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~ Steve Bell 1991 ~

TV's war: doublestandards and double-think

'We did use the word censored. We tried to be as accurate as we could in what we said in front of the reports.'

'In Iraq, in Bahgdad we said reports were subject to Iraqi censorship. You notice that phrase. That is not to say every report was censored, in fact some reports were not censored. But they were all subject to Iraqi censorship and we thought it right, even when they were not censored, to let the viewers know we were working under those particular conditions. In Israel where reports were censored, we said they were censored.'

'In Saudi Arabia where we had to leave out certain details for operational reasons, we said just that - we had to leave these details out for operational reasons. If you can't understand that that's your problem.'

David Mannion, ITN Editor, responsible for all of ITN's programmes on ITV.

Also inside: Spin control at the Pentagon p. 3 Phillip Knightley on patriotic censorship pp. 4 & 5, and more.

The sound and the fury

'Who could have thought television could be so thrilling?' These were the immortal, not to say downright immoral, words with which Sheena MacDonald, presenter of Channel 4's *This Week*, introduced a recent British Film Institute retrospective on television coverage of the Gulf war.

Thrilling, perhaps, in the overheated atmosphere of television newsrooms. But for television viewers, smart communications technology, smart weapons, and above all, smart news management produced a wealth of images and a dearth of news.

'We got carried away by the impact of military technology and our own technology,' admitted Tim Orchard, editor of BBC TV's *One O'Clock News*. 'We were using ground stations in Kuwait which for us were the equivalent of the first moon landing.' 'I share the concern that it looked like little boys' computer games,' said Liz Howells, managing editor of Sky News.

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Nik Gowing, diplomatic editor of Channel 4 News, added his own *mea culpa*: 'How many people were really killed....Only seven per cent of ordnance dropped was laser guided. The rest of the bombs were free fall and only 25 per cent hit their target. We are suffering the fog of war.' The fog of war or necessary illusions? Throughout the war media editors were the willing accomplices of the military censors and the government news managers.

In a democratic society, in which the public is entitled to comprehensive information and a plurality of opinion, it should not be like this. Within days of the Gulf war ending, television news showed it does not have to be like this. It was the harrowing reports in the major news bulletins on the plight of the Kurds, and the exposure of the

hostile Arab public opinion, and the increased burden the war imposed on tens of millions of people in the countries of the South, were subjects marginalised or excluded from the major news bulletins.

Doublestandards and double-think were conscious editorial policy. It was not the Ministry of Defence, but John Wilson, Controller of Editorial Policy at the BBC who laid down the Corporation's line on the eve of war: 'Programmes should make it known in general terms that some information will be held back for military reasons and that reports out of Iraq are rigorously censored' (*War Considerations*, January 1991).

Not to be outdone, David Mannion, responsible for all ITN's programmes on ITV, could not understand the derision which greeted his comment at



hypocrisy and duplicity behind U.S. and British government policy, which forced Bush and Major to act.

That action may well prove cosmetic, but here was clear evidence of the ability of television news to mould public perception of a crisis - and mobilise public opinion.

Throughout the Gulf crisis there was no such systematic questioning of the sordid history of diplomatic manoeuvrings by the U.S. and Britain in the Middle East, or of the stated aims of operation Desert Shield, which was meant to protect Saudi Arabia, or of how it metamorphised into a Desert Storm to 'free Kuwait'. When war itself broke out, the beneficiaries of the military's and media's mutual technological obsessions were the respective governments of the United States and Britain.

War was sanitised while critical analysis of U.S. and British policy, dissident domestic voices, largely

the BFI retrospective that 'the information was controlled, but you were not controlled in how you reported it'. Challenged on the language used by ITN to describe military censorship he produced the specious nonsense printed on our front page.

Richard Blystone, CNN's London correspondent, appeared to blame the viewers. 'TV exists in a defined period of time in a little square box. It is an emotionally loaded symbol. If you go to TV for your only news, then your lazy. If you go to TV for the truth, then your a looney.'

But if future war coverage, to paraphrase Macbeth, is to be more than 'a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing', we must reject such cynicism and continue to fight for democratic and accountable control of broadcasting.

