

FREE ^{40p} PRESS

JOURNAL OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR
PRESS AND BROADCASTING FREEDOM
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Keep up the campaign for an end to the Hurd ban

- Start planning *now* local events to tie in with the anniversary of the ban on 19 October. (For details of national activities contact the office).
- Link up with the NFT season on censorship by organising screenings of censored films in your area (see page 3 for details).
- Monitor the broadcast media for the effects of the ban and protest to the broadcasting companies when instances occur.

Media freedom in the dock

April was a wicked month for press and broadcasting freedom. There were a string of hostile police actions and court decisions which threaten the independence of the media from the state and the flow of information to the public.

Three weeks into the month and the Metropolitan Police had succeeded in gaining two court orders against no less than 29 news organisations forcing them to turn over published and unpublished film of the London Poll Tax disturbances of 31 March.

Sandwiched between these hearings the High Court imposed a £5000 fine on trainee journalist William Goodwin for contempt of court for refusing to reveal his source of confidential information about a company's financial affairs. The Law Lords had earlier rejected his appeal out of hand.

Mr Justice Hoffman made it clear that he included the newspaper owners Press Council, and not just the National Union of Journalists, in his strictures against a journalist's duty to protect his or her sources! In a preposterous speech, Hoffman told Goodwin: "All our freedom, including the freedom of the press, is based on law and public respect for the democratic procedures by which the law is made and changed".

The hundreds of radical printers who went to prison rather than submit their publications to state censorship

would have been greatly amused by this claim. Indeed, it is only the judiciary's particularly perverted reading of Section 10 of the 1981 Contempt of Court Act — which sought to prevent disclosure — which allowed the case against Goodwin to succeed by equating the commercial interests of a company with justice.

There is little doubt that ultimately Goodwin will win at the European Court of Human Rights using article 10 of the European Convention. Those caught in the police trawl through the photo files and film libraries of the Poll Tax disturbances are unlikely to be so fortunate.

Section 9 of the 1984 Police and Criminal Evidence Act was the first time in history that a specific legal procedure was laid down by which the police could seize film. It is a telling tribute to the Thatcher years that the last major use of this Act was in relation to the disturbances outside Murdoch's Wapping plant where press freedom died a different sort of death.

The independence of the media from the state — theoretical as this is at times — is a basic principle of a democratic society. The job of journalists, camera crews and photographers is to report events to supply the public with information, not collect evidence for the police. Once this independence is compromised press and broadcasting freedom is in double jeopardy.

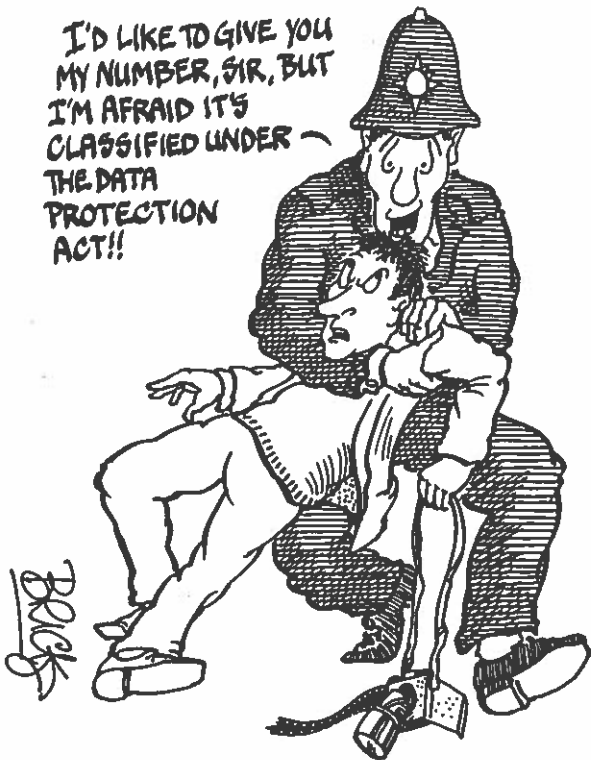
Firstly, reporters and photographers become potential targets for an angry crowd and can be prevented from doing their job. Already on 31 March there were shouts of 'Maggie's boys' as one TV crew had its camera smashed. Secondly, the public's right to know is denied if editors, fearing either injury to reporters or police seizure of film, stop sending teams to potential trouble spots. And the free flow of information is the oxygen of democracy.

Unfortunately, such is the craven state of much of the British media, papers like *The Sun* have already set themselves up as P.C. Plod on the Poll Tax unrest while the rest have only made the most muted protests against police interference.

