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PRESS AND BROADCASTING FREEDOM
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MP presents new Bill on pornography

B I L L

TO
Restrict the location of pornographic material; to provide for AD 1989
licensed vendors of pornographic material; to extend the powers
of trading standards officers; and for connected purposes.

BE IT ENACTED by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and
with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal,
and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the
authority of the same, as follows:—

1. —(1) It shall be an offence to display, sell or otherwise distribute any Offence
pornographic material from any premises unless the vendor or distributor
has a licence to sell or distribute such material from those premises.
- (2) It shall be an offence to display, sell or otherwise distribute
pornographic material to the general public from premises where any
other goods or services whatsoever are sold.
- (3) If the proprietor of any premises permits them to be used for the
sale or distribution of pornographic material by a distributor or vendor
who does not have a licence to sell or distribute such material from those
premises, he shall commit an offence.
- (4) A licence to sell or otherwise distribute pornographic material can
be granted only by the appropriate local authority for the area where the
premises are situated, and a licence can be granted only where the
premises from which material is sold or distributed are used solely for the
sale and/or distribution of pornographic material.
2. —(1) Any person guilty of an offence under this Act shall be liable— Penalties
- (a) on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level five on the
standard scale or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six
months or both; or
- (b) on conviction on indictment, to a fine or imprisonment or both;
- and the court may order that the premises used for the sale or distribution
of pornographic material be closed.
- (2) Prosecutions for offences under this Act may be brought by trading
standards officers, and the rights and duties of trading standards officers
shall be extended accordingly.
- [Bill 188] 502

On 19 July, Dawn Primarolo, MP, introduced a Presentation Bill in the House of Commons: the *Location of Pornographic Materials Bill*. This Bill was proposed and drawn up by members of the CPBF Women's Section, following months of research, consultation and campaigning on the issue of pornography.

It stipulates a separate location, away from general retail outlets, for the sale of pornographic materials and it includes a definition of pornography — the hardest part of the Bill to work out.

Pornography would not be censored, but its location of sale would be controlled; licences for premises being granted by local authorities, for a sizable payment. Zoning, which has dumped pornographic outlets in poor areas in the USA, would be out.

The purpose of a Presentation Bill is to raise an issue in the Commons, prior to its being introduced at a later date as a Private Member's or 10-Minute Rule Bill. Dawn Primarolo plans to follow up with one of these measures in the next session of Parliament.

In the meantime, the Bill has the support of a number of MPs and organisations, including the Campaign Against Pornography, of which Jo Richardson and Clare Short are members.

Tory plans for broadcasting 'undemocratic'

by Mike Jempson

This Autumn the Government will unveil the biggest Broadcasting Bill Britain has ever seen. Its 200 clauses will consolidate much previous media legislation, and much that is new. The aim is to transform our viewing and listening habits, by allowing free reign of market forces on the airwaves.

The Government's much-trumpeted claim that viewers and listeners should decide what is broadcast on radio and TV has already been exposed as a sham with the Hurd Ban, the Broadcasting Standards Council, and its frequent interventions to prevent the broadcast of embarrassing material.

In a unique move, the media unions ACTT and BETA, supported by the NUJ, have set about co-ordinating opposition to the Broadcasting Bill. Working closely with the voluntary sector and the churches, the Public Service Broadcasting Campaign has been providing information and advice about how to wake MPs up to the profoundly undemocratic nature of Government plans.

The Broadcasting Bill will set out its true agenda — to marginalise the BBC, drop the public service requirements which have so far stalled the efforts of advertisers to make radio and TV simply marketing media, and herald a new era of broadcasting in which only those with money gain the benefits of communications technology.

Negative image

The Bill will be a negative image of the CPBF Media Manifesto, handing over control of the airwaves to a cash-rich clientele. Franchise applicants must offer the Treasury a basic fee for each region, outbid their rivals in a competitive tendering scheme, and put up 'quality bonds' from which fines will be deducted if they breach the terms of their franchise. Their viability will be measured only in commercial terms.

To be able to receive satellite, cable and local microwave TV, viewers will have to spend up to £1000 in the first year alone. Some parts of Britain will be unable to receive the new national commercial Channel 5, and regions served by commercial radio and TV franchises are likely to expand with a consequent diminution of regional identity.

The promised plethora of community radio stations will be curtailed as three new national commercial radio stations, Channel 5 TV, and countless satellite and cable channels, compete for advertising revenue.

Meanwhile the BBC will be the only body with (expensive) public

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Help safeguard the future of broadcasting by:

- Writing to MPs demanding greater diversity and access in the media. Use the PSB leaflet circulated with the last *Free Press* for background information.
- Spread the information amongst friends, neighbours and work colleagues.
- Get your union branch/political party to organise a local meeting on the issue.

