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JOURNAL OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR
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Keep up the campaign against tabloid TV...

- Write to your MP asking him/her to back amendments to the Bill proposed by the CPBF (contact the office for details).
- Raise the issue at local political party meetings and union branches.
- Come to the CPBF conference in April - details on back page.

See back page for AGM details.

Quality sacrificed in TV shake up

The Broadcasting Bill, published in December, offers no freedom for viewers and no future for quality broadcasting, warns the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom.

"If the Bill becomes law the public can expect less choice, lower standards and the virtual disappearance of public accountability in broadcasting," says CPBF Chair Tony Lennon.

The CPBF is particularly concerned that:

- The Independent Television Commission (ITC) and Radio Authority will not have the power to ensure that new franchise holders deliver at least the same quality of programmes as the IBA currently requires of broadcasters.
- The proliferation of commercial TV channels and radio stations and the auctioning of franchises will mean a ratings war as too many companies will be chasing limited advertising revenue.
- Programme range and quality will

deteriorate as cash is drained from programme production into Treasury coffers through the franchise auctions, and into the pockets of shareholders.

● The Bill offers British broadcasting on a plate to media multinationals.

"The Government's so-called 'safeguards' are a worthless attempt to deflect public criticism," says Tony Lennon. "There is nothing to stop unsuitable franchise bidders who lose out first time from buying up their successful competitors on the Stock Exchange."

"The Bill offers more channels and less real choice; more money for the multi-nationals and fewer quality programmes for the viewer," he says.

"We want to see a properly financed, publicly accountable broadcasting system offering real choice to viewers and listeners. That means a democratically elected regulatory body, with advertising, licencing and exchequer revenues funding a genuinely diverse range of programmes."

The politics behind the Bill

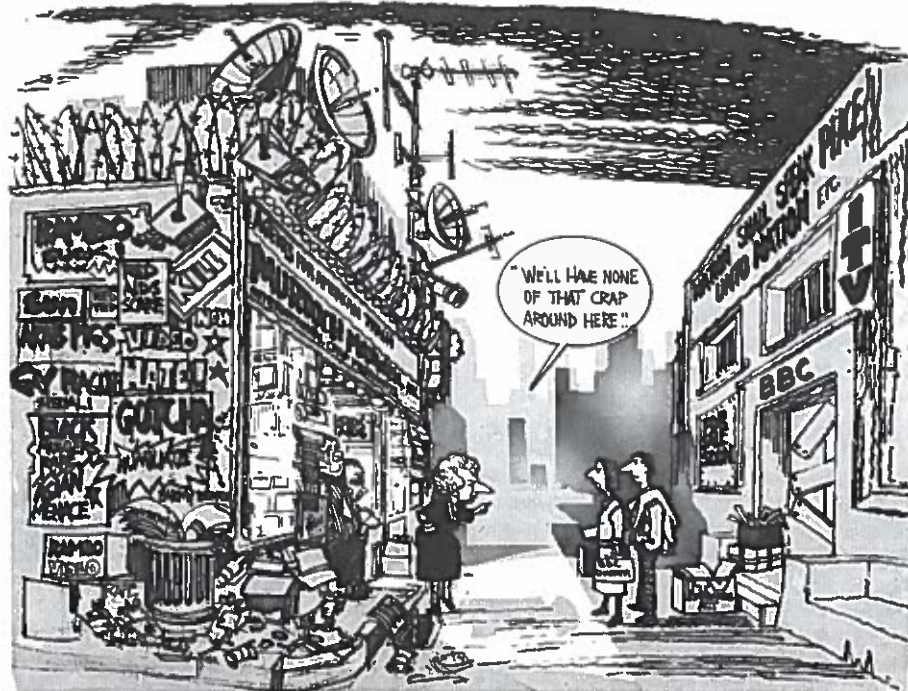
The government hopes to usher in a commercial TV system where the editorial and scheduling decisions rest with a new breed of broadcasters willing to put profit before service to the viewer. Bland mass market programming (quiz shows, soaps etc.) designed to win large audiences will drive news, current affairs and documentaries out of the schedules as the TV channels fight over the limited pool of advertising revenue.

Political interference with editorial decisions has already undermined confidence in our existing public service broadcasters. The Broadcasting Bill will gag or even abolish established broadcasters whose investigative programmes have been a thorn in the government's side.