Further police powers over the media are on the way. When the Broadcasting Bill becomes law, only a magistrate's order will be needed for the police to use provisions of the Public Order and Obscene Publications Acts to seize copies of notes, scripts and tapes from radio and TV stations. With what independence there is left in broadcasting threatened by de-regulation, the state is strengthened to ensure the market is free but thought is not.

Opposition to police and court interference in the media and to growing secrecy and censorship is coming from the media unions and campaigns like the CPBF. Unlike the newspaper owners and editors, the NUJ has appealed to its freelance photographers to sign over Poll Tax film to the union so it can be removed from the country and the jurisdiction of British courts.

Continued on p.4



Bazoft – the sorrow and the shame

Farzad Bazoft, executed by the Iraqi authorities on 15 March, was simply a journalist doing his job. A regular visitor to Iraq, always at the invitation of the government, he was following up a story of a major explosion at a secret military base which had reportedly killed several hundred people.

He had told the newsdesk at *The Observer* what he was doing. He had asked the Iraqi authorities for permission and transport to visit the site. Eventually, Daphne Parish drove him there — a 'crime' for which this 52 year old nurse is now serving 15 years in jail, a possible death sentence in itself.

The evidence against Bazoft was a videotaped 'confession' in which he appeared ill, shaken and confused. He was denied diplomatic help, tried in secret and summarily executed.

It is necessary to restate these simple, brutal facts, because Farzad Bazoft's body was barely cold when the official manipulation of the British media began.

Despite ritual condemnation of the execution the previous day, on Friday 16 March the lead stories in *The Sun*, *Daily Express* and *Daily Mail* all centred on Bazoft's nine year old conviction for robbery. The source for all these 'exclusives' were un-named sources in Whitehall, meaning the British Government.

For years our rulers had ignored the human rights abuses of the Iraqi regime, its slaughter of political opponents and genocidal onslaught on the Kurdish people because it suited narrow political and economic interests. Even while Bazoft was imprisoned, £250 million of fresh export credit guarantees (British taxpayer's money) had been extended to

Iraq. Now, to divert attention from these blood stained links and the Government's craven inactivity in the wake of Bazoft's execution, hares were being sent running. The press pack chased.

There followed emphasis on Bazoft's Iranian origins which served the double purpose of appealing to underlying racist sentiment here while raising doubts about his presence in Iraq — a hostile country.

The transition from 'doggy character' to 'spy' followed as up jumped a number of Tory MPs to claim Bazoft may have worked for British or Israeli intelligence. They subsequently admitted they had no evidence whatsoever for these wild claims but that didn't bother the tabloids.

By Sunday 18 March, just 72 hours after his execution, the *Sunday Telegraph* put the final nail in Bazoft's coffin by suggesting there was no real difference between investigative journalism and spying anyway. The pitiful headline on that day's *Observer*, 'Bazoft not a spy — official', summed up how successful the manipulation had been.

Of course, some papers refused to be led by the nose. Of course, angry voices were raised in opposition to this operation. But the agenda had been reset — away from the questioning of the Iraqi regime and our government's dealings with it to a questioning of Bazoft.

If it were not for the seizure of triggers for nuclear bombs at Heathrow and the saga of the super-gun, all mention of Iraq would have long since vanished from the pages of our papers along with the memory of Farzad Bazoft and the plight of Daphne Parish.

Mick Gosling



● CPBF Chair Tony Lennon addresses protestors outside the Iraqi embassy

US tele-aggression against Cuba 'illegal'

TV Marti is the new television station set up by the United States to transmit programs into Cuba via a high powered transmitter in a helium balloon above Florida. Within a few days of the start of transmissions on 27 March, Cuban engineers managed to jam the signals completely.

British Foreign Office minister Tim Sainsbury claimed TV Marti to be no different to the BBC's World Service. The reality, however, is that TV Marti is totally illegal, violating several international treaties and conventions, including the UN Charter and the 1982 International Telecommunications Convention. The frequency of the station is already used by one of Cuba's own TV channels.

TV Marti's purpose is to spread false information and to destabilise. It is a continuation of 30 years of US hostility towards Cuba, including the 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion, an economic blockade and bans on travel and cultural exchanges.

TV Marti is a telecommunications Bay of Pigs. Instead of fostering cooperation in the flow of information and culture between nations it does the opposite. It sets a dangerous precedent of media aggression against the sovereignty of Latin American nations, through the spread of misinformation and the unsolicited promotion of the US world view.

It is part and parcel of the US policy of bullying countries in its 'backyard' that opt for an independent course of development. It also raises the danger of military confrontation through the possibility of 'surgical' air strikes against Cuba's jamming equipment.