Petition launched against Hurd broadcasting ban

The National Council of the CPBF has agreed to help co-ordinate a national petition calling for the lifting of the Hurd broadcasting ban.

The petition has already won support from a broad range of trades union, political and media figures in Britain and abroad. The NUJ Executive has endorsed the petition, and journalists are planning other action to coincide with the anniversary of the ban.

One intriguing aspect of the proposed Broadcasting Bill will be how the Hurd ban is to be consolidated in legislation.

Clause 7.15 of the White Paper insists that the Home Secretary must retain the power to issue directives to all

broadcasting bodies. But the ITC may find itself saddled with the role of official censor, requiring all broadcasters to observe the ban as part of their franchise contract. CPBF members may wish to raise this disturbing development with their MPs.

A copy of the petition is enclosed with this issue of *Free Press*, and members are urged to photocopy it, collect signatures and donations towards the cost of the exercise, and return them to the CPBF Office by 5 October.

The petition will be handed in at 10 Downing Street on the first anniversary of the ban's promulgation on Thursday 19 October.

Here is the news, sponsored by...

A fascinating insight into the workings of sponsored broadcasting has come to light with the efforts of Bristol Irish Society to gain publicity for its forthcoming Irish Week.

When contact was made with GWR's Brunel Radio to find out whether the station would publicise the Irish Week and consider sponsoring an event, organisers were offered an amazing publicity package.

They would get two weeks of daily mentions, regular features on the breakfast magazine show, two outside broadcasts from specific events, and a

competition spot — providing the station could find a sponsor willing to pay up to £1,100 for the package, and supply the competition prize. The sponsor would get a plug on every occasion the event was mentioned.

Needless to say, the station would cover the event without sponsorship, but to nothing like the same extent, and outside broadcasts would not be considered unless someone picked up the tabs for the extra cost.

What is the going rate for news coverage in your area?

Mike Jempson

Continued from page 1

service responsibilities, and must adopt commercial marketing techniques to boost its revenue from a licence fee pegged below the rate of inflation.

Mounting criticism of the White Paper means that the new 'light touch' Independent TV Commission (ITC) will be more of a regulatory body than was intended. Derision of the Broadcasting Standards Council has led it to recommend that its codes of conduct should not be given statutory force.

CPBF members are urged to continue the task of ridiculing the contradictions in Government plans by writing to their MPs, using the PSB leaflet distributed with the last issue of *Free Press*, to assert the value of public service broadcasting and demand amendments to the Bill that will open up public access to the media rather than restricting diversity and choice by handing over the airwaves to commercial concerns.

For more information about the PSB Campaign, contact Mike Jempson at the CPBF office 01 437 2795.

Irish paper leads by example

Ireland's *Sunday Tribune* has set out its commitment to the Right of Reply in an editorial statement, which CPBF members may wish to commend to editors of their local or national newspapers.

In its 21 May edition the paper announced: 'It is the objective of the *Sunday Tribune* to publish information on issues which affect the lives and concerns of its readers and to contribute to the accountability of all those who exercise power in our society. It is also an objective to be entertaining and interesting and to present material accurately and impartially.'

'Inevitably we will make mistakes from time to time and, on occasion, we will unfairly impugn the reputation of individuals. In fairness to our readers and to anybody whose reputations we have unfairly impugned and, given that this newspaper is not insured against libel damages or costs, we undertake the following.

'In the case of errors of fact, we will publish corrections when we become aware of such. In the case of unfairly impugning the reputation of any person we hereby offer that person or their representative the right of reply in this newspaper, subject only to reasonable length, the laws of libel and our right to respond to such reply.'

With the tabloid press anxious to put their houses in order after the debacle of Hillsborough, and the threat of Government intervention, CPBF members might find editors in a more conciliatory mood than on previous occasions when we have broached the subject.

It might well be worth members organising a write-in campaign to persuade editors to issue a similar public statement. Let *Free Press* know how you get on.

Mike Jempson

Warning follows screening

The BBC's legal advisors have sent a warning letter to the CPBF following public screenings of 'Cabinet', the one remaining film in the Secret Society series which has yet to be shown on TV.

The film exposes the system of secret Cabinet Committees which shape policy making, and offers two illustrations of how pernicious the system can be in a democracy.

After a secret Cabinet Committee had been set up by Jim Callaghan, the last Labour Prime Minister, to rubbish Liberal MP Clement Freud's Freedom of Information Bill, Labour MP Chris Price was given the job of persuading Freud to miss a crucial vote of confidence in return for smooth passage of his amended Private Member's Bill. Freud declined the secret offer and the Government fell.

