

FREE ^{30p} PRESS

JOURNAL OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR
PRESS AND BROADCASTING FREEDOM
No. 53 June 1989

How you can help build the CPBF...

- Start a regional group for your area. We will supply you with the names of all CPBF members in your locality.
- Organise visits to union branches and local political party meetings to recruit new members and affiliates. Put on local CPBF events.
- Where a local group exists find out more about its activities. Extra help is always welcome and there is plenty of scope for new areas of work.

Campaign demands proper enquiry

The CPBF is calling on the government to widen the remit of its proposed enquiry into newspaper standards to cover key issues of press freedom. The enquiry, details of which are still to be released, was announced by Home Office Minister Timothy Renton during the debate on the Right of Reply Bill on 21 April.

The Campaign also believes that possible reform of libel law following the £600,000 award to Sonia Sutcliffe against *Private Eye* has to be linked to wider issues of redress against inaccurate reporting.

Despite the defeat of the Right of Reply Bill, public concern about Press behaviour and standards remains. Recent high awards in libel actions against newspapers, of which *Private Eye* is the latest and most dramatic example, are a symptom of this.

The government's announcement of an enquiry, intended as a spoiler in the campaign against the Right of Reply Bill, will be used by the CPBF to keep the issues raised during the debate centre-stage. To this end CPBF is calling for the enquiry to be established on a properly independent basis.

Issues

CPBF also believes that it is crucial that the enquiry doesn't only focus on the narrow area of invasion of privacy but that it looks at a range of press freedom issues, including:

- Concentration of ownership — so far the government's response to the concern about growing monopolies within the media has been wholly inadequate.
- Standards — the behaviour of sections of the Press in recent years has plumbed new depths.
- Censorship — journalists and editors face a growing number of restrictions including the Contempt of Court Act, the Police and Criminal Evidence Act and the recent ban on reporting named Irish groups. The enquiry must consider evidence on these issues.
- Freedom of information — the government's reform of the Official Secrets Act has narrowed even further the range of politically sensitive issues journalists can probe. Again the enquiry should be empowered to consider the arguments.

Any review of libel law needs to take account of this wider context. Libel law as currently framed is not an adequate mechanism for restraining the excesses of newspapers. Moves to limit the damages which can be awarded against a publication need to be linked, however, to providing adequate alternative means of redress. The CPBF believes that this is best achieved through the right of reply.

The current libel lottery is the preserve of those wealthy enough to be able to afford the high stakes. Reform should include the extension of legal aid to libel, thereby making it accessible to ordinary members of the public.

Hillsborough meeting criticised

Following a meeting organised by NW CPBF in Liverpool on coverage of the Hillsborough tragedy, the *UK Press Gazette* has branded the Campaign "a rabble of prejudiced lobbyists". Their ill-considered editorial appeared on 22 May.

One hundred and fifty people attended the Liverpool meeting which was addressed by Steve Kelly, author of the official history of Liverpool FC, Eamon McCabe, picture editor of the *Guardian*, and Rogan Taylor of the Football Supporters Association. A report of the meeting was submitted to and printed by the *Press Gazette*.

The attack by the *Press Gazette* is surprising as it could only be based on the published report, which contained selected highlights of a two hour meeting, distinguished by intelligent, informed and mainly calm contributions from the platform and audience.

Emotional

The editorial in the *Press Gazette* said: "It does little credit to (CPBF)... that all this time after they are promoting heated and emotional judgements rather than more precise ones.

"The knee-jerk slagging of the tabloids, and at this meeting some qualities, is every bit as bad as the isolated examples of 'quick thrills' reporting — and one does not justify the other."

NW CPBF Organiser, Granville Williams, commented: "Far from jumping on an anti-Press bandwagon, as UKPG alleges, we actually hesitated about calling the meeting. In the end Liverpool CPBF members felt there should be a meeting to articulate the deep sense of dismay and disgust about the behaviour of some sections of the media.

"The title of the meeting and the publicity were deliberately calm and neutral; we wanted a meeting which would be analytical and encourage discussion."

The *Sun*, *Mirror*, *Daily Star* and *Today* were all invited to send a representative to the meeting. The *Mirror* and *Today* declined; the others didn't reply.

Granville Williams said: "The *UK Press Gazette* Opinion column represents an attempt, based on incomplete information, to defend the tattered reputations of some papers which were rightly pilloried for the behaviour of their journalists and their reports of the Hillsborough tragedy."

New voices support Rushdie

by Elizabeth Block

In Britain, particularly, support for Salman Rushdie's right to self-expression has been moderated all along by hand-wringing official acknowledgements that Rushdie has 'given offence'. It is clear that traditional British reticence — reluctance to make a fuss, to rock the boat, to send back the wrong order — is in some measure in sympathy with the mullahs' fury with Rushdie for 'giving offence'.

Instead of attacking the way that the religious issue has been distorted for political purpose, both here and in Iran, Roy Hattersley recently went public — in English and Urdu — to advise Penguin Viking not to proceed with a paperback edition of *Satanic Verses*. He apparently counted a number of the alleged "one billion offended Muslims" among his constituents.

Once again, the glorious right to free expression, like an unruly child, is squashed, this time not in the name of national security or even anti-terrorism, but in the interests of social harmony.