Mick Gosling

Spin control at the Pentagon

Throughout the Gulf war the Ministry of Defence played second fiddle to the Pentagon when managing the news. There were even complaints that the MoD withheld information already released in the U.S. Coupled with CNN's 24 hour coverage, in which no White House, Pentagon or military briefing was missed, this may have created the illusion that the US administration was more open in its dealings with the media and U.S. war reporting was itself less censored. But as the U.S. media watch group, *Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting*, relates, nothing would be further from the truth.

The extent to which war reporting was controlled by the Bush administration was seldom detailed by the press and hence widely misunderstood by the public, which largely bought the argument that restrictions were necessary for some vaguely defined 'security' reasons. Such arguments were belied by the Pentagon's arbitrary ban on coverage of coffins returning to the Dover Air Force Base, and by the '48-hour news blackout' at the beginning of the ground war that was abandoned as soon as the news turned out to be good for the Pentagon.

Nor were the pools formed because there would otherwise be too many reporters for the military to safely manage: the Pentagon actually flew in, at its own expense, 450 local U.S. reporters to cover their 'hometown troops'. Meanwhile, foreign and alternative reporters who would not produce such predictably favourable coverage were almost entirely excluded from the pools.

The restrictions were aimed not at protecting lives, but at protecting the Bush administration's popularity by keeping unpalatable images away from the U.S. public.

'I've never seen anything that can compare to it, in the degree of surveillance and control the military has over the correspondents,' stated *New York Times* war correspondent Malcolm Browne (*Newsday* 31/1/91). 'When the entire environment is controlled, a journalist ceases to be a reporter in the American or Anglo-Saxon tradition. He works a lot like the PK (Propagandakompanien, the Nazi propaganda corps).'

The policy had its roots not only in the Pentagon's successful efforts to control the flow of information during the invasions of Panama and Grenada, but in the sophisticated techniques of spin control developed by the Reagan and Bush administrations, techniques whose finest flowering was in the 1988 Presidential election campaign. The key principle used by both is that if you can control where and when journalists (particularly TV journalists) can report, you can control the imagery and its emotional impact on the public. Michael Deaver, Reagan's minister of photo opportunities, marvelled at the Pentagon's media mastery: 'If you were going to hire a public relations firm to do the media relations for an international event, it couldn't be done any better than this is being done.'

'You asshole,' NBC correspondent Brad Willis told Robert Fisk. 'You'll prevent us from working. You're not allowed here. Get out. Go back to Dhahran.'

The prime function of the pool reporting concept was to limit the imagery available to TV cameras. Thus we saw much mock heroic imagery of missiles rocketing into the wild blue yonder; images of soldiers killed or wounded by 'friendly fire' or 'non-combat related accidents' were not considered suitable photo opportunities. As Howard Stringer, president of the CBS Broadcast Group reported (*New York Times* 4/3/91): 'There are more people routinely killed across the spectrum of American television in a given night than you saw in any of the coverage of the war.'

Since so much of U.S. action was in the air, where reporters are naturally excluded, the Pentagon provided its own visuals: the video-game footage from laser-guided 'smart bombs' hitting seemingly uninhabited buildings, always dead on target. That the military selects the best examples of its handiwork for their show and tells is obvious, but that didn't stop TV from rerunning the footage endlessly,

or pundits from citing it as evidence of how well expensive high-tech weaponry works.

While some journalists abandoned the pools and set off on their own in search of more independent reporting, others seemed to prefer the comforts and privileges of being a kept press. When Robert Fisk of the *Independent* tried to report without official permission on the battle of Khafji, NBC correspondent Brad Willis reported him to the Marines (*Independent* 6/2/91; Jack Anderson 3/3/91). 'You asshole,' the reporter told Fisk. 'You'll prevent us from working. You're not allowed here. Get out. Go back to Dhahran.'

Reporters who tried to cover the war outside the Pentagon's press pools were sometimes detained and threatened by US soldiers. Marines held a wire service photographer for six hours, threatening to shoot him if he left his car - 'We have orders from above to make this pool system work,' they told him. A French TV crew was forced at gunpoint to turn over to Marines footage of soldiers wounded at the battle of Khafji.