During the 1983 election campaign, a secret Cabinet Committee set up by Mrs Thatcher channelled funds to external pressure groups linked to a Conservative

Party 'think tank' run by Winston Churchill and the US-based Heritage Foundation to rubbish CND, promote Tory nuclear policy and undermine Labour's anti-nuclear stance. Another provided Michael Heseltine with the wherewithal to arrange secret service bugging of CND activists.

SW CPBF showed the film at Bristol's Watershed Centre in July, after threatened injunctions failed to materialise. CPBF showings in Cardiff and Manchester also went ahead without incident.

Video copies of the film were sent anonymously to numerous CPBF members as the Campaign entered its tenth year of operations. Earlier this summer MPTam Dalyell raised the BBC's reluctance to show the film in a Parliamentary Question, and several MPs have expressed interest in arranging a screening in the House of Commons.

Press hails tigress Maggie

by Wendy Cocksedge

Earlier this year Margaret Thatcher celebrated 10 years as Prime Minister. How did newspapers handle the anniversary of Thatcher's decade in power?

To mark the 'Thatcher Years', the press chose a new way of portraying the 'Iron Lady' — with help from her two month old grandson. Pictured, lovingly cradling Michael outside 10 Downing Street with her son and daughter-in-law, a sensitive, maternal side to her nature was shown. This created good publicity, promoting the Conservative ideas on the family.

In a widely reported Press Association interview, Margaret Thatcher described herself as a 'Tigress'. She spoke of the 'female of the species having natural instincts when attacked to ferociously defend your family and your political family'.

The *Sun* developed the theme: 'She has fought for her country as a jungle cat fights for her cubs'. The *Daily Express* used an advertising pun to state: 'Britain has a 'tigress' in its tank. Passengers are advised to keep their seat belts tightly fastened.' The *Daily Mail* went further: 'Not the least of Margaret Thatcher's qualities is that she is, quite simply, a nice person.'

The press was full of praise for Mrs Thatcher. Headline writers tripped over each other in an attempt to strike the message home: 'Maggie goes all motherly as grandson visits No. 10' — *Sun*; 'Ten great years, by gran Maggie' — *Daily Star*; 'One in six families now owns two cars' — *Today*; 'The Tigress defending Britain' — *Daily Mail*.

Even *The Independent* followed suit with its front page editorial listing



Thatcher's 'achievements' — the Falklands victory, the miners' dispute and economic growth; 'in terms of growth, productivity, investment, employment and entrepreneurship, Britain has become one of the more dynamic countries in western Europe'.

The Record

The facts tell a different story. As the *Daily Telegraph* pointed out, we are now importing £14.5 billion more of goods than we export, creating the biggest current account deficit in our history.

Unemployment figures are starting to turn down now, but during the first three years in power, they doubled to 2.4 million and inflation rocketed to 10.3 per cent. The numbers of people depending on income support rose from 3.4 million in 1981 to 5.6 million in 1988.

The rosy picture painted by the press tended to omit these facts. The *Economist* however, was more critical: 'at the centre of Thatcherism is the belief that a society whose individual members pursue wealth

is a happy one, and that there is no reason why those who acquire wealth from their own efforts should not also enjoy power'.

The *Independent* and the *Financial Times* at least quoted an opposing view from the Deputy Labour Leader, Roy Hattersley; 'She has prohibited the organised opposition of free Trade Unions and independent local government, bullied the broadcasters and bought off the newspapers with knighthoods and peerages.'

He also stated that Mrs Thatcher has 'preached the gospel of conflict and division' and she has encouraged the rich to feel proud that they are greedy.

Typical

Overall, the treatment by the press of the Thatcher years has been to avoid and skate around important issues: the long miners' strike, the loss of over 1,000 lives in the Falklands war, the five year long teachers' dispute, high unemployment figures, poor public transport, privatisation of state industries, and recently, Poll Tax and the threatened privatisation of water.

The press characteristically bolstered Thatcher's image by portraying her as a protective grandmother who relies on her female instincts to defend the country. The coverage of Mrs Thatcher's anniversary exposed the narrow partisan bias of the national press — devoid of genuine independence and diversity of viewpoints. The case for measures to promote diversity and curb monopoly is greater than ever.

Wendy Cocksedge is a journalism student at East Surrey College, Redhill.

Council workers' rights under attack

by David Brough

Journalists could soon be helping to get Council workers the sack. That's in the likely event of the Local Government and Housing Bill going through and removing the civil liberties of around 100,000 employees. Writing to the press and speaking to journalists look certain to be disciplinary offences leading to dismissal.

The Bill will hit anybody on over £13,500 a year. In addition to the salary limit there will be specially targeted groups including anybody who deals regularly with journalists and broadcasters.

All those affected will be gagged by two means. Firstly they will be forbidden by

law to stand for election as a Councillor, MP or MEP. Secondly their contracts will be forcibly changed to stop them engaging in political activity. The Government has yet to define what it means by political activity. This will be left to Chris Patten to include in regulations to be published later.