When Radio Marti (TV Marti's radio equivalent) was set up in 1985, Cuba suggested reciprocal broadcasting of Cuban programmes in the US. This and the more recent offer of TV programming exchanges were rejected.

As it is, 30% of Cuban programming consists of US-made entertainment. CNN

World Report (a major USTV news source) is regularly broadcast on Cuban TV which also carries programs from 20 different countries. Cuba's opposition to TV Marti is a rejection of the attack on its sovereignty rather than a parochial insularity against other cultures.

Already in Britain protests have been raised about TV Marti. George Foulkes from the Labour front bench spoke out on the issue in parliament and also in a letter to the Guardian. Thirty four MPs have signed an early day motion along the same lines.

The Britian Cuba Resource Centre is asking organisations and individuals to sign their Tele Aggression petition and to write to Douglas Hurd at the Foreign Office. Union journals are asked to carry articles on the issue.

Briefing material, petition forms and leaflets can be obtained from the BCRC. Contact BCRC, Latin America House, Kingsgate Place, London NW6 4TA.

Season of censored films planned

To mark the second anniversary of the Douglas Hurd broadcasting ban the National Film Theatre will be running a major season of films, videos and TV programmes which have run into censorship problems of one kind or another in this country over the past decade. Obviously Ireland comes high on the agenda, but other subjects to be covered will include the nuclear issue, race, sexuality, industrial relations, 'national security', and the whole 'video nasty' affair.

The season has been organised by the All Industry Censorship Group, which was founded last year to monitor and respond to instances of censorship in the film, video and television industries. It comprises representatives from ACTT, NUJ, BETA, CPBF, IPPA, the Producers' Association, the British Film Institute, the Writers' Guild, the Directors' Guild, Article 19, and Index on Censorship. In other words, an extremely broad church and, happy to report, an extremely amicable one.

The season will do a great deal more than simply show cut or banned product. For a start, we hope that wherever possible film or programme makers will introduce their work and discuss it with the audience afterwards. There will also be separate seminars devoted to cinema and

video, broadcasting, censorship and the State, and the conceptual issues raised by censorship; these will include a wide range of practitioners from the various media.

Further, the season will look at censorship in a broad context. For example, it will show how different media work with different levels of acceptability. Thus *The Life of Brian* can be shown in (most) cinemas, on video and on Sky but not on terrestrial television, *Straw Dogs*, *The Exorcist* and *Death Wish* can be shown in cinemas but not on video or television, and so on.

As well as the obvious cases of direct political intervention (eg *Real Lives*, *Secret Society*, the Hurd ban) the season will also include cases where the law has been invoked to justify censorship — for instance, the recent case of the *Visions of Ecstasy* video, and the C4 programme *M15's Official Secrets*. Programmes like *Death on the Rock* which have been the subject of vicious onslaughts by the Tory press will also be included in the season.

These, of course, have not themselves been censored, but the press has deliberately created an atmosphere of intimidation in which companies and programme makers may well think twice before tackling such subjects again. Leading on

from this, the theme of self-censorship will be one of the season's key organising principles.

Also to the fore will be the notion of censorship by delay or marginalisation. For example, the way in which Karl Francis' remarkable *Ms Rhymney Valley* was not transmitted by the BBC until after the coal dispute was safely over, Ken Loach's *Which Side Are You On?* was banished from the South Bank Show onto C4, and his *A Question of Leadership* was never networked and was saddled with a quite un-necessary 'balancing' discussion.

Central to many of these debates and programmes will be the way in which the terms of the Broadcasting Act and of the BBC Charter and Licence are interpreted. Crucial here are notions about 'balance', 'taste', 'decency' and so on, which are frequently invoked to keep contentious and challenging material off our screens.

One way or another, October is going to be very much censorship month. The aim of the NFT season is to show just how much the coinage of freedom of expression has been clipped during the Eighties. Thus alerted, let's hope that in the Nineties people will ensure this vital issue is at the top of the political agenda.

Julian Petley

BBC extends Hurd ban to murder witnesses

When the Home Secretary announced his broadcasting ban on actuality interviews with representatives of Sinn Fein and ten other Irish organisations in October 1988, the CPBF believed his real intention was to silence all discussion and criticism of the Government's Irish 'policy'.

To decades of self-censorship and media manipulation was added ministerial diktat. The alleged targets of the restrictions were representatives of the banned organisations or those speaking in support of them. But from the day the ban was announced, the Home Office was suggesting broadcasters should act in the 'spirit' of the ban (*The Guardian* 20.10.88). Recent events have vividly demonstrated just what that can mean.