Blasphemy

I am writing on the eve of an anti-Rushdie march in London. No matter how many or how few actually turn up to demand that the book be banned, it is alarming that the *Guardian* last month chose to quote a Muslim prediction of half a million in a front-page headline. Even if we don't quite have the spectre of Hattersley burning the book (hardcover version) or of Mrs Thatcher, suitably veiled, addressing the troops, the idea of hundreds of thousands of Muslims on the

march has galvanised many people into action.

For example, the International Committee for the Defence of Salman Rushdie and his Publishers, a group sponsored by Article 19 and Index on Censorship, among others, issued a statement calling for the repeal of the blasphemy law. The statement specifically endorses the Muslims' 'right to march' as an exercise in freedom of expression but also calls on the demonstrators to condemn the threat to Rushdie's life.

The Committee says that it agrees with the demonstrators that the current blasphemy law is discriminatory and has "no place in a modern, pluralistic UK", but it urges Muslims to work for repeal, rather than extension, of the blasphemy law.

Also, the Committee Against Blasphemy Law, formed in 1977 at the time of the *Gay News* case, issued a statement opposing "the current campaign for the extension of the common law of blasphemous libel." The Committee says that this law "encourages dangerous fanaticism in our pluralist society." The statement, signed by hundreds of prominent individuals, calls for abolition.

The planned Muslim march brought at least one entirely new group into existence last month. VOICES FOR RUSHDIE, an Initiative for the Right to Dissent/Against Racism and Fundamentalism, is a highly diverse coalition of individuals and groups, including Southall Black Sisters, Women Against Fundamentalism, Campaign Against Repression in Iran, Socialist Conference, *New Statesmen & Society*, *Feminist Review*, and many others. The group plans to campaign "to explode the myths and misconceptions which have shrouded the Rushdie affair."

According to a founding statement, VOICES rejects the attempts of fundamentalists in all guises to use the Rushdie affair to promote their own ends. "There has been much talk of Rushdie's book giving offence," the statement says. "We are offended by the use of this affair to mount racist attacks on Britain's muslim community, by sanctimonious claims that Britain embodies the values of pluralism and the right to dissent, by the claims of some religious leaders to speak for everyone in their respective communities and by the racist assumption that minority communities are monolithic."

Deplores

The statement deplores the use of the book by fundamentalists to control dissent and repress diversity and it particularly notes a concerted attempt "to thwart women's struggles to control their own destinies."

Several members of VOICES, representing the Asian community, said that pressure on Muslim women to adhere to traditional roles has increased significantly since the Rushdie affair began.

VOICES' statement calls for the abolition of blasphemy laws, for the end of state aid to religious education and the disestablishment of the Church of England. "These are necessary conditions for the development of a genuinely pluralist, democratic society."

While not everyone will agree with all of these demands, certainly all readers of *Free Press* can endorse VOICES' concluding statement: "Salman Rushdie's right to write and publish is also our right to read, to think, to criticise, to dissent. In the face of appalling distortion of these issues by fundamentalist and racist forces, we cannot be silent."

VOICES' launch press conference was held on Friday, 26 May at the House of Commons, and a brief message of support from Salman Rushdie was read out. While the new group decided, due to lack of planning time, not to hold an event on the day of the anti-Rushdie march, one group within VOICES, Women Against Fundamentalism, plans a women-only demo in Green Park during the march.

For further information on VOICES, contact Clara Connolly on 01 607-2789 or Gita Saghal on 01 571-9595.

For further information on the International Committee, contact John Hoyland or Carmel Bedford on 01 403-4822.

For further information on the Committee Against Blasphemy Law, contact Nicolas Walter on 01 226-7251.

An editor's duty to be careful

by Steve Kelly

"The cause of the crime has been established beyond all doubt. It was irresponsible action by selfish people determined to see a football match at whatever cost in discomfort and danger to other people... They surged into a ground already packed to overflowing. They caused crushing and panic and disaster. Blame rests entirely on those, who under the evil influence of a few hooligans put selfish desire above public safety."

The *Sun* of a few weeks ago? No it was the *Daily Mirror* in March 1946, two days after 33 people had been killed at a football match in Bolton. Nothing much changes when it comes to the tabloid press.

1989 has been a bad year for disasters, which in some part explains the bout of disasteritis which has gripped Fleet Street. Back in 1946 after the Bolton disaster tales of the tragedy had all but disappeared from the papers four days later. And in 1971 when 66 died at Ibrox Park, again it had faded by the Thursday morning. But not Hillsborough. Two weeks later it was still front page news.

Admittedly Hillsborough was a public tragedy witnessed by millions on television with hundreds of journalists present. It also involved the city of Liverpool which, after Heysel, gave the story an added impetus. It might be excusable if it was just Hillsborough but it is not. Every disaster now seems to necessitate a four page spread of analysis, graphics, and features that will run for days. Nor is it just the newspapers.

Early on the Sunday morning following Hillsborough my phone began to ring. As the author of the official history of Liverpool Football Club I was an obvious first port of call. By 9pm that night I had been phoned by *Breakfast Time*, *Panorama*, *TV am*, *The Time the Place* (three times), *Kilroy*, *On the Record*, *World in Action* (three times), and *Newsnight* (three times).

It seemed that every TV programme with the slightest current affairs bent was examining Hillsborough. Yet few, if any in the time available, could add much to what was already known.