The power to control where pool reporters go - and to remove unco-operative reporters from the pool, as was done to the *L.A. Times'* Douglas Jehl - was not enough to satisfy Pentagon information managers. Journalists were also accompanied by military escorts who intervened in reporting, blocking interviews on sensitive subjects like the practice of religion by US soldiers in fundamentalist Saudi Arabia. Military officials had right of approval over the final copy and footage (although the benign verb 'cleared' was usually used in place of the more ominous 'censored').

The response of the mainstream media to being censored by their government was strikingly muted, considering that in the case of Nicaragua the media often considered wartime censorship as a plausible justification for overthrowing the government. They could have legally challenged the Pentagon restrictions; the Center for Constitutional Rights, on behalf of a number of journalists and liberal and progressive publications, filed a lawsuit seeking the abolition of the restrictions on the grounds that there is no wartime exception to the First Amendment. But not only did mainstream media not join the lawsuit, they hardly even reported it.

Here is the Patriotically Censored News

Information manipulation has progressed since the Crimea and reached deadly sophistication in the Gulf, writes Phillip Knightley

The war in the Gulf marked a major change in censorship. Although the Alliance gave 'military security' as its ostensible reasons for the rules it imposed on correspondents - the excuse used ever since the British invented military censorship in 1856 - there was a covert expansion of aims. In the Gulf War, the Alliance goal was much more ambitious - to manage the news to its own advantage.

News management in the Gulf had three main purposes: to deny information to the enemy; to create and maintain support for the war; and to change public perception of the nature of war itself. Of these the third is by far the most important and the most sinister. How did we get to this alarming state of affairs?

The Crimea

After the failure of the Allied attack on Sevastopol in June 1855, sentiment in Britain swung against *The Times* and its correspondent, William Howard Russell, the pioneer of modern war reporting whose critical dispatches from the Crimea had helped bring down the government. Prince Albert called Russell 'that miserable scribbler', one MP suggested that the army should lynch him, and there were suggestions that the behaviour of *The Times* and Russell was little short of treason.

This made it easier for the new Commander-in-Chief, Sir William Codrington, to acquire government support for some sort of restraint on the press. The government favoured putting the reporters on their honour not to report anything that might endanger victory, but Codrington, whose opinion of journalists was not very high, went further. On 25 February 1856, he issued a general order that must rank as the origin of military censorship. It forbade the publication of anything the authorities considered could be of value to the enemy.

1914-1918

Britain has been involved in no major war since then in which some degree of censorship has not been imposed. And as early as the First World War, the government had expanded the aims of censorship to include point number two from above - create and maintain support for the war.

In 1914-18 the military allowed only six correspondents to report from the front. It put them in military uniform, provided them with orderlies, lorries, cars, conducting officers and censors. The censors lived with them, ate with them, read their dispatches, and opened their private letters.

'We identified ourselves absolutely with the Army in the field... There was no need of censorship of our dispatches. We were our own censors.'

First World War correspondent Sir Philip Gibbs, 1923.

The correspondents drew lots to see who would cover a particular attack and then shared the report with their colleagues, an early form of the modern 'pool' arrangement. Each then submitted his story to the censor and what was left was sent by military dispatch rider to Signals where it was telephoned to the War Office and then sent by hand to the various newspaper offices.

The aims were to provide the public with colourful stories of heroism and glory so as to sustain enthusiasm for the war, to cover any mistakes the high command might make, preserve it from criticism in its conduct of the

war, and to safeguard the reputations of the generals.

The correspondents went along with all this. One of them, Sir Philip Gibbs, wrote in 1923: 'We identified ourselves absolutely with the Army in the field... There was no need of censorship of our dispatches. We were our own censors'. *The Times* approved: 'They felt that their task was to sustain the morale of the nation in mortal combat; therefore they praised victories no less highly than they deserved; in stalemates they found elements of advantage; and defeats they minimised, excused, or ignored.'

The effect of this distortion was immense. The average British citizen, now a soldier, had been accepting all along that if something was printed in the newspapers, then it was true. Now, in the biggest event of his life, he was able to check what the press said against what he knew to be the truth. He felt that he had found the press out, and as a result he lost confidence in his newspapers, a confidence to this day never entirely recovered.