Not only will the civil liberties of thousands of people be taken away by order of the Minister but he will also have a Joe McCarthy-like power to change the definition whenever he thinks fit.

The definition will clearly include all those items recommended in the Widdicombe Report. High on the list will be speaking or writing in public 'in a way that might be regarded as engaging in

party political debate'. This could include individuals who are campaigning against a hospital closure or for a nursery or on any other issue that is contentious between the political parties. Trade union representatives could be particularly vulnerable when attacking Council policies which are identified with the ruling political group.

The prospects are frightening and that's why many of us are committed to fight the Government every inch of the way. We hope that others will join us.

David Brough is Head of Committee Services with Hillingdon Council and was Labour Candidate for Harrow East at the last two General Elections.

Newspapers and libel

In the last issue of *Free Press*, Wendy Moore reported on the extensive Press campaign against the Right of Reply Bill. Not all newspaper reactions to the issues raised in the original Bill have been negative, however. Recently, Ann Clwyd, MP, received a letter strongly supportive of those aspects of the Bill relating to libel from Frank Branston, publisher of *Bedfordshire on Sunday*. An abridged version of his letter is reproduced below. 'Dear Ms Clwyd,

I have been following your campaign with interest and it may come as a surprise to you that, despite being a journalist and director of a newspaper company, I agree with every word you say on this subject.

It is obnoxious that only people with sufficient wealth to fund libel actions, or people whose unions or professional associations are willing to do so, can protect their reputations in the courts...

While I agree with your legal aid campaign, it must go hand-in-hand with a complete review of laws which are reducing the courts to the status of a casino with a bent roulette wheel.

Few people, certainly not I, have much sympathy with the activities of papers such as *The Sun*, and if the courts simply penalised that kind of journalism, nobody would complain. But the perverse behaviour of libel juries is now producing a situation in which serious investigative journalism carries too high a risk for any newspaper not having the resources of News International.

You must feel concerned about this. One more means of opposing or exposing the insolence of office and the wrongdoings of the powerful is closed. The Establishment, in its broadest sense, is further armoured from attack.

The threat is not simply of an action that could bankrupt a small newspaper, but of a creeping paralysis and failure of nerve...

There are remedies. The Scottish principle that a libel plaintiff must quantify in advance the damage he believes he has suffered, is one worthy of consideration.

There also ought to be three types of damages: normal damages, payable in cases of accidental libel, which all newspapers run the risk of committing, reflecting actual financial damage, and encouraging withdrawal and correction of an erroneous statement as quickly as possible; punitive damages, where a statement has been published in the face of known facts, or where the newspaper has refused to correct an error; exemplary damages, where malice is proved.

Juries ought to receive firm guidelines on such matters.'

Yours sincerely,
Frank Branston

People attending the CPBF Conference, 'Media Freedom in the 1990s', on 29 April were treated to some very stimulating contributions by a number of speakers. The event was well attended with more than 130 people registered.

The morning session opened with an overview of ten years of the Campaign presented by Jake Ecclestone, Deputy General Secretary of the NUJ. The intention of the Conference, however, was not to dwell on the past but to look forward to the next decade so Jake was followed by three speakers who focused on different aspects of 'campaigning in the 1990s'.

Roy Lockett, Deputy General Secretary of the ACTT, spoke of the unprecedented cooperation which now existed between the unions in broadcasting. This alliance was a great asset he said. He also stressed the need to think in European terms not just about Britain.

Barbara Rogers, Editor of *Everywoman*, spoke about small print publishing. She made a number of perceptive and practical comments including identifying the need to get labour movement and other sympathetic advertisers to take smaller publications seriously.

She was also critical of proposals for a 'legal right to distribute' based on the French model. This would not help small circulation magazines, she said. Instead she urged people to look towards some kind of mechanism involving an appeal to the Office of Fair Trading.

Cecil Gutzmore, author of *The People's Account*, a documentary about Broadwater Farm banned by Channel 4, spoke about the relevance of the Black experience to understanding the nature of the state and media we are dealing with. This was a perceptive analysis of



• Members of Smell No Evil Theatre Group performing at the benefit after the conference.

Photo: John Latham

Ten years of CPBF

Free Press reports on the conference 'Media Freedom in the 1990s' and the 1989 AGM.

relations of power and the means by which power is retained by those who have it.

The second half of the morning was taken up with workshops which gave those attending a chance to discuss some of the practical issues arising out of the contributions from the platform.

In the afternoon Ann Crilly, the director of *Mother Ireland*, opened the session on Ireland by describing how the programme became the first victim of the Hurd ban. She also outlined some of the consequences of the ban for programme makers and urged the media unions to take a tougher stand.

