

FREE 30p
PRESS

JOURNAL OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR
PRESS AND BROADCASTING FREEDOM
No. 57 March/April 1990

Alternative media enquiry— what you can do:

- Help publicise the enquiry as widely as possible—through unions, community groups, etc., and through the media.
- Help organize local meetings where people can come along and give evidence.
- Write in to the CPBF office with examples of media behaviour or practice which have concerned you personally.

For fuller details turn to page 7.

Anti-porn Bill launched

The Bill of Location of Pornographic Materials was recently reintroduced to the House of Commons as a Presentation Bill by Dawn Primarolo, Labour MP for Bristol. The bill, the culmination of a great deal of research by the CPBF Women's Section, has all-party support, and sponsors from a wide spectrum of political opinion.

It limits the sale of pornography (in print or video form) to outlets licensed for that purpose, the licence being obtained, for a fairly expensive price, from the local authority. Heavy fines, set in Court, are to be imposed for transgression.

The bill has three great strengths. Firstly, it tackles the problem of pornography without the use of censorship. As Dawn Primarolo stated at the bill's launch, 'This (ie, censorship), is an area we do not wish to enter.' Neither the production nor the retail of pornography will be stopped by law; but the retail will be strictly controlled.

Secondly, the administration of the law will be in the hands of the local authorities. The record of the police in administering the Obscene Publications Act has not been good for gay men and lesbians, and we consider local, elected bodies to be more appropriate for this kind of monitoring.

Thirdly, the bill provides a legal definition of pornography for the first time; namely material 'which, for the purpose of sexual arousal or titillation, depicts women, or parts of women's bodies, as objects, things or commodities, or in sexually degrading poses or being subjected to violence.'

When the bill becomes law, this definition will have to be tested in the Courts, which may throw up some interesting results.

Reception

The bill was launched with a press conference in the House of Commons on 23 January. It was extremely well-attended, with almost all of the national dailies represented, and a good many regional papers too, as well as the BBC and some independent broadcasting companies.

The time is right for the Bill of Location. Campaigning work by the CPBF Women's Section and the Campaign Against Pornography has heightened awareness of how oppressive pornography is, as did Clare Short's Page Three Bill last year.

Surveys done by *Woman* and *Cosmopolitan* magazines have clearly shown that the vast majority of women hate pornography. Eighty per cent in the *Cosmopolitan* survey (published March 1990) supported legislation to curb pornography. And an all-party group will shortly be introducing a bill into Parliament to strengthen the law against child pornography.

As Dawn Primarolo stated at the Press Conference, the Bill of Location is a bill to protect women's interests. The debate around pornography usually revolves around issues of freedom: the freedom of those who want to produce it, sell it and consume it. This bill is for the freedom of a fourth group: the freedom of women from the oppression which it imposes.

Pornography is not harmless fun, nor is it about love and sex. It is about power and consumption, the objectification of women to be bought and consumed. It is loveless and ugly. It is also very big business.

In the States, pornography yields a bigger profit than the film and TV industries combined. Even here, there are 73 print titles explicitly devoted to pornography—and that is without considering those which include 'soft porn' as part of their format.

This bill aims to make pornography less acceptable, and it does so without censorship. The media's welcoming reception has recognised that fact.

ACTION: Please write to your MP, asking her/him to support the Bill of Location of Pornographic Materials.

**PUBLIC CONFERENCE -
BROADCASTING
IN THE 90'S**
- the democratic alternative
**Saturday 7th April 1990
10 a.m. Transport House
Smith Square London SW1**

*Debate*Workshops*Question & Answer Session*
Speakers include :

Roy Hattersley Labour Party
Marta Wohrle Broadcast Magazine
Harry Conroy NUJ
Tony Hearn BETA
Alan Sapper ACTT

Fees : Individual delegates £5 (£2.50 unwaged)
Official delegates £15 (£10 if less than 1000 members)
Registration : CPBF, 9 Poland St., London W1V 3DG 01-437-2795

Also inside: *Morning Star* p. 2, Hurd ban p. 3, Broadcasting Bill pp. 4 & 5, Cleveland p. 7

Appeal launched to save *Morning Star*

TONY CHATER, Editor of the *Morning Star*, reports on the crisis now facing the paper.