Suppression

One low-point in a dismal decade of news suppression was the Special Branch seizure of the *Zircon* tapes from BBC Glasgow in 1987. This intimidation was offset by Thames TV's courageous showing of *Death on the Rock* over one year later - one of the few encouraging TV events of recent years. Other gloomy points have been the relentless press campaign against ITV/BBC, the government's success in delaying transmission of the *Real Lives* programme on Northern Irish politicians in 1985, Whitehall's legal action against Radio 4's *My Country Right or Wrong*, the Windlesham inquiry into *Death on the Rock*, the Home Office censorship of Northern Irish politicians, and the IBA's support for TVam despite the plummet in standards after most of the workforce were sacked.

The CPBF fears that the Broadcasting Bill will mean an end to broadcasting as a public service and the arrival of tabloid TV. In the coming months the Campaign will be putting its case to MPs and will publish an alternative agenda for the future of broadcasting.



Australian group to challenge censorship

A group of Australians concerned with the way in which the Australian media cover the conflict in Northern Ireland, are planning to launch a campaign to highlight censorship.

"No Australian media organisation, to my knowledge has a reporter based in Northern Ireland," says group spokesperson Peter Moss. "Many have London-based correspondents who occasionally cover an Irish story. The vast bulk of reports are taken from British-based wire services, British newspaper reports, BBC and ITV television and BBC radio. This in itself is a problem, as these reports are made in a British context and tend to reflect Britain's particular relationship with Ireland."

The groups major concern, however, is more specific. Since the British government banned the electronic media from interviewing representatives of a number of organisations including Sinn Fein, in October 1988, Australian television and radio has continued to carry material from British sources. Without public discussion or knowledge, the Australian media coverage of events and issues in Northern Ireland is now subjected to censorship which, even in Britain is widely opposed.

Campaign

"Our group plans to launch a campaign against this censorship in the New Year," says Moss. "We will argue that the electronic media in Australia should draw its Northern Ireland coverage from uncensored sources. If the censored British reports are to be used, then each item should be preceded by a 'health warning', stating that it has been compiled under British government censorship restrictions."

The group will be discussing these issues with the Australian Journalists Association, news departments of the various media outlets, politicians, and other bodies and individuals concerned with media freedom. They will also monitor print and broadcast media coverage. Peter Moss says he is confident that they can achieve some or all of their aims. "At the very least, we should be able to stimulate discussion and public awareness," he says.

The group is currently compiling a briefing kit to explain the background, facts and implications of the censorship. It will include material covering the lead up to October 1988, the wording and government justification for the restriction, and reports of how the censorship has worked in practice.

New video shows what cannot be broadcast

A new video, *The Irish Question*, spotlights Government censorship of television coverage of Ireland and includes important material which cannot now be broadcast.

The video features excerpts from three important television programmes which failed to reach the screens because of the present broadcasting climate. These are *Mother Ireland* - a documentary about the image of women in Ireland, *Behind The Mask* - an in depth exploration of the world of the IRA, and *16 Dead* - a harrowing account of innocent people who died after being hit by plastic bullets. The video investigates why the programmes failed to reach our screens. It also explores the broadcasting ban and the pressures which are restricting and distorting media coverage of Ireland.

Ian Stuttard, co-producer of the celebrated series, *The Troubles*, speaks about the worsening political climate of broadcast TV which, he claims, is making it almost impossible to produce programmes that give a true picture of the problems in Ireland.

Politicians, including Tony Benn and Ken Livingstone, describe the difficulties of getting a fair hearing in the media for the Irish question. Liz Curtis, author of *The Propaganda War*, explains the history of bias and distortion which has characterised the coverage of Ireland.

The video explores the wide disparity between Britain's portrayal of Ireland and the international view, and looks at the worrying implications Government



censorship has for civil liberties and democratic freedoms in Britain as a whole.

Says one programme-maker: "Since the troubles began there has been restricted coverage of the Irish situation, but the current climate makes it impossible to produce programmes that reflect the realities of what is going on. This makes a mockery of the idea of a free press and objective television coverage."

The full price of the video is £99. Trade Unionists and political groups can buy it at a special discount price of £29.50 (not including VAT). The video is available directly from TV Choice Ltd at 80 St. Martin's Lane, London WC2N 4AA. Tel: 01 379 0873/0263.

Copies of the video are also available for hire from CPBF. For details contact National Office.

Court turns down NUJ appeal

On 6 December, the Court of Appeal dismissed the application by members of the NUJ that the Government's ban on 'actuality' broadcasts with Sinn Fein and 10 other organisations was unlawful.

However, in a lengthy judgement the Court did say that the ban had 'damaged the reputation of the BBC and IBA by compromising their independence from the government of the day'.