1939-1945

By 1939, the government had come to regard the war correspondent as a part of the armed forces - 'an integral and essential part of our fighting activities on land, on the sea and in the air' - who, for the most part, again went along with what the censors said. This was understandable because the war was one of national survival in which the wickedness of the enemy did not have to be invented.

But it did produce worrying after effects - when censorship was finally lifted many correspondent were bewildered. One spoke for them all when he said: 'But where will we go now to have our stories cleared?' A Canadian, Charles Lynch, summed up: 'It's humiliating to look back at what we wrote during the war. We were a propaganda arm of our governments. At the start the censors enforced that, but by the end we were our own censors. We were cheerleaders.'



Vietnam

Vietnam upset the status quo. Censorship has always been a problem in the United States because the first amendment to the Constitution guaranteed freedom of expression, and prior restraint (censorship) could only be justified in a national emergency. There was no declaration of war against Vietnam and therefore no censorship. Correspondents were free to travel where they wished and write what they liked. The military confined itself to trying to persuade them to 'get on side' and to using its political clout in Washington to influence editors.

It did not succeed. At first correspondents supported the war, but when they saw that government policy was not working they said so. Graphic television coverage brought home to Americans the nature of the war itself, its bloody brutality, and the suffering of Vietnamese civilians. That, and increasing American casualties, sapped public support for the war and the United States pulled out.

The lesson were noted. On 13 October 1970, a Royal United Service Institution seminar in London discussed television coverage of the Vietnam war. The Director of Defence

Operations, Plans and Supplies at the Ministry of Defence, Brigadier F.J. Caldwell, said that if Britain ever went to war again, 'we would have to start saying to ourselves, are we going to let the television camera loose on the battlefield?'

Falklands/Malvinas

The answer was no. By the time the Falklands campaign had started, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) had in place its plans to manage the news. The MoD started with one major advantage - it, and only it, controlled access to the war. So no one was let loose on the battlefield unless he had first agreed, as a condition of being allowed to accompany the task force, to accept censorship at source. And, to give the correspondents an idea of their duty, they were issued with a booklet which told them that they would be expected to 'help in leading and steadying public opinion in times of national stress or crisis'.

The MoD succeeded in managing the news brilliantly - censoring, suppressing, and delaying dangerous news, releasing bad news in dribs and drabs so as to nullify its impact, and projecting its own image as the only real source of accurate information about what was happening. Those stories it suppressed until the war was over give an indication of a trend that was developing in the culture of censorship.

After the war, correspondents back from the front rushed into print with the 'untold story', incidents that the MoD had refused to pass at the time. The intriguing thing is that most of these stories would have been of no value to Argentina whatsoever. What they did was to paint too vivid a picture of the face of battle.

Gulf War

So by the time the Gulf War had started, censorship's additional aim was to convince the public that the new technology of war had removed a lot of war's horrors from early on: the

emphasis was on the 'surgical' nature of air strikes; the cancer would be removed but the living flesh around it would be left untouched. Bombs dropped with 'pinpoint accuracy' would 'take out' only military targets; there would be little or no 'collateral damage' (dead civilians). Iraq's military machine would be destroyed from the air so that there might even be no need for soldiers to kill soldiers in a ground war of attrition.

The picture that this news management has painted is of a war almost without death, a sanitised version of what has gone before. It was weeks before any bodies were shown on television, and then British television chiefs voluntarily cut the more horrific scenes. A new language was brought into being to soften the reality of war. Bombing military targets in the heart of cities was called 'denying the enemy an infrastructure'. People were 'soft targets'. Saturation bombing was 'laying down a carpet'.

The idea was to suggest that hardly any people were involved in modern warfare, only machines. This explains the emphasis at Alliance press briefings on the damage 'our' machines have caused to 'their' machines, and the reluctance of the briefing officers to discuss casualties - on either side.

So the Gulf War is an important one in the history of censorship. It marks a deliberate attempt by the authorities to alter public perception of the nature of war itself, particularly the fact that civilians die in war. The rationale, as yet unproven, is that the public will no longer support any war in which large numbers of civilians are killed, especially by Western high technology armaments. Whether the new censorship succeeds or not remains to be seen.