Pickpockets

On the front page of the *Daily Mirror* in 1946 there was also a story about pickpockets robbing the dead of their wallets. It was clearly unsubstantiated, as was their editorial which I quoted earlier. An inquiry into the Bolton disaster blamed the opening of a gate for the deaths of 33, and not hooligans as suggested by the *Mirror*. Yet here we are again 40 years later with the *Sun*



• Steve Kelly reflects on coverage of the Hillsborough tragedy. (Photo Peter Walsh/Profile)

repeating the same kind of allegations and trying to pinpoint blame or search for scapegoats.

Digging for answers may be a legitimate journalistic activity but it can also be dangerous. A few months ago the pilot of the M1 plane disaster found himself accused on the front pages, while others have similarly found themselves vilified in the Press before an inquiry has even begun. And no matter how we feel about Hillsborough, the police superintendent who may, or may not, have ordered the opening of the gates should not be condemned until the facts have emerged and the inquiry has ruled.

The most startling difference, however, between those 1946 and 1971 newspapers and the Hillsborough coverage is the intrusion on privacy. Forty years ago it was enough to simply name the victims. Today we have to have photographs, quotes and biographies. I have no way of knowing whether any of the tales about journalists' antics in Liverpool are true but I can detail one personal story.

A week after Hillsborough I was telephoned by the producer of a leading BBC current affairs programme. Would I like two days' work? he asked. They wanted someone to go and knock on the doors of the bereaved and ask them if they could film the funerals and do some interviews. They had a list of a dozen names and addresses but weren't sure which had already been buried. In other words I might knock on a door of a

bereaved family which had already buried its dead. They did not wish to tap my knowledge of football but wanted instead to use my credibility. They knew that the reputations of journalists were at an all-time low in the city but with my association with Liverpool FC I might have been able to get access where they would be refused.

The use of photographs is a genuinely difficult area. A picture can have so much impact. It is legitimate to take photographs of a tragedy but not of dead bodies. No matter what the arguments, the people of Liverpool will long remember the *Mirror* for its tasteless colour photographs.

Motives

ITN News at 9pm on the Saturday ran a half-minute selection of black and white stills. Was it really necessary? There has been much debate about photographs leading to a healthy re-examination of motives. But there is also a tendency for television to liberally use shots of the Hillsborough disaster every time the story crops up.

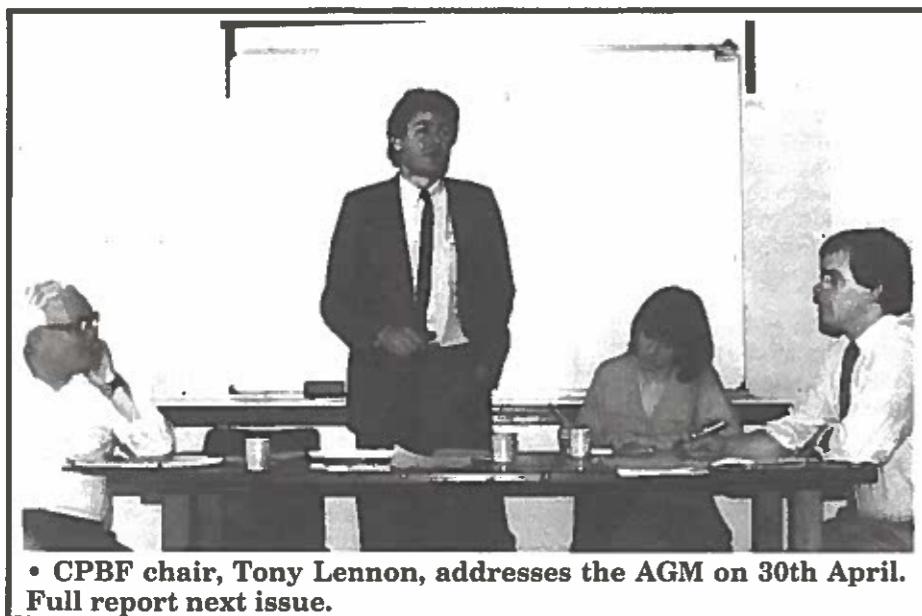
Similarly, TV producers seem to find it impossible to mention the word Heysel without showing footage of Italian fans being crushed to death. I cannot believe that it is necessary.

At a time of national tragedy the Press must accept a greater responsibility. There is a need for extra sensitivity. Knocking on doors, filming funerals, asking people how they feel are in most cases superfluous.

Stories need to be double-checked and feature writers should ask themselves whether they are simply being controversial for the sake of it when they talk about the mawkish behaviour of people laying floral tributes on the Kop and describe Liverpool as the self-pity city. Such descriptions can cause unnecessary hurt. Of course, journalists and editors have a duty to report and tell the truth but they also have a duty where there is grief to be especially careful and sensitive.

I spoke the other week to the 19 year old brother of one of the victims. He had gone to the match with his 17 year old brother but had lost him as they went into the stadium together. He never saw him alive again. He was a decent lad with no political axe to grind.

"As I was burying my brother," he told me, "all I could see were photographers clambering over the walls of the cemetery and peering from behind gravestones and all you could hear in the silence were the clicking of cameras. I just wanted to throttle them." Next time we're asked to cover a funeral we should remember that.



• CPBF chair, Tony Lennon, addresses the AGM on 30th April. Full report next issue.