Far more contentious was the Court's

Award for damages

A Co Armagh man recently received a record £135,000 damages when the Dublin High Court agreed that he had been libelled by the *Daily Mirror* newspaper.

Francis McNamee took action after a *Daily Mirror* report on 20 October 1987 of his brother's trial in London on charges of conspiring to cause explosions, falsely claimed that he and another brother were active IRA members.

claim that the European Convention on Human Rights, which formed part of the Journalists appeal could not be considered in relation to the case - despite the fact that Britain has been a signatory to the Convention since 1951! Perhaps recognising the dodgy ground they were on, the Appeal judges granted leave to appeal to the House of Lords against their decision.

Jake Ecclestone, Deputy General Secretary of the NUJ said he was 'disappointed, but not surprised by the decision'. Nevertheless, coming hard on the heels of the Appeal Court's refusal to overturn a High Court order that *Engineer* journalist William Goodwin must turn over notes which could identify the person who leaked to him details of a company's finances, this was another blow to press freedom.

As always the biggest impact of these decisions will not be on the stories which get suppressed but on those which will never be written because broadcasters and journalists fear the consequences of doing their jobs properly.

Alternative press enquiry set up

In its submission to the Calcutt Committee on Privacy and Related Matters the CPBF warned that it was essential that any enquiry into the Press at this stage should not be seen as an attempt to "defuse the growing calls for improvements in the media without any genuine desire to address those demands".

Building on its success with the two Private Member's Bills on the Right to Reply, the CPBF is now responding to the danger of Calcutt becoming a sop to the critics of the Press by launching its own alternative enquiry.

The enquiry will consist of two stages. The first will be the formal announcement and the calling for and collection of evidence which will take place in the New Year. We hope to place the call in as many local newspapers as possible as well as notifying various organisations and hope that the responses will come from all over the country.

The second stage will be the consideration of the findings and, we hope, their eventual publication in booklet form later in 1990. At the same time as the national enquiry and in conjunction with it, regional groups of the CPBF will organise local

meetings and events associated with the investigation leading, we hope to local and regional reports.

The final national enquiry will be conducted by a Steering Committee of National Committee members (at this stage a sub-committee of the NC is undertaking the preliminary work) and we hope it will be sponsored by a number of well known individuals and organisations.

The CPBF enquiry will go further than Calcutt, ensuring that our reservations about the government's remit are answered. In the Campaign's submission to Calcutt, six recommendations about the conduct of the Committee were made. That the enquiry should be:

- Independent of government;
- Impartial;
- Public - taking findings from members of the public and organisations, including the holding of 'listening' meetings;
- Representative - reflecting the diverse nature of British society;
- Forward looking - producing solutions rather than merely another analysis of the problem;
- Wide-ranging - expanding its remit to include broadcasting and to examine the question of the impact of patterns of

ownership and proprietorial control.

In addition to these primary concerns was the feeling that the government had allowed too little time for the collation of evidence. In addition we believe that not enough attention was given to the success of the campaign for a statutory Right to Reply, and its popularity as a simple non-censorial measure, and too much weight given to the calls for a Right to Privacy with all the inherent risks of a law that protects the rich and powerful and the impact of pre-publication censorship.

The CPBF will attempt to answer these concerns by ensuring its enquiry abides by the terms laid down above and by allowing more time for the collection of evidence and the consideration of the findings.

The CPBF has won the argument on the Right to Reply - it is now essential that we take the campaign one stage further and ensure that the CPBF's recommendations for the wholesale reform of the media are kept on the agenda throughout the 1990's.

If any member of the Campaign has any ideas on the enquiry they can contact John Latham through the National Office.

'Scrap Bill' call to Labour 'Poor quality, less choice'

"As we expected, the Broadcasting Bill embodies the misguided thinking and proposals put down in the November 1988 White Paper," say the technicians union BETA.

They have rejected the government's basic contention - that broadcasting in the UK and the interests of viewers and listeners will be served by an attack on the public service concept, by deregulation, and by an apotheosis of the free market.

BETA general secretary Tony Hearn pointed out that although the Bill deals primarily with independent broadcasting, it forms part of a sustained government campaign whose central thrust is a critical attack on the BBC.

"BETA continues to condemn any proposal for the abandonment of the licence fee and for forcing the BBC down the subscription road. BETA believes that the BBC must be guaranteed adequate support from a licence fee that at the very least is related to increases in inflation," he said.

Amongst other criticisms, BETA:

- Condemns the intention to hand over the present efficiently-run and publicly-owned transmission network to monopolistic commercial interests;
- Condemns the restricted regulatory role of the ITC and its totally inadequate powers in respect of the appointment

of franchise-holders, ownership, and the monitoring of programme performance and networking;

● Continues to attack the principle of franchise allocation primarily on the grounds of finance rather than quality of service.