When the Soviet Union cut its 12,000 daily order to 6,000, giving only six days notice of the change to take effect on 1 January 1990, the prospects for the *Morning Star* looked dim.

At a stroke, the paper's income for this year was slashed by £400,000, a loss which could not be absorbed.

The management committee of the co-operative which produces the *Morning Star*, the People's Press Printing Society, met in emergency session to take hard but necessary decisions.

The normally 12-page *Morning Star* was to be cut back temporarily to eight pages and up to 25 jobs were to go, although these were covered totally by voluntary or over-age severance.

At a staff consultation meeting to examine the crisis, the prevailing mood was positive despite the sombre news.

During discussion of the paper's financial plight, a proposal was made to call on the labour and democratic movement to contribute to a £150,000 special appeal fund for investment in high-tech to cut costs.

The proposal was backed enthusiastically and was given immediate effect.

Staff members and the *Morning Star* National Union of Journalists chapel were among the earliest contributors of the appeal.

Support for the hi-tech fund has come from Labour, Liberal and Tory MPs and several trade union leaders including Brenda Dean, Harry Conroy, John Edmonds and Ron Todd.

John Pilger, Derek Jarman, the Bishop of Manchester, Bruce Kent, Lord Donald Soper, Wendy Savage, Robert Wyatt, Bryan Hayes, Mike Harding and Paul Hill of the Guildford Four are also backing the appeal.

Why should such a broad spectrum of public opinion have been so ready to back a paper, which is maligned by some in the labour movement as 'narrow, sectarian and outdated'?

Obviously those who see themselves as socialists recognise that the *Morning Star* is the only daily paper in Britain which has a socialist orientation and makes its pages available to different viewpoints within the Labour and trade union movement.

But the importance of the *Morning Star* goes far beyond the ranks of trade unionists and Socialists.

Everyone believing that the vitality of a truly free press is a crucial part of democracy has a stake in defending 'the one that's different.'

The *Morning Star* has been the only daily paper to support unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Similarly, it has been alone in opposing surrender of British parliamentary sovereignty to the bureaucrats of Brussels, opposing wage restraint (no matter what government holds office) and backing those fighting to destroy apartheid.

People may not agree with these or others of the paper's political stances, but surely the essence of a free press is that we should have a variety of editorial opinions to choose from.

If you believe that, you should be backing the *Morning Star's* future.

In the short term, that means contributing to the paper's hi-tech appeal. In the long run, only a much higher daily circulation in Britain can guarantee that it survives as Britain's left-wing alternative daily.

• Donations to the *Morning Star's* £150,000 hi-tech appeal can be sent to John Waylett at 74 Luke Street, London EC2A 4PY, with cheques made payable to PPPS.

The January National Council meeting of the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom backed the *Morning Star's* £150,000 Emergency Appeal and approved unanimously a statement drawn up by CPBF National Organiser, Mick Gosling.

Alone amongst the natural press the *Morning Star* has consistently supported the CPBF. The NC wished them well in their appeal.

Cooperation against censorship

Glasnost appears to be the order of the day in the human rights/anti-censorship community! At the request of Andrew Puddephat, the newly appointed Director of Liberty (NCCL), Article 19, the international centre on censorship, arranged a meeting in late January between a number of groups including the CPBF to discuss joint projects.

The National Union of Journalists followed in early February, convening a similar meeting to plan activities for the second anniversary of the Northern Ireland broadcasting ban this October.

Meanwhile, the all-industry censorship

Gay hoax complaint upheld

The Press council has partly upheld a complaint against the *Daily Star*—because a columnist made an inaccurate assumption about Manchester's gay community.

A comment under the heading of 'Rat of the week' in Patricia Mansfield's *Star* column said members of the gay clubs and bars in Manchester's red light district had been behaving like real rats.

The writer claimed that they had been wasting firemen's valuable time and taxpayer's money by making hoax calls; when the firemen arrived all they got were wolf whistles and men blowing them kisses.

Mr Alan Horsfall of Little Hulton in Manchester complained in September that there was no evidence that a member of the gay community made the calls, the piece implied that gay bars were appropriately and usually located in red light districts, and that the column took the newspaper's 'long-standing campaign of denigration of homosexuals to a new depth in that it seemed to be based on malicious speculation.'