She was followed by David Miller, of Glasgow Media Group, who analysed press coverage of the Gibraltar 'bomb'.

In the final session on Right of Reply, Jeremy Corbyn, MP, and Wendy Moore outlined the case for legislation and spoke on the need to build on the debate generated by the Worthington Bill.

In the evening a benefit included a performance by Smell No Evil Theatre Company.

AGM

At the AGM on the following day, the outgoing Secretary, Wendy Moore, told delegates that despite the Campaign having achieved national status, major tasks lay ahead. Censorship and secrecy are on the increase, she said, a fact confirmed by a recent report from the International Federation of Journalists.

During the past year CPBF maintained a high profile despite continuing financial difficulties. The survival of the Campaign is in large part due to the commitment of staff and volunteers and the continuing generosity of supporters without which much of the work would not have been sustainable.

Membership is on the increase, partly as a result of new regional groups being formed. During the coming year the National Committee hopes to increase membership further and to persuade more members to make a regular donation by standing order.

The major areas of campaigning activity were:

(1) Public service broadcasting. As well as publishing *Switching Channels* and producing a briefing paper on the Government's White Paper, CPBF has been closely involved with the media unions on this issue. That work continues.

(2) Right of reply. Tony Worthington, MP, approached the Campaign last year after winning second place in the ballot for Private Members' Bills, offering to take up the right of reply. CPBF worked closely with him on the Bill, which reached a third reading (the furthest any such proposal has ever got). Although it was defeated, the Bill has provoked considerable public debate about media standards and has led to the Government announcing its own enquiry.

(3) Ownership and control. CPBF organised a successful conference on ownership last year at which Brian Gould, MP, announced details of Labour's plans to curb monopolies in newspapers. CPBF is now involved in drafting a Bill.

(4) Racism in the media. An education pack is in preparation and Chris Searle's



Granville Williams, CPBF NW organiser

Photo: John Latham

study of racism in *The Sun* is being published by CPBF. The campaign has also been closely involved with a number of organisations set up in defence of Salman Rushdie.

(5) Secrecy and censorship. CPBF campaigned against the Official Secrets Act which imposes further restrictions on freedom in this country. The Campaign also strongly condemned the banning, by Douglas Hurd, of broadcast interviews with named Irish groups and has been working hard to highlight the dangers of the ban.

(6) Pornography. The Women's Group has gone from strength to strength during the year and has developed important initiatives around pornography.

Accounts

John Beck, The Treasurer, presented accounts covering a 21 month period as CPBF is changing its financial year so as to be able to provide AGM delegates in future with full audited accounts.

This year's accounts show that in the period since the Campaign finally lost grant funding, it has not only been able to stay afloat but has actually been able to reduce its debts — a target which the National Committee set itself last year. John Beck said that during the coming twelve months he hoped the CPBF would be able to eradicate remaining debts.

A total of sixteen motions were debated by the delegates. The subjects covered included finances, right of reply, concentration of ownership, public service broadcasting, secrecy, Ireland and pornography. A full list of AGM resolutions and remitted motions plus the audited accounts are available from CPBF, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG (please enclose an S.A.E. and three 19p stamps to cover photocopying).

Labour Party will debate broadcasting

The following motion on the future of broadcasting, drawn up by ACTT members at Trade Films in Newcastle, is going forward to the Labour Party Conference this year from the ACTT. CPBF members attending the Labour Party Conference are urged to give it their full support.

'Conference:

1. Believes that accessible television and radio services, representing a diversity of points of view, are essential in modern Britain both as a cultural asset and as a bulwark of democracy;

2. Believes that the Tories' plans for a 'competitive broadcasting market' will hand over control of television and radio to private capital and ultimately lead to undemocratic monopoly ownership of television and radio similar to the present situation in our national press;

3. Reaffirms its support for the defence and further extension of broadcasting as a public service, in the interests of viewers, listeners and media workers.

Conference therefore calls upon the next Labour Government:

1. To establish a new Ministry of Arts & Communications to oversee all cultural and media activities;

2. To repeal the 1989 Official Secrets Act and to replace this Act with a Freedom of Information Act;

3. To impose a legal limit on the number of broadcasting and publishing interests owned by any one person or company;

4. To establish a Media Enterprise Board to promote, advise and help fund new and innovative media projects;

5. To invest in a national fibre optics network as a major cultural and economic priority, and to bring British Telecom into an appropriate form of public ownership for this purpose;

6. To cooperate with our European neighbours in establishing a European regulatory framework for satellite broadcasters, based on public service criteria.'

Consortium Launch

National voluntary agencies have formed a Broadcasting Consortium to promote public service broadcasting. The Consortium was launched in July and a basic leaflet setting out the organisations key concerns has been circulated by member agencies to supporters.