● Has serious reservations about the status of Channel 4 after the Bill is enacted;

● Is concerned about the role and statutory basis of the BSC, and its relationship with the broadcasters;

● Questions whether the government has in fact any strategy at all for the future of radio in the UK.

BETA particularly condemns the failure of the Bill to deal in any way with training. The union calls upon the government to make provision for the establishment of comprehensive training arrangements, financed by the broadcasting and film employers, to safeguard the future of the industry.

Together with ACTT, BETA will maintain the joint public service broadcasting campaign established by the two unions, and will seek to fight important aspects of the Bill and to amend others in the Bill's passage through parliament. BETA calls upon a future Labour government to be prepared to scrap any legislation that is enacted if the Bill is not fundamentally amended.

Responding to the publication of the Broadcasting Bill, ACTT General Secretary Alan Sapper said: "The Bill is a cynical and destructive piece of legislation. Auctioning TV franchises

will siphon resources from television into the Treasury, drastically reduce the range and quality of programmes, and choke off regional, specialist and minority interest output."

Bleak

"Starved of resources and undermined by the abolition of key regulatory demands, the future of British broadcasting looks bleak. Extra commercial radio and TV stations are no guarantee of choice or quality, and will cost viewers more than the current licence fee."

"The real danger lies in deregulation and the issue of ownership and control. By encouraging commercial exploitation of the airwaves the Government is displaying contempt for viewers, listeners and those working in the media."

"Broadcasting is a public service which should be accountable and accessible to everyone. Commercial companies must not be allowed to purchase such powers by bribing the Treasury."

BBFC says new video is blasphemous

Confidentiality and the British courts

Visions of Ecstasy is a new 18 minute film directed by Nigel Wingrove. Intended for the video 'sell through' market, the film was refused a certificate of classification in September by the British Board of Film Classification on the grounds that it was 'blasphemous'.

Wingrove has taken the decision to appeal and at the time of going to press a decision is pending. The last case heard under the blasphemy law was the *Gay News* case, involving an allegedly offensive poem; the only prosecution made under the law in the last sixty-seven years.

The appeal against the BBFC decision is supported by a number of organisations including the National Council of Civil Liberties and Article 19.

Frances d'Souza, director of Article 19 commented: "This ruling by the BBFC illustrates the dilemma surrounding the current blasphemy laws in the UK. These laws were originally framed in the 17th century to protect Christianity and as such were biased and do not reflect the multicultural society in which we now live." "To condemn any artistic work on the grounds of blasphemy is to use a form of censorship which is unacceptable in a free and democratic society."

Based on the story of a 16th Century nun, St. Theresa of Avila, the video includes material of an erotic nature, culminating finally in St. Theresa making love to a blood covered Christ.

Tackling TV racism

Coinciding with the re-screening of the BBC's *Black and White Media Shows* on TV racism, Race and Class have published the critical findings of media researcher, Keith Withall - 'How not to tackle racism on TV?' - Withall says the *Black and White Media Shows* are shallow and partial.

Without ever analysing racism in institutions (including TV) or anti-racism the shows concentrate on individual attitudes, argues Withall. This is an example, he says, of (the now discredited) techniques of racism awareness being transferred to the screen. The programmes are presented as fundamental self-criticism within television and an exercise in which viewers can participate, but in fact the format of the programmes is as controlled (and unquestioned), and the message as constructed, as in any standard programme.

"Like much liberal argument, the programmes fail to challenge the underlying ideology of TV institutions, and thus, while presenting a list of criticisms and complaints about

The recent case involving William Goodwin of the *Engineer*, has once again highlighted the problem with UK laws on confidentiality of sources. What distinguishes these from those in other countries is that there are no clear guidelines or principles which confine the arm of the law to cases involving serious crime.

This position was made worse by the 1981 Contempt of Court Act which states that:

"No court may require a person to disclose, nor is any person guilty of contempt of court for refusing to disclose, the source of information contained in a publication for which he is responsible unless it is established to the satisfaction of the Court that the disclosure is necessary in the interests of justice or national security or for the prevention of disorder or crime." (section 10)

The UK is a signatory to the European Convention on Human Rights which is the most developed regional instrument for press freedom and reiterates Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which guarantees the right of freedom of expression for everybody.

In Sweden freedom of the press was adopted in the 1766 Constitution - the earliest known legislation of its kind. In Sweden it is generally accepted, even by the judiciary, that the public's right to know takes precedence over law and order considerations.