The *Star's* editor, Mr Brian Hitchen said he believed Miss Mansfield made a 'reasonable assumption that it was a homosexual who made the calls.'

Mr Horsfall then complained to the Press council, saying that it seemed to be flying in the face of reason to suppose that hoax calls made to inconvenience an already unpopular and harassed minority would be made by the minority itself, and this was supported by the Council's adjudication, which said it was equally likely that the calls were made maliciously in attempts to embarrass the clubs and their members. (Source: *The Pink Paper*)

group convened by the ACTT is discussing the possibility of a major season of censored films at the National Film Theatre to coincide with the anniversary of the ban and a parallel week of activity against censorship in South Africa.

Finally, Index on Censorship, the international magazine for free expression, is seeking assistance from the CPBF in reporting any incidents of censorship which come our way. Brief reports will be used in the 'Index' section, longer pieces in 'News' and 'Notes'.

Continued on p. 6

Meeting sought over ban

The Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom are demanding a meeting with Home Secretary David Waddington to challenge the continued imposition of the broadcasting ban on Irish organisations.

The Government showed no signs of lifting the ban when opposition MPs challenged its validity during the committee stage of the Broadcasting Bill.

Trades unions leaders, including Alan Sapper (ACTT) and Tony Hearn (BETA) are supporting the CPBF call, which comes after a dismissive reply to the 5,000 signature petition delivered to the Prime Minister on the first anniversary of the ban last year.

According to the Home Office 'the Government does not believe the (ban) represents a serious diminution of civil liberties'. The reply stresses that the ban has 'the support of the House of Commons' and 'has been upheld in the High Court'. The Home Secretary intends to keep the ban for 'as long as (it) is needed'.

The CPBF are planning to publish a booklet about the ban and official manipulation of media coverage of Ireland later this year.

The response to the petition

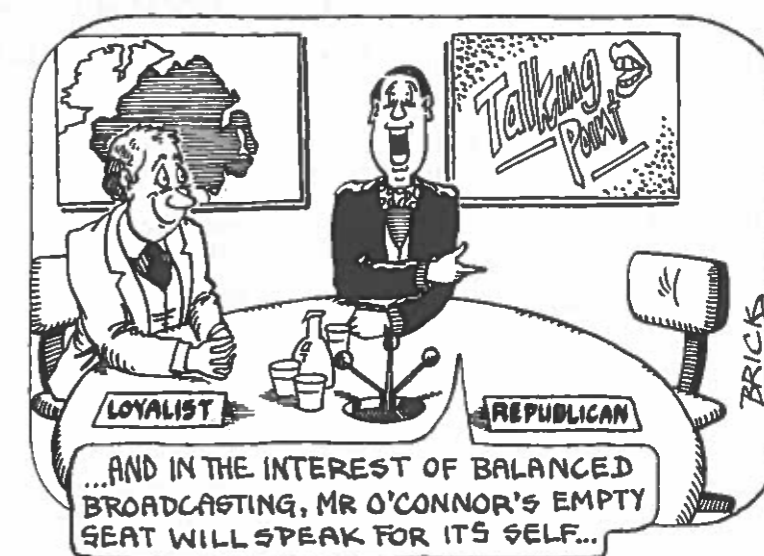
'Thank you for sending the Prime Minister your Free Speech on Ireland Petition, with approximately 5,000 signatures.

Your petition has been passed to the Home Office for reply as the Government Department with overall responsibility for broadcasting policy.

I am sorry for the delay in replying. 1. The decision to impose such restrictions was taken only after long and careful consideration by the Government and its operation will be kept under review

In arriving at the decision, the Government concluded that those who plan and execute acts of terrorism and those who support them, cannot in all circumstances be accorded exactly the same rights as the rest of the population. This is a principle which has been endorsed by Parliament on many occasions.

2. In the particular case of broadcasting, the Government's view was that those who practice and support terrorism and violence should not be allowed direct access to radio and television screens in the United Kingdom.



I should emphasize that the directions do not restrict the second-hand reporting of events. The terrorists' activities and the words they utter can still be reported, just as they are in the written press.

