Turner, and puts this process in its wider technological, economic and political context.

The main concern is to show what kind of policy issues have emerged with the new broadcasting technologies, and to examine the convergences and divergences in the responses of the various different governments.

The authors also ask what are the main characteristics of the various regulatory frameworks that have been established: as they put it 'is broadcasting policy now being made in a different way? Who have been the main policy actors; what have been their motivations; what have been the respective impacts of international market change, political tradition, ideology and institutional structures on policy development?'

Obviously, one of the problems with any book on the subject of the new communications media is that it threatens to become out-dated before it is even printed. Thus for example the chapter on France stops at 1986 and misses out on recent legislative changes and other upheavals in the French broadcasting system, whilst the chapter on Britain inevitably lacks discussion of Murdoch putting his Sky channels onto Astra, the continuing problems with Superchannel and of course the White Paper on broadcasting.

However, such gaps are unavoidable given the rapidly changing nature of the beast and the book is an extremely valuable and useful history of technological, economic and legislative trends

to date in this bewilderingly complex field.

Thus although the chapter on, say, Britain (aptly entitled *Is There a Policy?*) may not be bang up to date on the latest facts but its delineation of the broad trends in government policy is amply confirmed by subsequent developments, including the White Paper: 'what, at first, appeared as an industrial strategy towards information technology, based on the principle of liberalisation, has become little more than a mosaic of disconnected and disparate sectoral policy making... The Conservative government's approach to the new media displayed a confusion and a lack of clarity over political and industrial objectives which derived from an unwillingness and unpreparedness to manage the pace and direction of change.'

British industrial policy has in fact long been characterised as a mixture of crisis management, political opportunism and ad hoc decision making. These characteristics appear to have been carried over into new media policy'.

Julian Petley

Doctoring the Media: The Reporting of Health and Medicine, Anne Karpf, Routledge, £7.95.

The media's reliance on tried and trusted stereotypes in reporting health and medicine is illustrated by the ambiguity of editorial attitudes when nurses go on strike. The image of 'angels' who do their work because they have a 'calling' is incompatible with the reality of workers who organise protest against their inadequate pay and arduous working conditions.

Moreover, the nursing role involves service and obedience; criticism of the system which employs them is unexpected and unwelcome.

Earlier this year, faced with widespread and imaginative protest action from nurses all over the country, the media finally conveyed the seriousness of the NHS cash crisis by focussing on a letter from three influential consultants. When these men spoke, the situation gained the stamp of urgency: there really was a problem here.

The mutually reciprocal relationship between the media and the medical profession (that is, doctors) works repeatedly to the detriment of other health professionals who, because of it, are denied consultation and respect.

Its origins lie in the compromise made by Bevan when the NHS was set up forty years ago, leaving a disproportionate amount of finance and control in the hands of the British Medical Association (BMA) and the teaching hospitals.

The lack of prestige afforded to public health and community care in the media is backed by the reality of sparse budgetary allocation to the local authorities whose duty it is to provide these

services. The high, and glamorous, profile of hospital doctors in TV soaps is a reflection of economic priorities in the NHS.

Anne Karpf describes the kind of material which has come from this relationship, drawing on a number of examples. Her account of early radio health programmes is particularly interesting, especially her description of Charles Hill who, as Radio Doctor and Secretary of the BMA, represented this relationship at its cosiest.

Hopefully, Anne Karpf's example will encourage further work in this area for, although she broaches the subject, hers is a disappointing book. The title is misleadingly general: the book is almost exclusively about broadcasting.

This is a pity, since some of the most controversial media coverage of health issues recently has been largely print-based (Wendy Savage's case, for example, and Cleveland). She omits media coverage of psychiatric health, but does not explain why; yet the scant attention afforded to psychiatry by the media in a country where half the hospital beds are psychiatric surely needs some comment.

There are also some curious omissions in her account of television and health: no mention of 'ER', for example, which has been acclaimed for giving viewers non-stereotypical images of health workers in an entertaining show.