Sweden has an 'obligation of silence'

television, they really fail to get to the heart of why TV in Britain so consistently insults or ignores black people and other minorities," Withall says.

The programmes not only concentrate on individual programme-makers and viewers' attitudes but fail to connect racism with class and gender. And they are silent on key questions such as censorship, the role and ideology of the state-appointed governors of the BBC and IBA, and selective about the aspects of racism they tackle. Discussion of media presentation of policing of black people is uncritical, the media depiction of fascists and racists is ignored.

Withall concludes that "*The Black and White Media Shows*" did not open up the debate on racism in the media; it helped to foreclose it. That closure needs to be challenged."

"How not to tackle racism on TV" appears in *Race and Class* Jan/March 1990 available from the Institute of Race Relations, 2-6 Leake, Street, London WC1X 9HS.

in its press freedom act which prohibits anyone who works in the production or publication of printed matter from disclosing anything he or she knows about the author or source of his or her information unless:

- The informer has waived the right to anonymity.
- A court decides it is in the general interest or the interest of individuals.
- Where the information would reveal crimes against the state such as high treason, espionage or incitement to riot or war.

To ignore this prohibition is a punishable offence in Sweden and very serious grounds are needed to infringe anonymity.

Privilege

In the US the Bill of Rights includes both the right of a free press and the right to a fair trial.

The idea that a reporter's privilege should be secured through state law has a long history and was first advanced in the late 19th Century in what has become known as 'shield laws'. Maryland in 1896 was the first state to incorporate these freedoms and since then 26 states have passed shield laws.

Two cases demonstrate the way in which they operate:

- In Massachusetts last year a police department paid a freelance photographer \$24,000 to settle his claim that his First Amendment rights were violated when he was arrested for taking pictures of a drink driving arrest.
- The Minnesota Appeals Court refused in September to overturn a \$200,000 damages award against two Minneapolis newspapers for publishing a source's name after a reporter had promised him confidentiality. One judge said "We do not think it is an undue burden to require the press to keep its promises."

Another case shows many parallels to the case of William Goodwin of *The Engineer*:

- The Philadelphia Enquirer was protected by Pennsylvania shield law from being compelled to reveal sources of information about defects in Bic cigarette lighters. But at the same time the court prohibited the newspaper from publishing information which was being obtained confidentially.

This is an area of the law which is in need of urgent reform. The right of a journalist to protect confidential sources is essential. Removal of this protection may mean issues of public concern never seeing the light of day.

Information provided by Article 19.

Book Reviews

Watching the World: Investigating Images - Working with pictures on an International Theme (£13.00), **Aspects of Africa** - Questioning Our Perceptions (£12.00), **Picturing People** - Challenging Stereotypes (£4.00), **News from Nicaragua** - Fact or Fiction: A Case Study (£5.00), **Whose News?** - Ownership and Control of the News Media (£5.00). All titles are produced by the Development Education Project (DEP) and are available from the CPBF.

The broad aims of the DEP in producing *Watching the World* were to explore how our perceptions of the world are created, challenged or re-affirmed by the media, and to promote a critical awareness amongst teachers and students of the representation of people and cultures. A huge task to undertake but one that largely succeeds by concentrating on particular themes and examples.

The core unit is *Investigating Images*, a pack of photographs and colour slides on the theme of buying and selling in different parts of the world. By looking at images in their context, students both widen their knowledge of world cultures and develop skills in analysing the 'construction of media products'.

As with each of the five units, *Investigating Images* contains exercises to copy such as 'image analysis' worksheets; advice for teachers on how to evaluate classroom activities; and back-up 'factual' information with useful guides to further resources. Although based in humanities, the methods and materials used cross curriculum boundaries and are adaptable beyond the 13-16 target age group. In addition, the authors attempt to present all material in a mould that challenges sexist and racist stereotypes.

Aspects of Africa, for instance, uses colour slides and worksheets to present aspects of life in African countries. The unit aims to compare and counter mass media representation of Africa as a starving continent torn apart by violence and guerrilla wars. Instead, we focus upon images of work, education, and everyday life in African towns and villages. The text would benefit from examples of African media images of itself, although the authors do cover the problems surrounding the 'white European' perspective of the photographers.

Picturing People offers a definition of 'stereotype' by investigating media images of young people in Britain and abroad. Under scrutiny are negative mass media representations of youth, gender roles ascribed by youth magazines, and a pictorial history of young people at school in different cultures.