3. There were several reasons behind the Government's decision. Firstly, the appearance of these spokesmen causes considerable offence to many viewers—and in the case of those in Northern Ireland who are closer to the problem, the offensiveness must be intensified.

Secondly, direct access to the broadcasting media gives those who use it a spurious authority and respectability. Terrorists and their apologists have taken advantage of these opportunities to exploit and manipulate the media.

4. Some people argue that the decision plays into the hands of the terrorists. On the contrary, the directions will close to them a major avenue for propaganda, with beneficial results for the whole of the United Kingdom.

The public are well aware of what the terrorists and their apologists stand for.

5. The Government believes that it is simply not acceptable for the public platform of television and radio to be used in a way that causes offence to the vast majority of people and on occasion to threaten and intimidate law abiding citizens.

6. For the reasons outlined above, the Government does not believe that the Notices represent a serious diminution of civil liberties.

They are a limited measure aimed

at a specific source of harm, they have received the support of the House of Commons and the Home Secretary intends that they should remain in force for as long as they are needed. This decision has been upheld in the High Court.'

McGrory wins libel award

Mr Paddy McGrory, the Belfast solicitor who represented the families of the three IRA members killed by the SAS in Gibraltar at the inquest, has been awarded substantial damages for libel against three newspapers.

The *Star*, *Today* and the *Sunday Express* made an out of court settlement on the second day of a hearing involving *Today*. The sum, which was not given, is believed to be in six figures.

Mr McGrory's case revolved around two items in the *Today* of 6 July. One was a headline which read: 'SAS must face provo lawyers, says coroner.'

The second was an editorial which stated: 'To expose undercover British soldiers to lawyers who are effectively promoting the IRA's propaganda war would be to condemn these men and their families to a lifetime under constant threat of IRA revenge.'

Mr Frazer Elliott, QC, read out agreed apologies for the three papers.

Police powers and the Bill

Tucked away at the back of the Broadcasting Bill are measures granting the police power to enter a broadcasting station and seize film, tapes, or any other material they believe may either be in breach of the law or likely, if broadcast, to breach the law.

Ostensibly these powers relate to the extension of the Obscene Publications, Public Order, and Defamation Acts to cover radio and TV. In effect they represent a frightening extension of state censorship, since any police officer above the rank of superintendent may exercise the power on their own initiative (or after a phone call from Mrs Whitehouse or anyone else).

There are summary fines for non-compliance, and the police have the right to make copies of the material whether or not it has been broadcast.

Following representations from the Campaign for Press Broadcasting Freedom, the NCCL have briefed lawyers to devise amendments, and both the media unions and opposition parties have raised objections to the clauses.

Now leading figures in broadcasting, including C4's Michael Grade and the IBA, have added their voices to the protest. Unless the Committee stage is guillotined it looks as if the Minister will have to climb down over the offending clauses.

Government gives little away on broadcasting

MIKE JEMPSON reports on the progress of the Broadcasting Bill through committee and on aspects of the proposals which are still giving cause for concern.

Two months into the committee stage of the Broadcasting Bill and there is little sign of a shift in the Government's determination to handover the airwaves to 'free market' forces.

The vast majority of Opposition amendments have been rejected. Even Home Office Minister David Mellor's much publicised 'concession' that the quality of applications for C3 TV franchises could be more important than the size of cash bids still ensures that vast sums will be siphoned out of programme-making by the Treasury.

Successful lobbying has resulted in Ministerial agreement that religious and children's broadcasting should feature in C3 schedules. Social action programmes, drama, and documentaries should also be on the shopping list that the Independent TV Commission will expect of C3 franchise hopefuls.

A more telling measure of the Government's mood came in the

Minister's reply to an amendment from five Tory backbenchers.

They wanted to impose a contractual obligation on media workers, including journalists, to abide by the conditions of the licence agreement between the ITC and their employers. Mellor hastily assured his colleagues that such heavy-handed measures were unnecessary. TV companies keen to retain their licences could be relied upon to keep their staff under control, he said.

Ownership

The Minister has resisted all attempts to extend restrictions on cross media ownership to cover Rupert Murdoch's burgeoning empire. The Bill carefully exempts Sky TV from the restraints that will apply to all other broadcasting and print proprietors.