Most of all, the book is disappointing in its lack of political and historical background. There are reasons why the '30s and '80s have both seen an increase in programmes telling people that health is their responsibility, and they lie in the Tory idea of financial priorities.

And not so far behind the image of doctors as heroic sages lies their position, little more than a hundred years ago, on the fringes of society. Anne Karpf, like most medical sociologists, puts her focus onto the roles into which we are placed by the media and, while this is interesting, it is also tantalisingly insufficient, particularly in a book which is evidently intended to have wider appeal than just a sociological text.

Teresa Stratford

TUs AND VIDEO

The last few years have seen a growth in the use of video by Trade Unions. A new booklet from the North East Media Development Council, which has itself pioneered much of this work, looks at the experience so far.

The booklet examines the use of video both from the point of view of unions as users and also from the point of view of the producers by means of five case studies.

Copies of *Preaching to the Converted: Trade Unions and Video* are available from CPBF price 50p plus 20p p&p.

CAMPAIGN FOR PRESS & BROADCASTING FREEDOM

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

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MEDIA STUDIES

A conference to be held at the Robin Brook Centre, St. Bartholomew's Medical College, London, from 3-5 February 1989 will address the major changes taking place in the institutional and academic circumstances of media, film, TV and communications studies in higher education.

'Redefinitions for the 1990s: Studying the Media in Higher Education' has been organised by BFI Education.

Conference and accommodation costs are £50, with ten places available at a reduced rate of £35 for students. For further details contact: Redefinitions Conference Secretary, BFI Education, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL.

(This conference was to have taken place in Glasgow in September but had to be rescheduled. It was originally advertised in the August *Free Press*.)

PCL MEDIA COURSES

The Polytechnic of Central London is offering the following media courses during January.

Race and Gender in Representation
12 January - £60

Writing for Radio and Television
12 January - £150

TV Journalism Practice
16 January - £320

Social History of British Broadcasting
9 January - £60

Photography Theory and Practice
12 January - £175

Introduction to Print Journalism
11 January - £150

History and Theories of Documentary Photography
9 January - £60

Further details and application form from: Netta Swallow, Short Course Unit, PCL, 35 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5LS. Tel: 01-486 5811 ext 434 or Answerphone 01-935 3633.

LIBRARY CAMPAIGN

The Library Campaign has, as part of its future strategy, decided to organize a 'Library Promotion Month' during March 1989 - on a nationwide basis.

The aim is to promote library services through a variety of events, which are to take place in and around the nation's libraries - while at the same time highlighting the current situation within libraries regarding reductions in services, introduction of charges and - where charges exist already - increases in charges and the effects of proposed new legislation.

1989 is the 25th anniversary of the passing of the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act.

The Library Campaign is a national, non-party political pressure group dedicated to developing and defending publicly funded libraries. It was established

in 1984.

The Campaign Director, Mieke Hinchliffe-Wood, can be contacted on 0767-313759 (24 hours) or by writing to 2nd Floor, 1-5 Bath Street, London EC1V 9QQ.

DEFENCE NEWS

Transcripts from British television and radio of interviews involving the key figures (political and military) in the area of arms control and disarmament are now available free from Media Transcription Service.

MTS is funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust. The only payment requested is an annual donation of £25 to cover postage, packing and copier charges. For details write to: Susan Scott (Co-ordinator) Media Transcription Service (Defence Information), 12 Sheri Drive, Newton-le-Willows, Warrington, WA12 8PT.

BENEFIT

The London Group of CPBF has organised a fundraising benefit which will take place on 20 January, 8-11pm at Chat's Palace, Brooksby's Walk, London E8, entrance fee £3.50 (£2.50 concessions). The star attraction is Eyes on Brazil, who have just completed a tour with the Bhundu Boys. (Wheelchair access).

Edited for the National Committee by SIMON COLLINGS. Copy for FP51 should arrive at the office by 16 January 1989.

CPBF AGM

plus Special Right of Reply
Forum 29/30 April 1989
University of London Union
Malet Street, London
(Social on Saturday evening)

For further details contact
Tom O'Malley on
01 437 2795

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