By way of contrast, young people look at their own self-image and criticise

media coverage of their interests - highlighting that journalists, not young people, determine and perpetuate stereotypes. One hilarious exercise looks at images of Britain from young people in the Netherlands: all Sky TV, football violence and royalty!

News from Nicaragua explores the way that news is gathered and introduces the concept of bias. Without attempting to provide a 'balance', the unit looks at how the media has influenced opinion through distortion and 'disinformation'.

On a parallel with current CPBF thinking is *Whose News*, exploring how ownership and control of the media influences the reporting of news. A multiple choice game looks at criteria used by journalists covering news stories, enabling students to analyse

the politics and economics of UK national newspapers.

Another simulation game invents media coverage of a fictional Central American president assassinated by US intelligence. Students become the news team, putting together storyboard reports with information form press releases, top secret memo's, news agencies, libraries, and messages between the different departments of the TV company.

The games are imaginative and potentially exciting in a classroom setting, although the teacher may need to adapt some of the over-complicated details. With the unit is the CPBF researched poster 'Who owns what?' and consultation paper to end concentration of media ownership.

With the growth of media studies in schools, the DEP have produced a well-researched and imaginative resource to aid the teacher.

Steven Gray

The Drama of Cleveland

Pauline Illsley

A joint publication from the Standing Committee on Sexually Abused Children and the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom. Published September 1989.

Events in Cleveland and the issue of child sexual abuse continue to be a focus of public attention and passionate debate. *The Drama of Cleveland* examines press coverage of events at the height of the controversy in June-July 1987 and reflects on developments since then.

The sexual abuse of children is increasingly acknowledged as a disturbing reality in our society. But *The Drama of Cleveland* concludes that press treatment hindered rather than helped our understanding of what happened in Cleveland.

The doctor who brought the issue to public attention was scapegoated, information distorted, distractions created and the crisis turned into a conflict between personalities and institutions.

The children themselves and those who abuse them were virtually forgotten by a press more concerned with sensationalising events than with dealing responsibly or thoughtfully with an explosive situation.

Yes, rush me _____ copies of *The Drama of Cleveland*

Name _____

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Rates: single copy £3.00 + 28p p&p. Bulk order rates on request

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Labour's blueprint for press reform

MARK FISHER, MP, Labour's spokesperson on media policy, outlines what the Party would do if elected to government to arrest the decline in newspaper standards.

AS WE WAIT for the reports from David Calcutt QC and the Office of Fair Trading, many will agree with Tim Renton MP, who as Home Office Minister, said in April that the Press was on probation, or with Hugh Cudlipp, when he claimed "the status of newspapers has never been lower".

The spotlight glares on the national, tabloid Press and the empires of Mr Murdoch and Mr Maxwell.

It is not simply the rise in the number of complaints received by the Press Council from 568 in 1979 to 1,421 in 1988. The Elton John libel case which cost the *Sun* £1 million, and Wendy Henry's style of editing and reporting, whether on the Falklands war widows or on tiny Royals, provide plenty of evidence for any Press probation officer. While a recent Gallup poll showed even Tory MP's are worried about cross-media ownership.

The classic Press defence is that there's nothing wrong that a bit of self-regulation can't put right. Wendy Henry has been sacked or, sacrificed; few take the *Sunday Sport* or the *News of the World* seriously; even the *Sun* can claim to be reforming itself in recent months with rather a different treatment of groups such as blacks and gays.

The Press Council, under Louis Blom-Cooper, is introducing a new improved system (and *really meaning* it this time), the editors of all national newspapers are backing a code of ethics, and everything is lovely, isn't it? Well up to a point, Lord Cooper.

You don't have to be a professional sceptic to need rather more convincing. It was under the owners of a self-regulatory regime that these abuses took place and standards slumped. Groups like victims of the *Sun* show that the power of the Press still crushes some individuals.



"Maxwell...in newspapers because he wants to communicate."

Perhaps we should wait and see what effect this new bout of self-regulation has, and what the Calcutt Committee proposes. But the Press's problems are not confined to foot-in-the-door journalistic techniques, or the cynical manipulation of libel laws in the battle for circulation and profits.

There are wider questions going unanswered. In whose interests is the growing concentration of ownership in our Press and media? What pressure is journalism under from ownership, and from Government? In short, how free is our Press?

The question is important because what is at stake is not just the health of the Press, but the health of our democracy, in which the Press and broadcasting media are powerful central elements setting the news agenda and determining the quality of public debate.

That role is all the more important in a democracy such as ours where there are no checks and balances on a Government with a clear majority in Parliament.

We need journalists to scrutinise on our behalf, and to ask awkward questions, free from the pressure of government and vested interests.