On Wednesday 7 March 1990, Sam Marshall was shot dead by a Loyalist death squad after leaving Lurgan RUC station where he had reported as part of his bail conditions. The following day Sinn Fein hosted a press conference which was to be addressed by two men who had survived the assassination bid. Neither were members of Sinn Fein.

In the wake of continuing allegations about collusion between the security

forces and Loyalist paramilitaries, these men's account of events was clearly a major news story. However, on this occasion the BBC used the broadcasting ban to effectively silence their contribution.

When Richard McAuley from the Republican Press Centre challenged BBC Northern Ireland on this extension of the ban, Keith Baker, head of news and current affairs replied: 'it was the BBC's view that the context of the news conference, hosted by Sinn Fein, and at which the two men appeared, which placed it within the terms of the restrictions'. He refused a meeting to discuss the matter.

In reality neither the Home Secretary's restrictions nor the BBC's own 'Guidelines for Factual Programmes' and 'Producers Guidelines' rule out covering Sinn Fein press conferences as such. These clearly state that the restrictions are meant to apply to those representing banned organisations or speaking words of support for them.

Indeed, after the assassination of Phelim McNally on 24 November 1988, the BBC broadcast an interview with his brother, Sinn Fein Councillor Francis McNally, on the basis that he was an eyewitness to murder and not covered by the



ban in that context.

The BBC's decision to extend the ban to anyone who participates in a Sinn Fein press conference is clearly outside the terms of the restriction. Two questions need an answer. Given that all editorial decisions about Irish coverage are always referred upwards, at what level in the BBC was this decision taken? Secondly, isn't this news blackout on potentially embarrassing questions precisely the 'spirit' of the ban the Government intended?

This October the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom alongside the National Union of Journalists, other media unions and anti-censorship groups will be mounting nationwide activities on the theme 'Time to Know'.

Mick Gosling

Broadcasting in the 1990s

Roy Hattersley, the Shadow Home Secretary, disappointed delegates to the CPBF 'Broadcasting in the 1990s' conference on 7 April with a speech which offered little which was challenging or new. He made it clear that the Labour leadership saw little wrong with British broadcasting as it exists and wanted to preserve its essential ingredients.

Hattersley acknowledged that even had the Government not launched its Broadcasting Bill, legislation would have been necessary because of the pace of technological change in the industry. But what was required, he argued, was an application of the abiding principles which have governed broadcasting in the recent past to the new environment.

The deputy Labour leader identified four fundamental principles which he said should guide policy: Maximum choice for the viewer; high quality (including diversity and innovation); maximum availability and political honesty and independence.

He said he believed a strong, successful and independent BBC, working to the modern version of Reithian principles was essential. He had doubts about funding the BBC out of direct taxation, because of a potential threat of 'treasury control'.

'The licence fee is probably the best system in the short term for raising money independent of Government,' he said.

Hattersley said Labour would provide help for OAPs with the licence fee, possibly by raising additional revenue from commercial establishments such as hotels, which currently only need one licence—no matter how many TV sets they have.

He went on to attack the franchise auction by bids in sealed envelopes as 'a nonsense'. He said he didn't believe the Governments promised concession on the clause would stand up in law.

He also talked about the need to safeguard journalistic independence. He said the Broadcasting Standards Council was 'silly' and that he did not support the ban on 'actuality' broadcasts of interviews

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Pressure has to be stepped up for the repeal of Section 9 of PACE and for a Freedom of Information Act to replace the new Official Secrets Act. And the anti-secrecy and censorship activities planned by the All Industry Censorship Group and Time to Know Committee to coincide with the second anniversary of the Irish Broadcasting Ban this October need the fullest possible support.

While others take liberties it is our job to ensure that information, on which all other rights rest, is freed.

with Sinn Fein and others. He also said he believed some areas of cable and satellite which could and should be regulated.

Finally he talked about the need for a pluralistic press in this country, and in particular the need for legislation to control monopoly ownership. He said that 30 per cent of the national press being in the hands of one person was 'not acceptable'.

Responding later to comments from the floor Hattersley said he found it 'difficult to believe' that there were views which didn't find expression on TV, a remark which was greeted with some incredulity by most people in the room.

Earlier in the morning Marta Whorle, the Editor of *Broadcast* magazine, had called for a 'new agenda' for broadcasting — one which questioned whether the BBC should be the cornerstone of the system.

Twelve to eighteen months ago, she said, the broadcasters had been worried. Now they were all slapping each other on the back over the 'concessions' won on the Bill in Committee.