Reprinted with the kind permission of Index on Censorship & Phillip Knightley. The IoC Gulf Special, £3, and Phillip Knightley's definitive history of war censorship, *The First Casualty* £7.50, are available from CPBF. Add 10% p&p CPBF, 96 Dalston Lane, London E8 1NG



Vietnam revisited

The role of the American media during the Vietnam War is still hotly debated. In this article, **Daniel Hallin**, Associate Professor of Communication at the University of California argues that one of the most persistent myths about Vietnam is the idea that saturation coverage on television turned the public against the war, and by extension that any televised war will lose public support.

The truth is that television was very far from showing the 'true horror of the war' in Vietnam, although it wasn't military restrictions that limited what we saw. The limits were mainly self-imposed - or to be more generous, were imposed by television's relation to its audience, to its government and military sources, and to the soldiers who were the principal characters in the 'living room war'. These factors affected what we saw in the Gulf as well, far more than military restrictions, tight as these may have been.

The main story for television in the early years of the 'living room war' was the 'American boys in action'. The networks assumed, probably correctly, that this kind of 'up close and personal' reporting would appeal most strongly to the public. The morale of American troops was very good when the war began, and most television coverage was filled with vignettes of brave soldiers and their powerful weaponry which of course made wonderful visuals for TV. The 'big picture' was filled in by military planners. The networks' own policies, meanwhile, limited graphical portrayals of casualties. 'Producers and editors must exercise great caution before permitting pictures of casualties to be shown,' said one CBS directive.

'Shots can be selected that are not grisly, the purpose being not to avoid showing the ugly side of war, but rather to avoid offending families of war victims.' This policy however well-intentioned, had the effect of sanitising television's image of war.

Television coverage did not become substantially more sober until the public, Washington officials and the soldiers in the field had already lost confidence that the war could be won. Television, in other words, was more a



GULF WAR WORD QUIZ

MATCH SANITIZED PHRASE AT LEFT WITH CORRECT MEANING AT RIGHT

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Pounding positions | A. KILLING |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Softening up | B. KILLING |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Collateral damage | C. KILLING |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Saturation strikes | D. KILLING |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Carpet bombing | E. KILLING |

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follower than a leader of public opinion.

Much of the public seems also to assume that the media in Vietnam were a threat to military security, judging from polls that show support for tight restrictions on journalists in the Gulf. But this is also incorrect. Several examinations of the voluntary guidelines used in Vietnam, which were far looser than the restrictions in the Gulf, found that these guidelines worked well. This was the conclusion reached by a Twentieth Century Fund task force on the military and the

media, as well as a study by William M Hammond of the Army's Office of Military History.

Today's living room war was not so different from that of 1965. Images of technology still fascinate, although far glitzier 'smart bomb' videos have replaced the old bomb-sight films of Vietnam. The media's military analyses, presented in a language drained of any sense of the political meaning or human cost of war, echoed the earlier reporting.

Reprinted from *Extra!* (Gulf May '91).

TV: The more you watch the less you know

Many television news editors have dismissed criticism of TV coverage of the Gulf crisis by pointing to opinion polls showing roughly twice as many people believe what they watch on the television news as opposed to what they read in the newspapers.

This has not been put to the test in Britain. However, a recent study conducted by the University of Massachusetts' Centre for Studies in Communication, found that the more people watched TV during the Gulf crisis, the less they knew about the underlying issues and the more likely they were to support the war.

When the research team tested public knowledge of basic facts about the region, U.S. policy and events leading up to the war, they discovered 'the most striking gaps in people's knowledge involved information that might reflect badly upon the administration's policy'.

Only 13 per cent knew the U.S. responded to Iraq's threat to use force against Kuwait last July by saying it would take no action; 65 per cent falsely believed that the U.S. responded by saying it would support Kuwait militarily.

Less than a third were aware that either Israel or coalition partner Syria were occupying foreign territory in the Middle East. Only 14 per cent knew that the U.S. was part of a tiny minority in the UN that voted against a political settlement of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict.

By contrast, 81 per cent of the sample could identify the missiles used to shoot down Iraqi Scuds as a Patriot. That viewers knew facts relating to apparently successful U.S. weapons but not about inconsistencies in U.S. foreign policy, the researchers argued, 'suggests that the public are not generally ignorant - rather they are selectively misinformed'.