Pressure

The editorial pressure from proprietors is indirect and hard to identify, but Messrs Murdoch, Maxwell and Black are in newspapers, rather than estate agency because they want to communicate.

Although their editors would hotly deny that there is day-to-day interference, Rowlands use of the *Observer* to pursue his complaints against the Fayed brothers, or Murdoch's of his News International titles to wage a long campaign against the BBC and ITV and now BSB, suggest that there is a problem.

This problem is now made more acute by the growing concentration of ownership. Of the 11 national dailies, seven are owned by four companies. Of

the ten national Sunday newspapers, four are owned by two companies. When circulation is considered, the position is even more extreme with three companies (News International, the Mirror Group, and United Newspapers) selling 70% of all national dailies and 80% of all Sundays. For the consumer this does not offer an enormous choice. For the proprietor, it does offer enormous power.

When a proprietor also takes a substantial stake in newspaper distribution, as Murdoch has done in the UK through TNT, he is able to vary the terms of trade to affect significantly the economics of the Press.

This economic and editorial power, combined with growing cross-media interests, gives added significance to concentration of ownership. It's a situation that is more likely to benefit shareholders, rather than readers.

But if the editorial impact of the owners is hard to identify, it has been only too easy to see the footprints of the Government on the back of the media of recent years.

The Guardian, *The Independent* and the *Observer* have all been subject to injunctions to prevent the publication of a news story that was common knowledge throughout the world.

Mrs Thatcher may have made a fool of herself over this, but her determination to restrict comment is in deadly earnest, witness the Sinn Fein ban; the rubbishing of the Windlesham Report on *Death on the Rock*; the new Official Secrets Act and the raids on the office of the BBC in Glasgow, the *New Statesman* and on the house of journalist Duncan Campbell, in search of documents and film connected with the BBC series *Secret Society*.

It amounts to a fairly systematic campaign of criticism, bullying and threats, designed to inhibit investigative reporting.

So what's new, the cynic asks? Governments have always resented the media, even if they haven't been as overt as the present one. Why and in what ways, will a Labour Government be different?

For a start, Labour has learnt a great deal from observing the Thatcher government, not least the malign effect (both direct and through self-censorship) that is caused by government interference in the editorial context of the media. We see our media policy strictly confined to creating an overall framework so as to ensure editorial independence and a wide range of news and views for the public, governing conduct and ownership, but having no role whatsoever in matters of content.

The key element in that framework would be legislation to strengthen the position of editors and journalists by means of a Freedom of Information Act and reform of the new Official Secrets Act.

Our legal system imposes far greater constraints on journalists than those which exist in the United States, and this undoubtedly inhibits investigative reporting. It is unlikely that Watergate could have been pursued and exposed in Britain, or that the Tory Government's involvement in the Westland Affair would have remained publicly undocumented in the USA.

Democracy

Our two countries judge differently the difficult balance to be drawn between the right to privacy and the public's right to know. In our view we will be a more open democracy if the Press has greater access to information.

On ethical standards, we will have the opportunity to study the recommendations of the Calcutt Committee and to see what steps, if any the Government takes and how the Press reacts, but we see little option other than regulation through a statutory Press Commission, whose members will be appointed by the Government on the nomination of the industry itself, the unions and consumer, professional and voluntary bodies.

The Commission would be responsible for Press guidelines on matters of public

interest such as individual right of reply, chequebook journalism and other abuses. If necessary an ombudsman for the Press would be appointed.

On ownership, the next Labour Government will ensure that current concentrations of ownership are broken up, and that potential concentrations are prevented. Other countries offer a variety of methods for us to consider.

In France, the Commission Nationale de la Communication et des Liberties (CNCL) was set up in 1986 to administer anti-trust media laws which prohibit ownership of newspapers with more than 30% of combined national and regional sales. West Germany works through the Central Government's Cartel Office,

while in the USA, the FCC forbids the ownership of a major newspaper and TV station in the same city.

These options, based in the main on market shares or equity holdings or nationality all have disadvantages. We suspect that a simpler yardstick such as a limit on titles may be more effective, combined with restrictions on cross-media ownership.

Whatever the final details, Britain needs to bring itself into line with other comparable countries, all of whom have specific legislation which seeks to ensure that ownership of their Press and broadcasting media is diverse, not concentrated.

We have some of the finest journalists, editors and photographers in the world. That potential coupled with the fact the present financial/advertising strength of the industry should result in a Press to be proud of. It is ridiculous that we should be scrabbling about, timidly recoiling from tackling the problems and practices which tarnish our Press's reputation.