The Government's justification is that Murdoch has invested many millions to exploit satellite technology and create 1,000 jobs which would be at risk if the legislation were to have retrospective effect.

Battling against such intransigence has been a talented Labour team led by NUJ member Robin Corbett. It includes Mark Fisher, Norman Buchan, former ACTT equality officer Dianne Abbott and the BETA sponsored Tony Banks, who has kept the Committee chortling with his irreverent and often telling interventions.

Mr Mellor accepted their demand that protective arrangements should be made for staff who lose their jobs when the ITC and the Radio Authority take over from the IBA next year.

He has acknowledged their arguments on other matters, including protection for regional identities and TV production, but insists that the Government will make substantive changes at the Report Stage of the Bill. Most of the minister's own amendments so far have been on drafting and technical matters.

Labour, SLD and Plaid Cymru MPs have been supplied with briefings, and draft amendments by the ACTT/BETA-sponsored Public Service Broadcasting Campaign, which has also kept in touch with the many lobbying groups concerned about the impact of the Bill.

Most Tory backbenchers seem more content to catch up on constituency mail than engage in debate. Even such luminaries as Edwina Curry, Martin Brandon-Bravo and Ivor Stanbrook, have had little to say apart from predictable sniping at trades unions and the vested self-interest of the broadcasters.

Nonetheless, progress has been



slow. By mid February the committee had only dealt with a quarter of the 500 amendments submitted to date, and reached Clause 30 of the 167 clause Bill.

Guillotine

The Government are anxious to have the Bill out of Committee in advance of the Budget, and may apply the guillotine to get it finished by March 13.

The Bill will go to the Lords shortly after Easter, where it is expected to have a stormy ride.

If the Government are to auction the new TV franchises in advance of the next General Election, the Bill must complete all its stages and receives royal assent this autumn. The broadcasting industry, already displaying jitters in deteriorating industrial relations, is likely to be further destabilised if that time table is thrown out of kiltre.

Mike Jempson

Environment and Third World threat



LOSING THE PICTURE

A group of fifty Third World and Environmental agencies, including Oxfam, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and the Save the Children Fund, have warned that the government's proposed shake up of television could reduce coverage of global issues. The warning comes in a report, *Loosing the Picture*, published in January.

The agencies are concerned that increased competition combined with deregulation could lead to TV companies having to concentrate on popular shows to maximise audiences with detrimental results for other kinds of programmes.

Currently audiences watch about one third of factual programmes to two thirds of entertainment and television is the single most important source of information on matters of public interest. ITV which faces the biggest threat, provides a significant slice of factual programming.

The report contains contributions

from a number of distinguished authors and has a preface by David Bellamy. The subjects covered by the various contributors include the extent and importance of TV coverage of global issues in recent years, factors affecting scheduling, audience preferences and the experience of other countries which have followed the path of deregulation. A concluding chapter looks at parallel developments in radio.

The report's recommendations, that commercial television companies should be obliged to show one third factual programming and that broadcasting franchises should be awarded on the basis of quality of bid and soundness of business plan rather than just size of bid, appears to have won some partial response from the Minister.

Loosing the Picture is available from Oxfam Publications Dept. 274 Banbury Rd., Oxford OX2 7DZ, price £2.95 plus 50p p&p.



'YOU STAND ACCUSED OF REPEATED DISPLAYS OF GRATUITOUS VIOLENCE BEFORE THE 9:00 PM WATERSHED.'

Civil liberties implications give cause for concern

In the latest issue of their newsletter (Feb 1990) the anti-censorship group, Article 19, draw attention to a number of aspects of the Broadcasting Bill which threaten civil liberties. The article points out that '...appointments to all four authorities proposed are directly or indirectly in the gift of the government of the day. The Bill makes no mention of appropriate qualifications for those appointed to the authorities and it contains no mechanism for ensuring a broad spectrum of public and professional opinion in any appointments.'

'These gaps in the Bill are particularly serious since the various authorities to be established will have the task of agreeing codes regulating content according to such criteria as fairness and decency in advertising and the treatment of sexual themes and violence. There must be a grave risk that such codes will directly implement government thinking rather than reflect the consensus opinion of the community as a whole.'