Protests follow attacks

Journalists in Turkey were beaten by police during the funeral of Mehmet Dalci, a young worker shot dead by security forces during May Day demonstrations. Subsequent protests at the police behaviour also met with violence.

In the days following the May Day incident, Turkish Prime Minister Turgut Ozal launched a bitter attack on the Press, accusing them of "undermining the police". Journalists later accused Ozal of giving the green light for the police to attack journalists.

At the funeral of Dalci on 4 May, police attacked the funeral crowd of several thousand people. The crowd resisted and the police were forced to withdraw and regroup. They then charged again, first making straight for the journalists covering the event and beating them with batons.

On 5 May journalists marched to the offices of the Istanbul Governor to protest at police brutality accompanied by representatives of the Journalists Union, the Turkish Press Employers Association and those injured in police attacks.

Afterwards journalists were again attacked, this time by 'muslim youths', aided and abetted by the police, who stood by while the thugs smashed journalists' cameras.

In protest, journalists sat down in a main Istanbul street and blocked traffic for several hours.

Publishers on trial

Thirty-nine publishers went on trial on 26 May 1989 for publishing Henry Miller's *Tropic of Capricorn*. Two years ago a State Security Court in Turkey banned the book as "not literature and harmful".

The publishers had attempted to collectively published a version of the book with all the passages on which the court based its verdict deleted. However, in the introduction to the book, the publishers had printed in its entirety the official text of the court verdict, which included the text of all the passages from the book the court considered "harmful".

The Istanbul Court ordered all copies of *Tropic of Cancer* in Turkey to be confiscated and burned and the publishers to stand trial.

The Right of Reply Bill is dead. Long live the right of reply!

by Wendy Moore

The government may have smartly defeated Tony Worthington's Private Member's Bill at its third reading on 21 April, but the CPBF can claim a major victory none the less. The campaign for the Bill has achieved everything it set out to do — and more.

The Worthington Bill was the sixth attempt to introduce right of reply legislation through parliamentary measures. It came closer to success than any previously. But more importantly, in the current climate, it raised the issue of declining media standards to a higher profile than for many years.

Support for a statutory right of reply is greater than ever. The unassailable arguments have won over MPs of all parties, a broad range of voluntary and community groups, numerous trade unions and many, many individuals — some of whom are themselves victims of press excesses.

At the same time the Labour Party has now firmly committed itself to introducing right of reply legislation and a Press Commission when it returns to power. Model legislation — redrafted and refined after widespread consultation — is ready and waiting.

So it is hardly surprising that the Press pulled out all the stops in its attempt to defeat the latest Right of Reply Bill. Circulation wars were forgotten as the Press joined forces — tabloids with qualities, Maxwell with Murdoch, regionals with nationals — in a united effort to protect the 'freedom of the press' from the scourge of corrections.

Persistence

The *Sun* railed against it. The *Mirror* attacked it. The *Independent*, which probably excelled the rest in its persistence, thought it "odd" that the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom supported a move which was against "the very essence of press freedom". It then brought in a libel lawyer to rubbish the clause proposing legal aid for libel in an article published two weeks after that clause had been dropped.

Regional newspaper group Reed International urged its journalists in the Northern Newspaper Group to write to Conservative MPs opposing the Bill. A memo, leaked to the CPBF, outlined the arguments they should put.

Newspapers pulled every trick in the book to crush the Bill. The first tactic —

'Unworkable and unfair'

Editors attack Bills' privacy and right of reply proposals

A bad defence of a good name

The editor undermined

tried and tested in many a drive to undermine groups the press barons disagree with — was to ignore the Bill altogether. The Press exercised a conspiracy of secrecy against the Bill while frantically lobbying MPs and ministers behind the scenes to defeat it.

Editors accused the Bill's supporters of attempting to censor the Press. Yet it was they who censored their own publications in order to deny their readers the facts.

When after a while it became obvious the Bill and its supporters were not going to go away, the Press weighed in with a flurry of heavily one-sided reports containing streams of invective maligning the Bill and little or no explanation, let alone defence, of its aims. Other articles were riddled with inaccuracies about the content and aims of the Bill, while decrying a measure aimed at improving accuracy. And many of the articles inexplicably, but quite deliberately, linked the Bill with the Official Secrets and Privacy Bills, which they denounced as a trio of attacks against press freedom.

The truth is that the proprietors and some editors have about as much support for genuine press freedom as for enlightened labour relations. Their definition of press freedom is the freedom to print what the hell they like, regardless of who it hurts or harms and to smugly point the way to the hapless Press Council or expensive libel system for those it tramples on.

The Right of Reply Bill was aimed at

Proprietors aim to defeat two ¹/₃ press curb Bills

Let's keep the law out of it

Right of reply bill 'doomed'

ensuring the public were entitled as of right to a correction against inaccuracies. But the vicious campaign of inaccuracy against the Bill has ensured that neither the editors nor their readers understand the real arguments.

Triumphant

So the press barons will now be celebrating a successful campaign which they mistakenly believe has got them off the hook once again. But it is the Labour movement — which has campaigned for a right of reply for more than 10 years — which should be triumphant.

The Bill was roundly defeated by filibusterers led by Normal Tebbit and clearly organised by the government. But it has gained massive support and, if we capitalise on the new avenues it has opened up, the prospects for press freedom look more positive now than at any time in the last 10 years.