But all of the major proposals of the original Bill were still intact, she said. It was silent about the future of the BBC and there was still nothing which affirmed 'the rights and responsibilities of journalists'. She drew attention to the absence of debate over Channel 5 and the inadequacy of Government action in the area of monopoly ownership.



● Harry Conroy, NUJ General Secretary — 'the Government's hidden agenda is the creation of TV as biased and partial as the national press.'

'We need some new definitions, a new vocabulary', she said, 'otherwise the best we can hope for is business as usual'.

Harry Conroy, General Secretary of the NUJ, picked up on the theme of the BBC. He reminded delegates that the Bill only represents half of the broadcasting agenda. Once the Government has got the independent sector out of the way the BBC will be next, he warned.

He said the Bill had 'nothing to do with choice'. The motivation was entirely commercial. There was also a hidden agenda, he said; an attempt by the Government to create TV as biased and partial as the press.

Conroy adopted a forthright stance on the use of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act to seize journalist's unpublished film and photographs.

He reported that the NUJ had recently sent eight packets of material to Brussels, to the Headquarters of the International Federation of Journalists, to remove them from the jurisdiction of the British Courts. 'They will not be handed back, no matter what', he said.

Kathy Darby for the CPBF said that quality TV was about issues like access and diversity of views — issues which weren't currently being addressed by the TV industry. Tony Hearn, General Secretary of BETA, said that CPBF must try to work with the Labour Party. But, he said, 'we must stop looking back to the so called golden age of the duopoly'.

Officers report on full year of work



● Roy Hattersley, Shadow Home Secretary — 'can't believe there are views which don't find expression on television.'

This year's AGM, instead of formally debating a long list of motions, discussed a series of reports from the officers about different areas of CPBF activity.

In the last year thanks to the hard work of national and regional workers, the dedication of National Council members and the continued financial and political support of affiliated organisations and individual members the campaign has been able to make a significant impact on a whole range of important national issues.

The CPBF has organised an Alternative Media Inquiry in response to the Calcutt Inquiry established by the Government. It has run an influential Parliamentary campaign on Right of Reply. It has been at the forefront of the organisation against the Broadcasting Ban and other examples of media censorship, and has launched a major new initiative to establish civil rights for women in the area of media representation with the Bill of Location.

Major research, about to be published, on ownership and control in the media has gone hand in hand with publications on the media coverage of the Cleveland child abuse controversy and of Chris Searle's highly successful book on racism and the Sun.

CPBF has worked closely with the media unions in a campaign around the Broadcasting Bill and made sure that Campaign policies have been put to both the Government and opposition leaders. It has also initiated a process of discuss-

ing an alternative to Government broadcasting policy which will be taken out to members, affiliates and beyond.

All of this work provided plenty of material for discussion and the format of the meeting allowed delegates to debate freely.

Formal decisions were taken on five issues during the meeting. A motion seeking to change the campaign's name was defeated. Supporters of the proposal argued that the existing name was too long and that as the CPBF was having to move offices — and would therefore need new stationery — this was a good opportunity to change.

Other delegates felt that a name change should only be considered if there were very strong reasons for doing so.

On financial matters the meeting agreed to increase the subscription rate for students and the unwaged to £5 and, on the advice of our Auditors, to carry out only an internal audit in future. As the CPBF no longer receives public money it is no longer required to employ external auditors.

The AGM also agreed to increase the cover price of Free Press from 30 pence to 40 pence so that the newsletter could continue to pay for itself.

Finally, an emergency motion on the Press Council, tabled by Mike Jempson, was defeated. The motion proposed that, in the light of the NUJ decision to rejoin the Press Council, the CPBF should nominate people.

'No room for complacency' says Treasurer

The CPBF accounts for the year ending December 1989 show a final deficit of £6874 — a small improvement on last year. The campaign will be looking to further reduce outstanding debts during the coming year. Advice from our Auditors has helped tighten up our Accounting and budgeting procedures, enabling us to see at a glance where things are going wrong.

1989 was a positive year for the Campaign, but there is no room for complacency and we must again in 1990 make every effort to maximise our Fund Raising as a major priority. The National Council have approved the Budget set for 1990 which should eliminate our current debts providing we meet the targets set.

During 1989 further efforts were made in the Office to cut down on expenditure and I am grateful to the Staff for their efforts. However, there is now little scope for further improvement.

It was pleasing to see in 1989 an increase in individual and affiliated members, which gave us an extra £900 above our Budget. Membership is now the bedrock of our funding for the future and we must continue to develop it.

There have been some positive savings made by employing a part-time worker as well as a more positive approach to membership and literature/publication sales. It has also freed our full-time worker to do other work. The wages for our part-time worker are now properly budgeted for in our main account thus reducing our Administration expenses to their proper level.