Initiate

'The Broadcasting Standards Council (BSC) which is now a statutory body can be particularly criticised on these grounds. In addition it is a cause for concern that the BSC will not be a body solely responding to complaints of viewers but can itself initiate complaints. A watchdog which has statutory powers to monitor and condemn TV is a body which will be acting as judge in its own cause. Furthermore, since staff will be appointed by the government, the BSC could well become a body promoting government-approved television.'

'The new Bill adds to the regulation of broadcasting content the statute law on obscene publications and race relations but these additional restrictions are nowhere balanced by a positive recognition of the importance of freedom of expression and opinion in the media.'

'Lastly, it is noted that Section 154 of the proposed Broadcasting Bill allows the government to proscribe a foreign satellite service. This amounts to a banning power and as such introduces a new concept to broadcasting.'

THE FUTURE FOR TELEVISION'S COVERAGE OF GLOBAL ISSUES



THIRD WORLD AND ENVIRONMENT BROADCASTING PROJECT

Edited by James Firebrace with Preface by David Bellamy

Pergamon strike out on video

'The story of how 23 people were sacked by Robert Maxwell's Pergamon Press comes through strongly in this video. It should be seen by everyone who cares about the rights of people at work. It exposes the hypocrisy of newspaper proprietors who claim to defend working people in public, but attack them in private. See it before you buy your next copy of the Daily Mirror.'

Ken Loach (Director of KES)

'This video brilliantly describes the campaign by the 23 people, wrongfully dismissed by Pergamon Press Oxford...any local union branches or labour parties which wish to understand the issues should show this video in their own areas and use it to build even further backing.'

Tony Benn MP

Stopping the Press is a video about 23 workers who were sacked from Robert Maxwell's Pergamon Press for taking a one-day strike in defence of union recognition. It charts the development of the dispute which started over incorrect procedure in disciplining a union member, and swiftly turned into a challenge to the union itself, leading

eventually to a one-day strike and the sacking of the entire NUJ chapel.

The 8-month campaign of the 23 NUJ members for reinstatement and recognition has, in many ways and for many reasons, been an exceptionally dynamic and political campaign. Their small numbers and lack of industrial muscle on the one hand, and the peculiar characteristics of their employer—the Maxwell factor—on the other, have combined to shape a dispute that has been fought as much in the Labour Party, and at an international media union level, as it has on the picket line.

It is not the unique features of the Pergamon dispute that receive most attention in the video, however. In fact, the point that comes across most forcefully is that the battle that has been taken up by 23 workers at Pergamon Press is the same battle that all workers are facing everywhere and everyday: a battle in defence of their right to organise, and their right to decent working conditions and living standards.

It is a story told with humour and feeling through the eyes of 13 of the 23, including 'documentary' style shots in which the strikers deal with

the context of the strike: the history of Robert Maxwell's media empire and his treatment of trade unionists elsewhere and the crippling effect of the Tory anti-union laws.

The video, made on a shoe-string budget thanks to the generosity of the Oxford Film and Video Workshop in giving both their time and expertise, is intended to be used both as a campaigning tool—helping to spread information and win support for the strike and as a historical document.

Copies of the video can be obtained for £25 from the chapel (60 Cricket Road, Oxford OX4 3DQ) or hired for £10 (negotiable). Cheques should be made payable to 'NUJ Pergamon Press Chapel'. Money raised by the film will go into the chapel account to sustain their fight for reinstatement and recognition. The video is recorded on a normal VHS cassette and runs for approximately 23 minutes.

Continued from p. 2

Members of the CPBF can help by monitoring the arts, broadcasting, stage and journalism in their local areas or passing on reports they receive from abroad. Please pass on any information to the CPBF office.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

My attention has been drawn, belatedly, to a letter in a recent issue from a Kieran Fagin (recte Fagan?) in the August issue of *Free Press* in which he asserts, rather rashly, that 'nobody, whether Catholic or Protestant, nationalist or unionist, can sustain any serious complaint about the width or depth of coverage given by the Irish media to Northern Ireland'.