For details contact: Amanda Bennett, c/o NCVO, 26 Bedford Square, London WC1 3HU. Tel. 01 636 4066

Book Reviews



The Invisible Medium: Public, Commercial and Community Radio by P. Lewis and J. Booth, Macmillan, 1989, £8.95 pbk.

Millions of people listen to radio every day. Given the medium's importance, it is surprising that radio does not receive the attention it deserves in public, academic and political debates. Peter Lewis and Jerry Booth, two academics with an interest in community radio, have tried to redress the balance. The result is a wide ranging survey which will certainly provoke debate about radio.

There are chapters on the origins of radio—the social, political and technical factors which brought it into being—and on radio's early development in the USA and the UK. A review of BBC and commercial local radio is followed by a description of community radio stations, or practices, in the USA, UK, Africa, Canada, Latin America, India, Italy and France.

A final chapter deals with future prospects for the medium, and puts forward the authors' idea for a national community radio channel in the UK. There is a useful bibliography and the appendix provides a chronology of key dates in the history of radio.

The book stresses the elitism of the BBC, especially in its dealings with those who have argued for change. There is a useful description of the birth of the US system—the commercial ambition of Marconi, the role of the US government and the early domination of US radio by big companies like RCA.

The UK (public service) and USA (commercial) systems are described in the book as the models from which much of the rest of the world's radio systems were developed. 'Oppositional' radio emerged as an alternative to these models.

The book provides revealing details of community radio outside the UK. In 1987 only 9% of Canada's 1363 radio stations were community stations. In the USA community radio is 'marginal' to the

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mass audience commercial system, and is being undermined by cuts in grant aid and a drive towards sponsorship.

No figures are given for the percentage of community stations in Australia, but the authors point out that the sector is being pushed into sponsorship, and may be used as a device to promote the deregulation of the rest of the system. Of France and Italy the authors admit that community or 'free' radio is marginal and that 'what began as a radical opposition to monopoly opened the door to expansion financed by private capital' (p164).

They then advocate a national community radio channel for the UK, based on the Channel 4 model. Programme provision would be 'a distinctive service of the kind of material community radio stations could use' to supplement their own programming. The channel would receive money from the BBC's licence fee and a subsidy from commercial radio and TV profits through a Public Service Broadcasting Council—a body proposed by the Peacock Report (1986).

Underlying the proposal is the assumption that the political battle to defend and develop public service radio in the BBC and the commercial sector has been lost.

The book reflects this by focusing on remedies situated outside of the mainstream. The authors tend to under-emphasise the political and economic forces which are likely to marginalise or crush any community radio initiatives in the UK as they did in France, Italy, the USA and Canada.

Should we accept that the battle is lost, and resign ourselves to eking out a precarious existence on the margins of a commercial communications system whilst mass audiences are fed the culture and the politics of the media multinationals?

Lewis and Booth are committed in this book to progressive ideas about radio even if, in this reviewer's opinion, the remedies proposed do not match the scale

of the problems described. *The Invisible Medium* fills a gap which CPBF members will find very useful and interesting. There is no doubt that it will provoke more debate and interest in an important and until now, unjustifiably, neglected area.

Tom O'Malley

Daily Racism: The Press and Black People in Britain, by Paul Gordon and David Rosenberg, The Runnymede Trust, 1989, £3.50.

Every day for the past ten years the Runnymede Trust has monitored the news and comment columns of the national press, and it is on this archive of cuttings and references that Paul Gordon and David Rosenberg have drawn for their study of newspaper racism in the 1980s. Their work is valuable and timely.

The central argument will not surprise readers of *Free Press*. Gordon and Rosenberg set out to illustrate that newspapers have played a decisive role in defining race relations in Britain as a 'problem'—by manipulating 'popular' fears and suspicions, by renewing and embellishing stereotyped images, by repeating and legitimating racist sentiment, by sensationalist over-reporting and by the equally damaging under-reporting of the genuine fears, worries and opinions of black people.

Studies of press coverage from the 1970s (listed in a brief but useful bibliography) had shown how an overwhelming preoccupation with the 'numbers game' of immigration had consistently marginalised the concerns of ethnic communities and their contributions to British society.

What Gordon and Rosenberg now demonstrate is the way in which the focus has shifted in the 1980s. Newspaper coverage, as ever taking its lead from political opinion mongers, still portrays black people as 'immigrants', 'problems', 'scroungers', 'a threat to law and order', but a reluctant acceptance that Britain is now a multi-racial country means that the style of attack is now often more subtle and insidious, though no less aggressive.

In particular it is now routinely directed against the whole concept of multiculturalism and the organisations and arguments that support it: 'As well as expressing opposition to anti-discrimination measures press commentators have re-defined anti-racism. In doing so they have often employed language previously used to describe racism'.