We were fortunate in 1989 that we received some large donations to the Staffing Appeal Fund, we cannot rely on the same thing happening this year. We will need to raise some £15,000 to cover our staffing costs during 1990.

John Beck



● John Beck, CPBF Treasurer

Civil liberties or censorship

Dawn Primarola's Bill of Location which seeks to restrict the sale of pornography, has caused much controversy on the libertarian left. In this issue of *Free Press* we publish letters from two critics of the Bill.

We would like to offer some reasons why the Dawn Primarola Bill on Location of Pornographic Materials is a less admirable and progressive piece of legislation than is suggested in the editorial of the March/April issue of *Free Press*.

It is argued that the Bill does not censor — it merely relocates offensive material to licensed premises under threat of fines. This is a piece of semantic juggling; it will ensure self-censorship lest work be so relocated, and will make it impossible to produce work which might be considered to be covered by the definition offered, but which the proprietors of licensed premises would not regard as commerial for them to display.

(A useful example of work in this category would be the lesbian erotica magazine *Quim*.)

The claim that the Bill will not affect lesbian and gay material has been discredited by the addition of a clause which specifically adds men to the definition of pornography.

The assumption, particularly after the record of Tory councils acting in accordance with their own interpretation of Clause 28, that the record of local authorities in distinguishing between lesbian and gay material and heterosexual pornography will be better than that of the police is straightforwardly absurd.

Placing operation of this law in the hands of local authorities means that its operation will be locally variable; some authorities will be more lenient in their application of the definition than others, producing a situation analogous to the 'Wet' and 'Dry' local liquor laws of some American states.

It is hard accordingly to see how the requirement of the European Convention of Human Rights that justice be administered equally can be fully honoured.

By relocating pornography to licensed premises, the Bill ensures that the sexually explicit material available will always appeal to the lowest and most sexist common denominator by placing editorial control over it firmly in the hands of the pornography industry you claim to oppose.

It will make it more difficult for the workers in, and creators of, such material to claim decent conditions of work and artistic control by closing off alternative distributive outlets.

To place a definition of pornography on the statute book is not the triumph you claim, particularly when that definition is as woolly as the one contained in the Bill. Judges are not known for their anti-sexism and the building up of a body of

case law that interprets so ambiguous a set of definitions is likely to produce some very odd anomalies.

One has only to look at the ways in which laws against racial incitement have been used to set white racists free and imprison black nationalists to be very sceptical about the operation of the law.

Futher, once a definition is enshrined in law, it will constantly crop up in the attempts of the Moral Right to co-opt the anti-sexist anti-pornography movement to their own moral campaigns; defending the rights of women has an entirely different meaning in the mouths of the Moral Right.

The assumption that there is a direct link, or any causal one, between pornography and sexual violence is one which has never been satisfactorily proved; most studies have produced a null correlation and even those which have shown a positive one have been sufficiently ambiguous that the researchers concerned have decried their results' adoption as an argument for censorship.

Of course, in a sexist society, most sexually explicit material is going to be sexist; the assumption that, by abolishing that material or shifting its location, you are going to make more than cosmetic changes to the underlying oppression of a society is fallacious in logic and dangerous in practice. We ask you earnestly to reconsider your support for this Bill.

Feminists Against Censorship

The front page of your March/April issue signalled that the word 'freedom' in CPBF's title has become empty rhetoric. The anti-porn Bill which you support obviously is a censorship measure. As you well know, the aim of the anti-porn lobby which unites authoritarian feminism with the puritanical right is to force out of business the 'soft porn' magazines which some two million people buy from newsagents each month.

As with the 'Off the Shelf' protest campaign, the suppression strategy rightly assumes that few soft porn consumers would dare to set foot in a licensed sex shop — even if they live in one of the relatively few towns which now tolerate these.

The Bill's stipulative definition of 'pornography' is clearly aimed at all visual material which men seek out for sexual arousal — since anything in a photograph can be said to be represented as an 'object'.

The anti-porn lobby evidently agrees

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- 1000+ positions for reporters are widely available — through agencies, recruitment agencies, etc. — and through the media.
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- Write us in the 'FREE PRESS' office with examples of possible jobs or projects which have interested you previously. Your details here on page 7.

Anti-porn Bill launched

The Bill of Location of Pornographic Materials is the most restrictive ever imposed on the freedom of expression. It will force the sale of pornography to licensed premises, and will make it impossible to produce work which might be considered to be covered by the definition offered, but which the proprietors of licensed premises would not regard as commerial for them to display.