The review of the Press announced by the government during the third reading debate was obviously intended to deflate the situation and to buy time. Clearly we cannot expect Margaret Thatcher — who has done more to inhibit press freedom than any Prime Minister this century — to provide a review which will genuinely assess the problems and come up with reasonable answers.

Judging by this government's record its review is more likely to produce censorial restrictions than reforms to improve press freedom. There is little

point in saying 'We told you so' to the editors who were warned to expect a serious government crackdown unless they accepted moderate measures to put their house in order.

But the Review will ensure that the media and its flagrant disregard of both the truth and its readers remain very much in the political limelight for the next year and probably up until the next general election.

It should not be denied that there were a number of flaws and difficulties with the Worthington Bill. That is not to say that the Bill was badly drafted, as alleged by the Press. The Bill was deliberately written in a non-legalistic style so that it could be easily understood and accessible to members of the public, rather than simply to well paid lawyers.

However, there are a number of limitations in working with Private Members' Bills. The need to win cross-party support leads MPs to compromise on their aims. So the latest Bill had lost some of its crucial elements.

The Bill was weakened to exclude broadcasting at an early stage. During committee the commitment to legal aid for libel cases was abandoned. And attempts by the CPBF to improve on the structure of the Press Commission — to take on board criticisms that the body could act as an arm of government rather than an independent watchdog — were in vain.

Most seriously the Bill was flawed by an amendment, fervently opposed by the CPBF, which would have meant victims could only claim a right of reply to an inaccuracy if they could prove it had harmed their reputation, posing an unnecessary and legalistic hurdle for complainants. In the event, the CPBF felt it could not actively lobby MPs to support the Bill at third reading although we had made some headway in securing a commitment from Labour MPs to press an amendment at the House of Lords.

The outcome then meant losing the battle for the Right of Reply Bill but making significant advances in the long term campaign for a better media. Now we have to build on these achievements. We need to combine forces — the CPBF, unions, the TUC media working party, and a wide range of community groups — to present a united front as formidable as any the press magnates can muster.

Proprietors will have to face the fact that they are fighting a losing battle in trying to defend their own 'freedoms' against the freedom of the general public to a fair, accurate and diverse media.

Human rights groups attack UK's record on freedom

Article 19, the international human rights organisation, and the National Council for Civil Liberties published jointly last month a Briefing *Freedom of Expression in the United Kingdom*, which criticises the UK's record on freedom of expression and information.

The two organisations wrote to all delegates at the Helsinki Information Forum in London enclosing the Briefing and urging them to take up the issues it raises.

The Briefing highlights:

- the laws restraining freedom of expression;
- the government's interference in broadcasting;
- the government's reassertion of secrecy as a central principle of its activities;
- the courts' use of novel and far-reaching precedents of prior restraint on the media through the use of injunctions.

The Briefing concludes:

- freedom of expression is increasingly threatened by governmental encroachment;
- contrary to the trend in other countries there is no commitment in the UK to open government;
- concentrated ownership of the media is a threat to freedom of expression and British democracy;
- the government's forthcoming independent review of the Press should be wide-ranging and include media manipulation by the Government Information Service;
- a positive right to freedom of expression and information is needed urgently through, for example, incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law.

Kevin Boyle, Director of Article 19 said: "If freedom of expression as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the cornerstone of all freedoms, then its decline in Britain does not augur well for civil liberties as a whole."

Paul Hunt, the NCCL's Legal Officer said: "Freedom of expression and information is the life-blood of democracy. This Briefing shows it is under serious threat in the UK and that it needs urgent legal protection."

Copies of the Briefing are available from Article 19, 90 Borough High Street, London, SE1 1LL, cost £1.

Brass Tacks comes to an end

by Granville Williams

Brass Tacks, the current affairs series which has run for 11 years from BBC Manchester, is finished. This should concern anyone who cares about maintaining a strong, distinctive base for current affairs production outside London.

Under Colin Cameron, former Head of the TV Features Department and BBC North West, *Brass Tacks* won a solid reputation. It brought a distinctive approach to topics ignored by other current affairs series. These include subjects such as safety and the P&O dispute, far right involvement in the Animal Rights Movement, the cover-up of deaths in military training and the role of the police in breaking up the Leon Brittan demonstration at Manchester University.

Colin Cameron was well regarded ("a very good management person who ran a good empire" is one view) and it's to his credit that a viable centre for current affairs and solid investigative journalism existed outside the Metropolis.

When Colin Cameron departed for London he had the clear understanding that *Brass Tacks* would continue. John Drury, an internal appointment, took over last November and the intervening months have been extremely frustrating. People from *Brass Tacks* dispersed to work on other programmes (*Reportage* and *On the Line*).

At the end of April, John Drury

announced he was going back to radio to head a unit called Special Documentary Features under the *File on 4* umbrella. Finally, in early May, at a meeting between the team and Hugh Williams (Regional Controller), John Drury and Ian Squires (Head of TV, Manchester) it became clear that, whilst there was a desire by the North West management to keep making current affairs programmes, London was dictating the terms.

BBC 2 Controller Alan Yentob's vague brief was to encourage programmes with more emphasis on cultural/artistic topics. This has been difficult to translate into real subjects for programmes because, as one person said, Alan Yentob "knows what he doesn't want — current affairs — not what he wants".