Gordon and Rosenberg give detailed examples of this process in operation, in the 'Honeyford affair' in Bradford, in the Dewsbury school case, in attacks on the anti-racist policies of Labour controlled local authorities. Again the cases will be familiar, but the concise statement of

headline and comment bring them together in a powerful indictment.

Some of this coverage has a clear and obvious political motivation, but the pamphlet also examines how the content and structure of news values and the pervasive influence of ownership shape editorial direction. In a final section ways of challenging this daily racism are briefly outlined (with an honourable mention for the CPBF), making this short pamphlet an extremely useful combination of evidence and argument for any teacher, student or campaigner.

Bruce Hanlin

The Rushdie File, edited by Lisa Appignanesi and Sara Maitland, Fourth Estate, 1989, £5.95.

The clash of literary, religious and moral arguments generated to date are well documented by Lisa Appignanesi and Sara Maitland in *The Rushdie File*, published with commendable speed by Fourth Estate when Collins withdrew its interest despite an early enthusiastic commission.

The editors of *The Rushdie File* draw their evidence from the columns of newspapers here in Britain and, given the international scale of the affair, from publications in India, Germany, France and the United States. Their strategy, however, is to document the developing crisis rather than to analyse the style, quality and implications of the press coverage itself.

Though the whole debate over *The Satanic Verses*, from the initial book-burning protest in Bradford on 14 January onwards, has provided ample evidence of the inherent racism of the popular press (and of the tortured liberalism of the qualities) this is one troubling aspect that remains unexplored.

The Rushdie File charts the intellectual debate through passages drawn from the quality and weekly press—the *Independent*, the *Guardian*, the *New Statesman and Society*, *Le Monde*, *Die Zeit*, *The Times of India* and others. There is no reference in the index to the *Sun* or the *Daily Express*, and only minimal mentions in the text to the *Daily Mirror* and the *Daily Mail*.

A single editorial from the *Sunday Sport* has to stand as evidence that there were other kinds of response to Khomeini's fatwa against Salman Rushdie. There is no reference to the way the *Daily Star*, for example, used the protests in Bradford and elsewhere to depict Muslims in Britain as sinister aliens who should either accept 'our' cultural perspectives or be sent packing to Iran and good riddance.

It may be unfair to castigate Appignanesi and Maitland for this. The intellectual debate they document is of the greatest significance.

The questions of religious tolerance versus literary expression, of freedom of speech, of a form of 'censorship' never encountered before (and perhaps unique to our media age), of improbable alliances in protest against or support of the author, of the continued meaning and usefulness of the concept of blasphemy—all these questions are tightly interwoven and the statements and passages collected in *The Rushdie File* will help us to unravel them a little, the better to see the problem if not to find the answer (for can there be a single 'answer' to this whole affair?).

But at the same time there is a danger of leaving the protest in the street for the 'benign sort of meeting that one expects at the Institute for Contemporary Arts' (to quote Alan Yentob's approving words).

In doing so we face the danger of intellectualising the whole affair, of losing sight of the supreme irony that Salman Rushdie's political stance against racial discrimination could so easily be turned against the victims of that discrimination by a newspaper press that has never been much concerned about moral arguments or even about investigating the true realities of British society and its inherent racism.

As long as we remember this, *The Rushdie File* will provide very useful documentation of the passions and the fury of an affair that is still far from over.

Bruce Hanlin

The nude: a new perspective

Feminists campaigning against pornography were last year posed a question by Norman Tebbit. If we criticised Page 3 and *Penthouse*, he asked, where would we draw the line? The National Gallery contains plenty of female nudes, but these are works of art. How do we differentiate between the two?

V & A Curator Gill Saunders replied to this question in her exhibition, *The Nude: A New Perspective*, and her answer was challenging: we don't. The exhibition was mainly an examination of the representation of women's bodies throughout history; it also contained observations on male nudes. With such a broad time span, it was often sketchy on detail, but Ms Saunders' commentary was well-argued, and her reassessment of artists whose reputations have excused them from social criticism was very refreshing.

Some reviewers (particularly the gentlemen from the *Guardian* and *Evening Standard*, were at a loss as to how to assess this exhibition. Hopefully not too many people were put off by their woolly comments. The wonderful paintings at the end by Helen Chadwick and Rose Garrard were not to be missed.

The Nude: A New Perspective was shown at the Victoria & Albert Museum. It finished on 13 August 1989.

Teresa Stratford

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir

Forgive me for this late response to your April issue. In your report 'Media Watchdog for Ireland' you refer to a group of 'mediawatchers who travelled up from Cork...who were particularly concerned at the scandalous lack of information in the media about the human consequences of military occupation and civil strife in the Six Counties.'