PUBLIC COUNCILING BROADCASTING IN THE 90'S
the democratic alternative
Saturday 7th April 1990
10.15 in Transpod House
Smith Square London SW1

Ray Williams Labour Party
Helen White Socialist League
Harry Gandy NUT
Alan Sapper ACTT

● The offending article in *Free Press*.

with Mrs Thatcher that where Britain is totally out of step with almost all of Europe on this and other matters of personal freedom, we alone are right, and it is they who must become more restrictive in 1992.

Elementary social scientific analysis of the recent *Cosmopolitan* survey and the results presented shows its findings to be quite worthless. Before answering the questions readers were exposed to a partisan, rhetorical article by the investigators, Catherine Itzin and Corinne Sweet.

This misrepresented the objective evidence of porn's effect on people, in order to sway readers' opinions. The questionnaire was undermined by simple technical errors, and the account of the findings then distorted what readers' answers showed.

CPBF's credibility is undermined by reliance upon the factually unsubstantiated claims of the anti-porn lobby, who appear incompetent even to assess women's feelings impartially — let alone to judge any causal role that porn may play in their oppression.

And even if most women do want all sexually stimulating materials suppressed, the principle of freedom in media expression is emptied of meaning if simply causing subjective offence is taken to justify censorship.

If this is to be CPBF's new stance on denying the right of 'deviant' minorities to publish and receive information — irrespective of proof of whether it causes substantial harm to others — then I for one will be unable to renew my subscription in future.

Ian Vine

ACTT publishes code of practice on sexuality

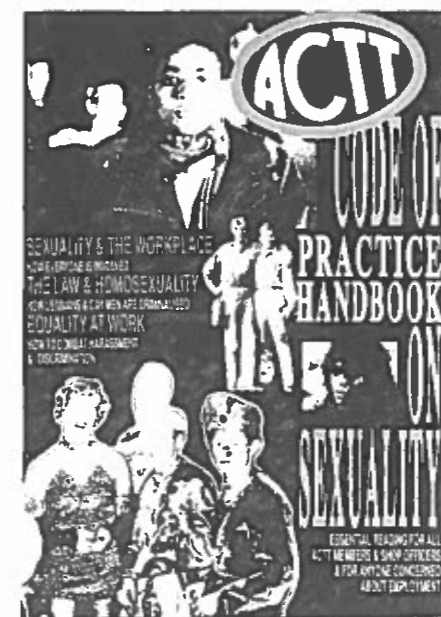
This accessible and attractive handbook from the Association of Cinematograph and Television Technicians shatters the myth that sex and sexuality is a private issue. It cannot be when the jobs, working conditions and personal lives of lesbian and gay workers are blighted by discrimination. Media unions have a special responsibility for tackling this discrimination because their work should involve challenging the stereotypes which help it to flourish.

The handbook both describes and analyses the discrimination lesbians and gays face in law, employment, the workplace and the media and gives ACTT members and shop officers guidelines for tackling it.

This ranges from negotiating equality clauses in all agreements to recommendations on how to overcome the limited, inaccurate and disrespectful images of lesbians and gays which constitute current media output.

Lesbians and gays are ordinary people whose sexuality should be treated as part of their lives, as that of heterosexuals is, throughout media programming. It is important that programmes with positive images are not confined to minority 'slots'. Yet even these are under threat from the Broadcasting Bill.

Channel 3 franchises will be auctioned to the highest bidder, and where cash dictates the rights of minorities go out the window, making them more invisible and quite possible increasing prejudice by offering no positive representation.



If that is a bleak prospect, this ACTT handbook shows that there will be powerful forces inside broadcasting fighting against it. It should serve as a model for other unions developing equality policies and seeking to challenge heterosexism within the industries in which they work. For its part the CPBF will be incorporating the ACTT handbook in its updated Media Heterosexism pack to aid its wider circulation.

CPBF Media Heterosexism pack costs £2.95 + 55p p&p from 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG.

The rubbishing of left critics

A nasty practice has crept into the Labour Party's treatment of members who are critical of the party leadership. The technique is to disparage the author of any criticism, while ignoring their views; a regular practice in the Soviet bloc prior to Glasnost.

Take the case of Dick Douglas MP who resigned the Labour whip over the leadership's opposition to non-payment of the Poll Tax.

Reporting his protest, the *Guardian* on 15 March quoted a party 'spokesman' saying that Douglas 'had not been happy about his personal circumstances for a long time'. This was followed by praise for Douglas's successor as candidate for the Dunfermline West seat.