I wonder where Kieran Fagin/Fagan has been for the past 20 years—in some ivory tower in Middle Abbey Street or D'Olier Street, Dublin, perhaps? Has he not heard any complaints from his fellow NUJ members in RTE, for instance, about the restrictions which Section 31 of the Offences Against the State Act impose on the reporting of news in Northern Ireland?

Is he not aware of the deep dissatisfaction felt by journalists in the Independent Group, for example, because of self-censorship arising from the strictures of over-zealous editors? Has he not studied the files of the papers in Independent House, especially for the years 1975-85, and noted the countless omissions in reporting events in Northern Ireland during that period?

Has he not heard the many appeals by community groups in Northern Ireland, by priests such as Fathers Faul and Murray, Des Wilson and others, for fairer, more impartial coverage of Northern Ireland affairs in the Dublin media?

If he has not been aware of any of these developments, then it is high time Kieran Fagin/Fagan withdrew his head from the sand and took stock. If he has been aware—as he must—of the situation, then he has been rash indeed in making the statement quoted above. Serious complaints have been made about the width and depth of coverage given by Irish media to Northern Ireland and those are on record. It is hypocritical, to say the least, of Kieran Fagin/Fagan to endeavour to prove otherwise.

Yours,
Richard Roche

Press damned over Cleveland

National press coverage of the sexual abuse of children crisis in Cleveland hindered rather than helped our understanding of events and turned the crisis into a conflict between personalities and institutions.

These damning findings published in *The Drama of Cleveland*, a monitoring report from the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, were announced at a press conference chaired by ex-NUJ Joint President Scarlett McGwire on 11 January.

Explaining the reasons for commissioning the report, Bernadette Manning, director of the Standing Committee on Sexually Abused Children, said she had been 'incensed' with the way Cleveland was portrayed in the press and shocked at its power to mould the opinions of fellow professionals who had started ringing her office condemning their professional colleagues.

Report author Pauline Illsley claimed press coverage offered a 'classic example of the use of disturbing news as a marketing technique. Newspapers daily try and out-bid each other for the most sensational headlines and the most eye-catching front page, not because they are interested in informing the public of the facts of the situation, but because they want to outsell their rivals.'

Pauline singled out *The Daily Mail* which prefaced each day's headline with the slier 'The Scandal The Mail Revealed to the Nation'.

The report details how the scramble

for newsworthy stories meant the press often got things wrong—such as the number of children actually involved, the techniques being used to diagnose abuse and the fact that the much criticised Drs Higgs and Wyatt examined children mainly referred by other agencies concerned about possible abuse.

'A crisis that was fundamentally about men sexually abusing children was presented largely as a conflict of personality,' said Pauline. 'The press made the whole situation look as if there was a battle being waged between two pig headed women and a gang of local lads.'

Dr Marietta Higgs and social worker Sue Richardson were so maligned that you would have been forgiven for thinking that they rather than the sexual abuse of children had created the crisis.'

The press supplemented conflicts of personality with conflicts of institutions—parents against professionals, the family against the state, and everybody against doctors and social workers. 'The battle raged everywhere except the place where it began—man against child,' said Pauline.

While health and welfare workers were pilloried, the police and local MP Stuart Bell were treated as sources of unquestioned authority. The consequence of this, says the report, was that the papers 'took the side of the aggrieved families and their supporters and fought the realisation of a terrible truth: that the sexual

Pauline Illsley

The Drama of Cleveland

A monitoring report on press coverage of the sexual abuse of children controversy in Cleveland

Commissioned by the Standing Committee on Sexually Abused Children

Campaign for PRESS & BROADCASTING FREEDOM

abuse of children is far more widespread than anyone has ever been prepared to admit'.

In an appendix to the report Mike Jempson explains how many of the worst excesses of the national press reporting could have been avoided if the highly paid hacks responsible had abided by the National Union of Journalist's own professional Code of Conduct. But there again pigs might fly.

The Drama of Cleveland is available at £3, plus 30p p&p, from CPBF, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG.

Alternative enquiry seeks submissions

The setting up of the Calcutt enquiry last year was clearly a response by the government to the private members' bills and the burgeoning campaign calling for a statutory Right of Reply as well as the Privacy Bill put forward by Conservative backbencher John Browne. The government is obviously keen to damp down the increasing concern over abuses of press freedom perpetrated by some newspapers.