The study concludes: 'the Pentagon or the Bush administration cannot be blamed for only presenting those facts that lend support for their case - it isn't their job, after all, to provide the public with a balanced view. Culpability for this rests clearly on the shoulders of the news media, particularly television, who have a duty to present the public with all the relevant facts.'

Information from *Extra!* (May '91). Journal of Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting.

Two cheers for Channel 4?

Channel 4's *Banned!* season was eagerly awaited in the aftermath of the Gulf War - not least for the programmes that Channel 4 itself had 'delayed' screening.

Notwithstanding that, a season of films committed to freedom of expression and the public's right to know was welcome. Duncan Campbell's *Cabinet* found a welcome slot. So did goldfish in *WR - Mysteries of the Organism*, an easy laugh against the Independent Television Commission's prudery regarding male genitalia.

But, the preamble to the screening of *Mother Ireland* on April 11, made one wonder whether C for Channel 4 and H for hypocrisy should have been added to the *A-Z of Censorship* which accompanied the season.

It was claimed the film 'was never acquired by Channel 4 from the Derry Video workshop'. The fact that Channel 4 had paid for the film to be made and had the first option to screen it was omitted and the film which followed was one already cut at the request of Channel 4 in 1988.

Mother Ireland included an interview with Mairead Farrell, one of three IRA members shot dead by the SAS in Gibraltar on March 6, 1988. But it was not banned, as Channel 4 suggested, because of the Government broadcasting ban on live speech by members of Sinn Fein and 10 other Irish organisations, announced by Douglas Hurd on 19th October 1988.

The film had been delivered to Channel 4 on March 2, 1988. Even after the Gibraltar shootings Channel 4's legal department concluded in a three-page report that nothing needed to be cut from the programme and recommended that it be shown.

It was Channel 4 that requested changes, reluctantly agreed to by the Derry Film and Video Workshop. Out went rare archive footage of Emma Groves being blinded by a rubber bullet in 1972; out went film of women marching on a British army post; out went a song by Christy Moore called *Unfinished Revolution* and out went Italian TV footage of women sitting in a room with weapons.

While detracting from the power of the film, some of these cuts are now clearly ridiculous. The Emma Groves shooting has since been shown as part of a Ken Loach film for BBC2's *Split Screen*, and the Italian footage was screened on Channel 4 itself in *Ireland: Silent Voices*.

It was this cut version of *Mother Ireland*, which was sent to the

Independent Broadcasting Authority in mid-May 1988. It was neither banned nor given the go-ahead. It was sat on. Finally on 19th October 1988, Channel 4 said it would broadcast the film if Mairead Farrell was cut from the programme. However, the same day the whole exercise became academic. Hurd announced the broadcasting ban, affecting five of the 11 interviews in the programme.

One is left asking whether Channel 4, leave alone the IBA, really wanted to show *Mother Ireland* at that time. The furore over Thames TV's *Death on the Rock* was running. Deregulation of commercial TV was on the way. Anything controversial from Ireland must have been an unwelcome hot potato.

The current tragedy is that Channel 4 never attempted to restore the cuts and sought to disguise its own role in the original censorship of *Mother Ireland*. So long as self-censorship prevails, there is little chance of challenging the heavier hand of official secrecy and government censorship.

Mick Gosling



MOTHER
IRELAND

Right to Reply? Tackling the media

Which national newspaper proprietor openly describes himself as being on the political right? When is a drift back to work a long way from the truth?

The answers to these and many more related questions are in the new video from Northern Newsreel, *Right to Reply*. The tape focuses on three main themes: the media moguls, TV coverage of the 1984-5 coal dispute and videos from trade unions and is supported by a very useful set of supporting notes.

The first section on the media moguls looks at concentration of ownership in the press, how it influences the content of newspapers, and how the problems we now associate with the press are spreading into broadcasting in the wake of the 1990 Broadcasting Act. Pointing out that Murdoch, Maxwell and Stevens control 73% of the national press, it shows the threat to media freedom this poses, using eye-catching graphics, a humorous voice-over and Granville Williams of the CPBF.

Tony Lennon, President of the newly merged broadcasting union, BECTU, and CPBF Chair, draws out the implications of the 1990 Act for jobs, quality, and freedom of expression in the industry. He also points to the increasing problem of cross ownership between broadcasting and the press.