Cynics (I'm not one but could be persuaded) would say this situation is inevitable in the new BBC, in the post *Real Lives* and *Zircon* era. Critics saw John Birt's job, when he was appointed Deputy Director General in 1987, as imposing a careful regime with 'safe' reporting and the avoidance of controversial subjects — notably Northern Ireland and national security.

Issues

Birt's creation, the Directorate of News and Current Affairs, has within it a Social Affairs Unit, set up to cover the sorts of topics *Brass Tacks* specialised in. Indeed, people from *Brass Tacks* have been

approached to go and work for the Unit.

However, there's a vital difference of approach. The Social Affairs Unit will deal with issues rather than people, will not be as story-based or grassroots orientated and will squeeze out anything vaguely controversial or confrontational.

Essentially, there's no room for what Roger Bolton, *This Week* editor, calls "undercover journalism", or the sort of approach which begins with the premise that current affairs is about subjects that the government doesn't want the public to know about.

The result is that a group of people specialising in long-term investigative research, streetwise journalists with years of experience in developing home grown, grassroots programmes, face an uncertain future.

This situation concerns the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom. In our recent North West Annual Report we said "We will continue to campaign strongly for freedom of speech and information, and quality and diversity in all aspects of the media. The deregulation of television and the Official Secrets Bill will be high on our list of priorities, as will the preservation of regional newspapers, television and radio.

"The North West cannot have its news and current affairs dictated by London. We must fight for the retention of regional news bases in the North of England. Without them, the long cherished tradition of a regional media will be lost forever".

Lockerbie; now Hillsborough. Plus hundreds of examples in between. Examples of people suddenly shot into the spotlight, their most private moments captured by journalists, their lives opened up to public gaze.

Two examples from Hillsborough: (1) The TV camera panning in on a Liverpool fan who had left Liverpool Cathedral during a memorial service because, to quote "it all became too much". So his attempt to snatch a moment's private grief became a TV event. (2) The *Daily Mirror* centre-spread on the Monday showing two dying fans' almost lifesize faces.

As a journalist myself, I know all the arguments for using such pictures. But I still believe they are outweighed by the arguments against. If the CPBF cannot take these issues on board, could you tell me who will? I meet many people who are concerned and I would like their voices to be heard.

Clare Jenkins
Sheffield

Dear Sir

Chas Criche's piece on broadcasting is one of the best you have published; very heartening indeed! May one offer some response, I hope constructive?

I agree that argument with the advertising industry is best pursued by sticking to basics. Their rationale is sophisticated, yes, but only in

a secondary way. We are up against volume of noise rather than the quality of the case.

A more detailed point concerns the admen's preference for emotive influence over rational persuasion, with a consequent discouragement of the critical faculty. Advertising and propaganda depend on gullibility, and do much to encourage it.

I doubt if we need to feel left-footed about altruism. There is ample self-interest in citizen power. That is a weakness in the consumerist rationale, or one of them. But encouragement and anti-apathy treatment is needed.

There is more than the future of TV at stake. Advertising is now the major influence over the future of 'Western' society. It is the currently dominant mode of power for wealth, vested interest, privilege, and for anti-democracy.

Years ago there was an outstanding little publication called *Advertising Scrutiny*, run by Giles Radice. It made really powerful contributions, both general and particular, to the critique of advertising. I was astonished and worried when it ceased. There was then no independent critical voice on advertising.

I wrote to Giles Radice more than once about this, with no reply. But a revival would be an excellent move, very apt and relevant now. Could CPBF do something?

Oliver Owen
Hove, Sussex

Book Reviews

Who Framed Colin Wallace?

by Paul Foot, Macmillan, 1989, £12.95.

Is he or isn't he? Was he or wasn't he? The questions apply as much to the veracity of Colin Wallace's extraordinary story as to the gullibility of journalist Paul Foot. They linger even after you have pored over the index of secret documents that concludes Foot's investigations.

Ulsterman Wallace was the British Army's PR man in the North of Ireland when the present round of 'troubles' started. He was soon involved in disinformation, or 'Psyops' as military strategists prefer to describe the practice of feeding false rumours to the media.

Colin, as Foot cheerfully calls him throughout the book, began to develop scruples when his superiors and the RUC took no notice of complaints that young boys were being systematically sexually abused by Unionist extremists at the Kincora hostel in Belfast.

Not to mention the fact that he was being asked to collude in an intelligence services' conspiracy against the then Labour government — his allegations appeared earlier than Peter Wright's.

Not surprisingly, in 1975, he found himself transferred to England, then forced to resign for handing over intelligence documents to journalists (one of the 'deniable' functions of his official job).

Now married and chief PR for Arun Council, in 1980 he was responsible for publicising an 'Its A Knockout' final and became emotionally involved with a colleague whose husband disappeared on the night Wallace organised a thank-you party for her. His body was found floating in the Arun three days later.

Foul play was not at first suspected, but it then emerged that Wallace had slipped away from the party briefly, and had arranged to meet the dead man that very evening. He was charged with murder.

During his trial rumours abounded that he had tried to get a former girlfriend's husband killed in the North of Ireland. Wallace contends this was part of a security service plot that included the very murder he was now charged with. Eventually he got 10 years for manslaughter, after a trial that Foot shows to have been riddled with inconsistent evidence.