The the enquiry, being chaired by David Calcutt QC, is unlikely to provide an effective solution. It has been given a very limited agenda. Its remit is to look into redress for the public against press excesses, the libel laws and privacy, making no mention of the demands for a Right of Reply, worries expressed over media inaccuracy and bias and the root causes of these problems—namely the pattern of media ownership.

Since it was set up the enquiry has been meeting behind closed doors and

has made no effort whatsoever to seek views from the general public.

Even the Press Council and the newspaper proprietors have demonstrated little faith in the enquiry. Before Christmas both produced their own proposals for reform. Both these initiatives are encouraging steps in the right direction. But they do not go far enough.

The public can have no confidence in either of these measures proving effective while they are policed by the press themselves. Few people will believe that the newspaper 'Ombudsmen', appointed by editors from among their longest serving staff, can hope to be truly impartial and independent.

The CPBF therefore launched an ALTERNATIVE MEDIA ENQUIRY to seek proposals for reforming the media from the public, from organisations that represent the

general public and from people who work in or are affected by the media. Its aim will be to produce recommendations to improve press and broadcasting standards through legislation or other means.

Time and resources prevent the CPBF from staging a huge, high profile enquiry. Neither do we believe that we would be offering a genuine alternative if we sought an eminent lawyer, journalist or celebrity to host the enquiry.

The CPBF is therefore hosting the enquiry for administrative purposes and a steering group from the National Council will consider the submissions made.

It is hoped that the final report will be published to coincide with the findings of the Calcutt committee in the summer. Submissions have to be received by the office no later than 31 March 1990.

Further information can be obtained from the CPBF office.

CATALYST

The Magazine of the Radical Left

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NEAL ASCHERSON

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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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NORTH WEST CPBF

Details of three forthcoming meetings are as follows:

Baring the Facts: Pornography and the Media

Speakers include: Isabella Koprovski, Managing Editor *Penthouse* and editor *Forum*; Colin Shaw, Director, Broadcasting Standards Council; Jill Hudson, Editor *Company* and Dawn Primarolo, MP.
 Saturday 31 March 1.00 p.m.
 Cornerhouse, Manchester
 Admission £4 (conc £2)
 Bookings—telephone 061 228 2463.

YOUR DAILY DOSE: RACISM AND THE SUN

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



Britain's Press and Broadcasting: What Future?

An opportunity to compare the British and Scandinavian Media with Nordic trades unionists.

A joint CPBF/University of Manchester Extra-Mural Department course: six meetings, commencing 1 May, 7.30 p.m.—9.30 p.m.
 Fee £10.80
 To book, phone 061 275 3273 and quote Course Number 34301.

North West CPBF Annual General Meeting

The World Turned Upside Down: The Media in Eastern Europe and South Africa
 Wednesday 25 April 7.30 p.m.
 Mechanics Institute, Manchester
 All members welcome.

WAGES APPEAL

The CPBF accounts for 1989 show further substantial progress towards the elimination of past debts. The employment of a second worker (part-time) in the office has more than paid for itself through efficiency savings, increased literature sales and membership renewals.

Subscriptions next year will continue to cover the campaign's basic running costs. Our ability to pay our workers, however, depends on the generosity of supporters. We need to

raise £15,000 in 1990 for the staff wages appeal. SOGAT and the NGA have already responded generously to the appeal with donations of £2000 each.

Two ways you can help are either by making a regular donation by standing order (forms available from the office) or by getting your political party or union branch to make a donation.

SUBS INCREASE

At this year's AGM, the National Council will be proposing that the subscription rate for students and the unwaged be increased from £2 to £5. the rate has remained unchanged for a number of years. The price of *Free Press* is also to go up to 40 pence. The new rate will help to ensure that *Free Press* continues to be self-financing.

WRITER NEEDED

A CPBF member is seeking a journalist to help her produce an article on disability and its impact on individual human rights. Anyone interested please contact John Latham at the CPBF office.

Edited for the National Committee by SIMON COLLINGS. Copy for *Free Press* 58 should arrive at the office not later than 13 April 1990.

JOIN CPBF HERE

PLEASE TICK APPROPRIATE BOX

- a) Individual Membership £10 p.a.
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