The Glasgow media group provide a sharp analysis of the way TV news misrepresented the 'drift back to work' during the 1984 coal dispute. It shows how the ordering of items and selection of language in one news bulletin gave the clear, and untruthful, impression that there was a 'drift back to work'. By reordering the same information and changing the language, the Glasgow group show how the bulletin could have presented the issue in a way which did not favour the propaganda interests of the government and the NCB.

Add to these items the one on trade union videos, and you have an excellent tape. It is ideal for use in trade union, campaigning or public meetings and in building support for media reform.

Tom O'Malley

Right to Reply? Tackling the media. 37 mins. Price £40 to regional and national trade unions, local authorities and institutions. Special price £20 to local trade union branches, Trades Councils and community groups. Available from Northern Newsreel, 36 Bottle Bank, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, NE8 2AR. Cheques payable to 'Trade Films Ltd.'

8. CPBF NOTICES

THE FOG OF WAR

Media Censorship & the Gulf

As part of the Brighton Festival Media Programme, the CPBF presents an afternoon of film and discussion about media coverage of the Gulf War. Including screenings of

Hell No, We Won't Go
and
The Gulf Between Us

These two films, shown on Channel 4, challenged the media consensus and are currently the subject of court action by the right wing Freedom Association. Plus a new film

A Tin Can With a Silencer

This is your chance to discuss how we organise against the abuse of media power, whether in war or peace.

The discussion will be led by

- Tony Lennon**
Chair CPBF, President BECTU
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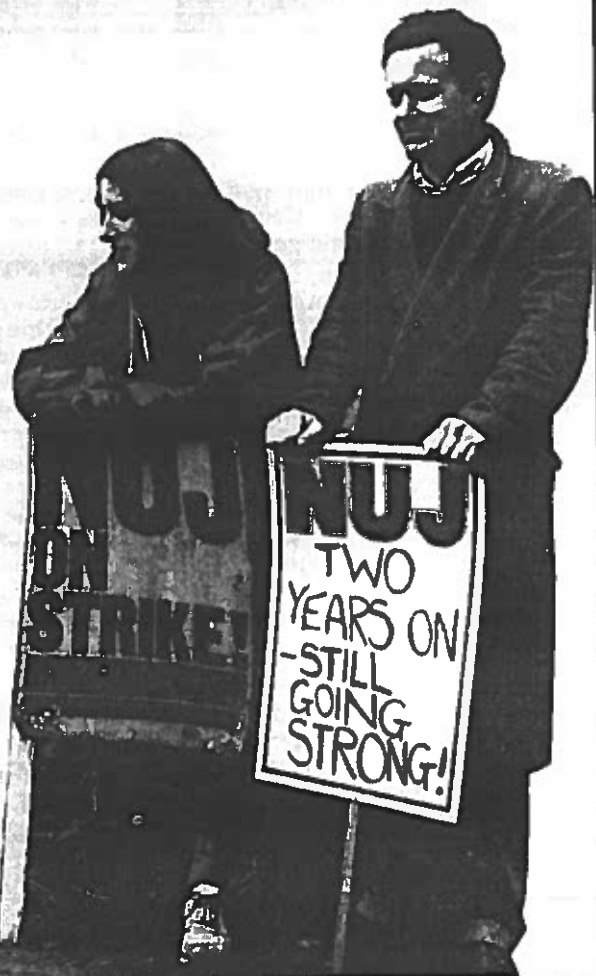
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BRING YOUR BANNERS



Free Press 63 should have appeared in Mar/Apr. This issue replaces it. Free Press 64 will appear in June. The July/August issue will be a special covering all aspects of the CPBF's policy for media reform in the 1990's and will appear in August. Free Press is edited by the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the National Council.

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AFFILIATION BY ORGANISATION

- f) Less than 500 members £15
 - g) 500 to 1,000 members £20
 - h) 1,000 to 10,000 members £40
 - i) 10,000 to 50,000 members £95
 - j) 50,000 to 100,000 members £185
 - k) Over 100,000 members £375
- FP63

I/We want to join the CPBF and enclose a cheque/PO for £

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