An anonymous and therefore unaccountable party official, with co-operation from a reporter, has thus led readers to believe that there is something amiss in Douglas's personal life and that he is an unsatisfactory MP.

It is possible that both these statements are true. Without any supporting or disqualifying information the reader has no way of knowing. But that is beside the point. Douglas tendered political reasons for his resignation, to be met with *Sun*-style dirt.

The *Guardian* is distinguished by its refusal to attend Government off-the-record briefings, thus inhibiting the spread of unattributed comment and disinformation. It ill-becomes the paper to fall foul of a similar malpractice when it comes from another party. It does no credit to the party, either.

Geoffrey Sheridan

Book Review

Necessary Illusions - Thought Control in Democratic Societies, by Noam Chomsky, Pluto Press, 1989, 422 pages, price £9.95.

Necessary Illusions grew out of a series of five lectures which Chomsky broadcast on Canadian radio in November 1988. The lectures themselves are elaborated upon in five lengthy appendices which take up and develop the various themes.

Chomsky is nothing if not thorough in his social criticism and this work is no exception. The main thesis of the lectures is that the media in western democracies is essentially a servant of state and corporate power. Individual journalists may strive for professional integrity but it is the commercial interests of the major corporations which ultimately decide on the choice of topics and their treatment in the media.

These contentions are supported by a considerable amount of detailed analysis

of individual news stories and issues — the tone and quantity of coverage of alleged 'human rights' abuses in Nicaragua as opposed to El Salvador for example, and the relationship of this coverage to the 'objective' situation.

The mass of carefully assembled evidence explodes the myth that the media is the safeguard of free speech and democracy. Instead Chomsky sets out to show that the picture of the world which the media reflects is one which fits with the perspective of corporate interests. Anyone who tries to question the system becomes defined as subversive. The only way to 'get on' is to conform.

Though concerned exclusively with the US media the arguments are wholly applicable here and British readers will have no difficulty providing examples to illustrate the points Chomsky makes.

Simon Collings

Necessary Illusions is one of ten new books included in a recent supplement to the CPBF catalogue. Copies of the book and supplement are available from the CPBF office.

Noam Chomsky

NECESSARY ILLUSIONS

THOUGHT CONTROL IN DEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES

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

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WOMEN'S GROUP

CPBF women's group needs more members to help it carry on with its busy programme of work. During the past year the main focus for the group has been the issue of pornography and in particular the Bill of Location. But the group also organised an important meeting on the Rushdie File as well as a number of fundraising events, and a very successful meeting at the Women's TUC. Anyone interested in finding out more about how they can help should contact the Office.

REGIONAL GROUPS

North-west CPBF has secured funding from the Association of Greater Manchester Councils for another year. The group held their AGM on 25 April. The AGM was addressed by Max Easterman, BBC presenter of Eurofile.

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

Your daily dose: racism and THE SUN



It was followed on the Saturday by a conference - 'Gunpowder, treason and plots'. Speakers included Colin Wallace and the co-editors of Lobster magazine.

The South-west group has had a difficult year with the bookshop which used to be its base having gone out of business. The Watershed in Bristol, which has hosted many CPBF events, is also undergoing changes. The group is still active, however and has links with another active group in Cardiff.

Following the AGM a Scottish group could be in the making. MP Norman Buchan, journalist Donald McCrae and law lecturer David Goldberg have been discussing the possibilities.

VIDEOS

The TV Choice video on Ireland and Censorship, reviewed in the Jan/Feb issue of *Free Press*, was launched with CPBF at the House of Commons on 5 April. A similar style launch is now being planned for a new video on the Broadcasting Ban put together by David Miller of Glasgow Media Group. For details of availability contact the Office.

RIGHT OF REPLY PACK

The Campaign has completely updated its Right of Reply Pack. Added to pamphlets, worksheets and the most recent Right of Reply Bill is information about the Editors' and

Press Council's new Codes of Conduct and the latest telephone and fax numbers of all national newspaper editors and readers representatives. This is an invaluable resource pack and guide for those seeking to tackle media bias and gain redress. It costs £3.95 + 65p p&p and is available from CPBF, 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG.

Also available is a new update of the 'Who owns what' poster detailing the latest changes in media ownership.

DAY OF ACTION

The NUJ has called for a day of action — including industrial action — on 27 June to press for union rights. The nationally organised campaign will highlight attempts by management to erode or remove recognition and bargaining rights. Over the last few years the union has faced a massive onslaught — particularly with the introduction of personal contracts. CPBF members are urged to support local action.

Edited for the National Council by SIMON COLLINGS. Copy for Free Press 59 should arrive at the office not later than 22 June 1990.

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