Wallace has been seeking an audience for his allegation of a frame-up ever since. He was released on parole in 1986, and Macmillan have rushed out Foot's book before it could fall foul of the new secrecy laws.

There has been a deafening media silence. Foot's book is a rattling good yarn, but doubts about Wallace's tale

persist. Could not a man whose stock in trade was deception construct the evidence needed to convince the gullible that it is he, and not the many people whose lives he had a hand in wrecking, who is the victim?

Working against a deadline Foot tries hard to prove his case, but he could have tried harder. He fails, for instance, to mention Liz Curtis's book *Ireland: the Propaganda War*, which provides an intriguing answer to questions simply raised by Foot about Wallace's alleged attempt to set up an assassination by a Unionist hit squad.

And Foot publishes a photostat of an intelligence briefing for the Press about a weird Unionist paramilitary group called TARA. It does not tally with the embellished copy Wallace actually gave to a leading journalist whose reputation Foot attempts to rubbish. If I could get hold of a copy, why couldn't Foot.

Wallace may be hard done by, and should rightly expose the cynical hypocrisy of the Establishment whose orders he was paid well to follow. What is more scary is that while thousands die, the British public continues to be pumped full of half-truths and downright lies about what is happening in the North of Ireland.

The Press now distrust Wallace because he so successfully manipulated them in the past. The media are quick to dismiss the Republican and Unionist propaganda machines. If Paul Foot's book encourages them to take on the responsibility of challenging British government, Army and RUC PR we may begin to get the political change that is needed to end the agonies Wallace did so much to prolong.

Mike Jempson

Ireland: The Censored Subject, by Danny Morrison, Sinn Fein Publicity Department, 1989, £2.50.

The proof of the pudding, so they say, is in the eating. According to Douglas Hurd his ban on 'actuality' broadcasting of the views of members of 11 Irish organisations had a purpose — to remove an alleged sense of affront to British audiences that those engaged in political and military opposition to British government policies could use radio and television to express their views and win support.

A more blatant form of political censorship has yet to be foisted on the British public. But what has been its effect on the main focus of political opposition within the Nationalist community in the Six Counties? Sinn Fein's Director of Publicity, Danny Morrison, himself excluded from travelling to Britain, has charted the impact of the ban in a slim, illustrated

Noticeboard

□ The Second International Congress of the European Federation of Community Radios (FERL) will be held from 6 to 13 August in Forcalquier in the South of France.

The main aim of the meeting, apart from renewing the FERL's structures, is to enlarge and strengthen the network which was established three years ago.

The Federation, which is the first — and only — European organisation of community radios has, during its existence, brought together several hundred member radio stations from all over Europe.

For further information contact: Francois Bouchardeau, Les Quatre Reines, B.P. 42, 04300 Forcalquier, France.

□ On 15, 16 and 17 September, Foundation Europe Against the Current will organise, in Amsterdam, the first festival on independent European publishing.

Some 2000 alternative, independent and radical publishers from both eastern and western Europe are expected to attend. The festival will present a counter current to the dominant cultures of the various European countries.

Among the inspirational sources for this initiative were the German Gegenbuchmesse and Mainzer MinipresseMesse and the British Radical, Black and Third World Bookfair.

The aim of the festival is to stimulate a free and independent exchange of information in Europe across the borders of national cultures.

For further information contact: Foundation Europe Against the Current, Erik Nieuwendijk/Eef Vermeij, Jodenbreestraat 24, 1011 NK Amsterdam, Netherlands.

pamphlet *Ireland: The Censored Subject*.

"British broadcasters are interpreting the ban more stringently than even the Home Secretary intended," he said this week, commenting on media coverage of Sinn Fein during the current local election period when Douglas Hurd's strictures are not supposed to apply.

He charts reactions to the ban and joins others in claiming that the ban is anti-democratic, in breach of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and an act of tyranny. It is difficult to see how the British government can gainsay his cogent argument, but since it will not be given the attention or respect it deserves by the British media that will not cause the Cabinet to lose sleep.

Whether you agree with Morrison or not, his summary of the impact and implications of the Hurd broadcasting ban should be required reading for anyone who wants to understand what is at stake when politicians decide what we can see and hear.

Mike Jempson

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir

The BBC's reputation depends on its balance, on stating both sides of important issues.

On 15 April BBC Radio 4 broadcast on its one o'clock programme the views of (a) the employers; and (b) the government, on wages and salary increases — but there was no union spokesman.

On 23 April there was a similar instance of bias in the influential *The World This Weekend* at one o'clock. The first item dealt with Mrs Thatcher's intention to press the West Germans to accept US short-range nuclear missiles on their territory and to refuse East-West negotiations to reduce such weapons.

Only one person was interviewed, and at some length: Mr Michael Mates, MP, a constant broadcaster in support of nuclear armament by Nato. Why wasn't a single voice heard in opposition?