The present Government has wrung its hands for 10 years but refused to act. The next Labour Government's package of reforms will, we believe, strengthen journalistic standards and ensure a more diverse Press, free from both Government pressure and proprietorial interference. That is the Press the public deserves to get each day.

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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

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CONFERENCE AND AGM DETAILS

Details of this years Conference/AGM are as follows.

The Conference, 'Tabloid Television: The Broadcasting Bill and After' will be held on Saturday 7 April 1990. Registration will take place from 9.30 am with the conference starting at 10.30 am. The format will be an opening session with the following speakers: Roy Hattersley MP, Tony Hearn, BETA, Alan Sapper, ACTT, and, Marta Wöhrle, Editor of Broadcast. The afternoon session will consist of workshops and a final panel session. The fees are £5 for individuals and £15 for delegates from organisations.

The AGM. will take place on Sunday 8 April 1990 commencing at 10.30am and ending at 4pm approx. Motions must

be submitted to the CPBF National Office no later than 23 February 1990 along with nominations for the National Council.

Delegates wishing to register for either event should contact Mick Gosling at the National Office. Venues for both events will be announced in the near future. Both will be in central London.

CABINET SCREENED

Cabinet - the 'missing' programme from Duncan Campbell's *Secret Society* series - was shown to MPs at the House of Commons in November at a screening organised by CPBF and MPTam Dayeell. The programme - which looks at the workings of the Cabinet and includes damaging material about how the Thatcher Government has manipulated information for political ends - was never shown by the BBC.

This despite four remakes of the film and the reworking of the script twenty-three times to meet objections at various levels of the Corporation. The BBC lawyers gave it a clean bill of health. Copies of the fourth edit of the fourth draft are available from the CPBF for anyone wanting to know what they're not being allowed to see. Hire fee negotiable. Contact the National Office.

PART-TIME WORKER

Last Autumn CPBF decided to take on a part-time worker for a six-month contract to help clear a back log of administrative tasks which had been building up in the office. John Latham was appointed to the post and his contract ends in March. Now the National Council is to review the possibility of offering another contract from March and is likely soon to looking for applicants. John Latham is already committed elsewhere so will not be able to continue. Write to or phone the office for further details.

ACCOMMODATION NEEDED

CPBF is desperately trying to find a new home following the decision of the Roundtree Trust to close 9 Poland Street. The Campaign has to vacate its present office by June 1990 and has yet to find alternative accommodation. If any

supporters know of office space in the central London area which is cheap - or better still free - please contact the office.

FREE PRESS SCHEDULE

Owing to delays in the production of *Free Press* 55 and our wish to report on the Broadcasting Bill, the National Committee decided in November not to publish a December issue of *Free Press*. This issue, No. 56, is the first of 1990 and we hope that the early start in the year will solve the problem of late arrival of issues. Although supporters will have only received five issues in 1989, no one loses as subscriptions are based on six issues of *Free Press*. In effect, supporters are getting two months of extra membership free. We apologise if the non-arrival of the December issue caused any alarm.

PERGAMON STRIKE

Twenty-three members of the NUJ sacked for going on a one day strike at Pergamon Press Oxford, have been in dispute since 24 May last year. The strike was the culmination of a 5-month dispute which started when the company sacked an NUJ member without going through any agreed procedures.

When the NUJ put the sacking into dispute they were told that the sacked member had no right to be represented by the union because the NUJ was only recognised in the Journals Production Department. This meant that two-thirds of the chapel, the members working in Books, Editorial and Marketing Departments, were effectively denied the right to union representation.

The strikers have waged a determined campaign against Maxwell winning the support of Labour's National Executive, of the TUC, and of labour movement organisations across Europe. Messages of support and donations should be sent to: Pergamon Press NUJ Chapel, c/o 60 Cricket Road, Oxford OX4 3DQ.

Edited for the National Committee by Simon Collings. Copy for Free Press 57 should arrive at the office by 11 February 1990.

JOIN CPBF HERE

PLEASE TICK APPROPRIATE BOX

- a) Individual Membership £10 p.a.
- b) Unwaged £2 p.a.
- c) Household (2 copies of FREE PRESS) £15 p.a.
- d) Supporting membership £20 p.a.
 (includes FREE CPBF publications)
- e) Institutional membership £20 p.a.
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- f) Less than 500 members £15 p.a.
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- h) 1,000 to 10,000 members £40 p.a.
- i) 10,000 to 50,000 members £95 p.a.
- j) 50,000 to 100,000 members £185 p.a.
- k) Over 100,000 members £375 p.a.

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Name/s:

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