Somebody is having you on. Nobody, whether Catholic or Protestant, nationalist or unionist, can sustain any serious complaint about the width or depth of coverage given by Irish media to Northern Ireland.

But as often happens, one side complains about the amount of coverage the other side gets. Perhaps that was what was bothering the unnamed 'brass monkeys' from Cork?

Yours
Kieran Fagin

Dear Sir,

I joined the CPBF because I have been strongly against the bias in the daily newspapers for over half a century—the bias has existed much longer. It is a mistake to concentrate on ownership and ignore contents which are more important.

We must aim at balance in the daily and Sunday papers.

Let the Labour Party now make it absolutely clear they will do something immediately on coming to power, for example, as follows.

Appoint a Royal Commission to report

within a year. All major opinions should be represented on such an important matter and it should consider *inter alia* the following:

1. All papers above a certain circulation to be governed by a trust as are, I believe, *The Observer*, *Guardian* and *Independent*.

2. No person or firm to own more than 15% of shares in any one paper and only one paper.

3. Political articles from different writers to be balanced over a period.

4. Lies about a party to be punishable as for an individual.

5. All papers keep their own characters.

Thus a customer can buy the paper suiting him but he is likely to vote more wisely. Bryan Gould would not allow a press baron to own more than three papers. Such timidity will lose Kinnock the next election as it did Dukakis.

Yours sincerely,
Jack Sime
Secretary, Ross, Cromarty & Skye CLP

Dear Sir

A local newsagent recently distributed a leaflet stating that 'British newspapers are the best in the world'. When I queried this statement in view of the admission (boast?) by the *Sun* of its willingness to lie (e.g. the 'interview' with the Falklands widow), a Mr. Dunbar referred me to the British Code of Advertising Practice Section B5.3 stating that the ASA considers the claim acceptable, 'as the advertiser is clearly expressing an opinion.'

Yours sincerely
D. Shepherd

**CAMPAIGN FOR PRESS
& BROADCASTING
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*incorporating the Campaign
Against Racism in the Media &
the Television Users Group*

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FRINGE MEETINGS

Details of fringe meetings at this year's party conferences are as follows:

At the Social and Liberal Democrats Conference a joint meeting has been organised with the Public Service Broadcasting Campaign entitled 'Whose choice, whose freedom? The future of public service broadcasting'. It will take place on 12 September, 6pm, Russell Suite, Royal Albion Hotel, Brighton. Speakers: Robert MacLennan, MP (SLD spokesperson on Home Affairs), Janice Turner (SLD trade unionist) and a speaker from the PSB Campaign. The meeting will be chaired by Tony Lennon.

**YOUR DAILY DOSE: Your daily dose:
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By Chris Searle

*The Sun's racism examined,
analysed and exposed.
Detailed indictment of the
way concentration of
ownership debases media
standards*
Published by CPBF, £5.00



The meeting at the Labour Party Conference is entitled 'Out of control: making the media accountable' and will take place on 4 October, 12.45 pm, Kings Hotel, Kings Road, Brighton. Speakers: Dawn Primarolo, MP, Pauline Illsley (author of *The Cleveland Affair*), Kuombe Balogun (Chair Bristol West CLP) and Tony Benn, MP. The meeting will again be chaired by Tony Lennon.

A meeting at the Green Party Conference is still being arranged.

Admission £1.00.
Thursday 28 September — 'Bad news? Media freedom in the 1990s', speakers include Jonathan Miller (SKY TV), Marta Whorle (Editor *Broadcast*) and Robin Corbett, MP. The meeting starts at 8.00 pm, Library Theatre, Manchester. Admission £1.00.

Wednesday 11 October — 'The media and racism', speakers include Chris Searle (author of *Your Daily Dose: Racism and The Sun*) and Kuombe Balogun. The meeting will be chaired by Councillor Khan Moghal.

Friday 13 October — A day school on 'The media and Europe' from 9.30 am — 4.00 pm, College of Community Education, All Saints, Manchester. Fee £2.00.

For further information contact Granville Williams on 061 832 6991

NW ANNIVERSARY PROGRAMME

The CPBF in the North West has organised an ambitious programme of events during September and October to mark the Campaign's tenth birthday. Details are as follows:

Friday 15 September — 'Ownership and censorship in publishing', speakers include Nick Daziel (Writers Guild), Anne Mosse (NUJ), Julianne Dickey (Co-editor of *Feminism and Censorship*). Meeting starts 8.00 pm, Town Hall, Manchester. Admission £1.00.

Thursday 21 September — Guest lecture by Michael Meacher, MP, 'Ten years of media freedom'. The lecture starts at 8.00 pm, Mechanics Institute, 103 Princess Street, Manchester.

Edited for the National Committee by SIMON COLLINGS. Copy for Free Press 55 should arrive at the office by 22 September 1989.

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