Frank Allaun
Manchester

Dear Sir

When are you going to take on board the issue of media coverage of disasters? First there was Zeebrugge; then Piper Alpha; then

CAMPAIGN FOR PRESS & BROADCASTING FREEDOM

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

Office Tel: 01 437 2795 (24 hours)

NATIONAL COMMITTEE 1989/90

CHAIR - TONY LENNON
 DEPUTIES - KATHY DARBY & TERESA STRATFORD
 TREASURER - JOHN BECK
 PLUS - ALF PARISH, BEN STAINES
 JON LATHAM, GAIL CHESTER, STEVE GRAY, JULIAN PETLEY, YOSHI BAL, JOHN MITCHELL, CAROL BEMANT, ANDY FREEDMAN,
 TESSA PALFREYMAN, SUE JOHNSTON, MIKE JEMPSON, WENDY MOORE, LIONEL MORRISON,
 SIMON COLLINGS, PAT INGRAM, OWEN GUERIN, EVELYN REID, JAKE ECCLESTONE, ANN POINTON,
 BRUCE HANLIN, GILES OAKLEY, BILL FREEMAN, SUE HARRIS

NEW OFFICERS

At the first meeting of the new National Committee, Tony Lennon was re-elected CPBF Chair and Teresa Stratford one of the Vice-Chairs. Gail Chester chose not to stand this year and was replaced by Kathy Darby as the other Vice-Chair. John Beck stays on as Treasurer and Simon Collings as Editor of *Free Press*. Last year's Secretary, Wendy Moore, who also decided not to stand again, has yet to be replaced. The NC thanked Gail and Wendy for their hard work during the past twelve months.

A number of vacancies exist on the National Council and nominations are

invited from appropriate groups and organisations as follows: Section 5 (trade unions other than print and broadcasting) one vacancy; Section 6 (other affiliated organisations) four vacancies; Section 7 (regional groups) one vacancy for the North West.

BOOKS CATALOGUE

The new CPBF Literature Catalogue will be out at the end of June. The Chris Searle book *Your Daily Dose: Racism and the Sun* will be published on 6 July with a launch at the House of Commons. The book on coverage of the Cleveland child abuse cases has now been put back to September. Copies of the new catalogue are to be inserted into the NUJ newspaper, *The Journalist*, to help promote the Campaign.

CPBF DISPLAY

A set of ten display boards are being assembled by Granville Williams, North West organiser, for an exhibition at the TUC in September. The portable panels will depict the history of the Campaign and illustrate some of the key issues CPBF has tackled over the last ten years.

After September the display will be available for loan to local CPBF groups who wish to put on local presentations in libraries and at conferences.

SUB-GROUPS ACTIVE

Three key sub-groups of the National Committee have been reconvened to plan strategy on important policy areas in the coming months. The sub-groups are: Ownership and Control, Broadcasting, and Right of Reply. Members interested in getting involved in any of these areas can find out more by contacting the Poland Street office. The sub-groups meet regularly in Central London.

CPBF Women's Group is also developing important initiatives around pornography, in particular a Bill to restrict sales of pornography to specific locations licenced for the purpose. Again, those interested should contact the office for details.

ARMS AND THE MAN

SW CPBF are to screen a recent C4 documentary about the Irangate scandal at the Watershed Media Centre in Bristol on Friday 14 July to raise questions about media silence on the British connection.

The City has long played a part in the murky world of international arms dealing, and Britain's arms manufacturers don't make weapons of destruction just for the hell of it.

The blame is always firmly placed on sinister foreigners when things go wrong. But when a fine upstanding military gent like Oliver North is forced to spill (some of) the beans everyone gets terribly embarrassed.

In an age when selling newspapers is more important than telling the truth the great British tradition of investigative reporting is no longer considered cost effective, unless you're Tiny Rowlands.

After the showing leading journalists will be invited to discuss these issues with campaigners against the trade in death.

MEDIA GUIDE

Yorkshire Arts have generously given financial support towards the production of a guide for arts, community and trade union organisations on using the media effectively.

It will contain hints on writing press releases/publicity, and addresses/contacts of the media in Yorkshire and Humberside. The plan is to have it on sale for the 10th Anniversary of the CPBF in September, and to run training days on Using the Media based on the booklet. If you would like more information contact:

Y&H CPBF, c/o 24 Tower Avenue, Upton, PONTEFRACT, West Yorkshire WF9 1EE, Tel: 0977 46580.

Edited for the National Committee by SIMON COLLINGS with assistance from JANE BUEKETT. Copy for Free Press 54 should arrive at the office by 26 July 1989.

JOIN CPBF HERE

PLEASE TICK APPROPRIATE BOX

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a) Individual Membership | £10 p.a. <input type="checkbox"/> | Affiliation by organisation | |
| b) Unwaged | £2 p.a. <input type="checkbox"/> | f) Less than 500 members | £15 p.a. <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Household (2 copies of FREE PRESS) | £15 p.a. <input type="checkbox"/> | g) 500 to 1,000 members | £20 p.a. <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Supporting membership (includes FREE CPBF publications) | £20 p.a. <input type="checkbox"/> | h) 1,000 to 10,000 members | £40 p.a. <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Institutional membership (includes 10 copies of FREE PRESS, plus FREE CPBF publications) | £20 p.a. <input type="checkbox"/> | i) 10,000 to 50,000 members | £95 p.a. <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | j) 50,000 to 100,000 members | £185 p.a. <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | | k) Over 100,000 members | £375 p.a. <input type="checkbox"/> |

I/We want to join the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom and enclose a cheque/PO for £

Name/s:.....

Organisation (if applicable).....

Secretary (if different from above):.....

Address:.....

Postcode:..... Tel:.....

Where did you obtain your copy of FREE PRESS?

FILL IN & SEND OFF TO CPBF, 9, Poland Street London W1V 3DG