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The Mirror and the Miners

The British Press Award of Reporter of the Year to three *Daily Mirror* journalists for 'the story of Arthur Scargill and the missing miners' cash' reflects the depths to which press standards and accountability have sunk. For the last nine months the CPBF has attempted to get serious complaints about this story investigated by the self-appointed regulators of the press. We have met with delay, prevarication and refusal.

The conduct of the *Mirror's* investigation flouted the national newspaper editors' own code of conduct in its failure to use straightforward means to obtain stories, promptly correct mistakes and offer a fair opportunity to reply. It makes nonsense of the Press Complaints Commission Code of Practice.

The *Mirror* never told its readers that its star witnesses, Roger Windsor and Jim Parker, were paid at least £100,000 for their stories — payments which would have raised questions about their motivation and credibility. When Iris Knight, another *Mirror* source, received a hate letter, the paper was 'happy to point out that Mrs Knight did not seek cash and was not paid a penny'. (*Mirror* 30 July 1990) Quite correctly the paper thought this gave her story greater credibility with readers. So why the double standards?

Having paid Windsor the *Mirror* tried to make him credible despite the fact that, on his own admission, he had gone off to France owing the National Union of Mineworkers £29,500. But why had it taken him four and a half years to become 'shattered and disillusioned' by the alleged Libyan cash deal. (*Mirror* 6 March 1990) Windsor's

THE FACTS

resignation letter to NUM General Secretary Peter Heathfield, dated 28 July 1989, told a different story: 'the dropping of the unilateral disarmament policy by Kinnoch was the final blow.' On 23 August 1990 the *Guardian* reported this, the *Mirror* did not.

Jim Parker was also paid by the *Mirror*, having taken generous redundancy terms, personally negotiated by Arthur Scargill, when he resigned voluntarily in 1989. The *Mirror* never mentioned this nor questioned the credibility of its two corroborative witnesses — Altaf Abbasi and Abdul Ghani.

Altaf Abbasi was introduced to the *Mirror's* readers as 'a Pakistani corner-shopkeeper in Doncaster'. (5 March 1990) It was not till 7 March 1990, in a side article on its centrespread, that the *Mirror* revealed that Abbasi had been arrested in Pakistan and jailed for 25 years for his part in planned bomb attack on a mosque. It didn't mention that this was in 1980.

Yet four year later Abbasi and the *Mirror* would have us believe that this was the man who on three occasions 'coolly moved through Customs at Heathrow' with a suitcase stuffed full of Libyan cash for the miners. This at a time, as *Guardian* journalist Richard Norton Taylor reported, 'all the (NUM's) telephone lines, down to branch secretaries were tapped by GCHQ.' (*Leeds Other Paper* 21 September 1991) And, as we now know, 'British and United States intelligence services used a Europe-wide telephone tapping system to

track funds being channelled to and from the NUM during the 1984-5 strike and for some years afterwards.' (*Guardian* and Channel 4's *Dispatches* 22 May 1991) Altaf Abbasi was honoured by Colonel Gaddafi in 1989 and believed by the *Mirror* in 1990.

Abdul Ghani, was modestly introduced to *Mirror* readers on the 7 March 1990 as the 'builder' who claimed to have witnessed the handing over to Windsor of two sums of £50,000. Following a nine week trial in 1987, Ghani was jailed for fraud for running a massive housing improvement grant rip-off. What does this make of his credibility? Is this why this information was withheld from *Mirror* readers, or are we to believe that three journalists who spent seven months preparing the *Mirror's* allegations were too incompetent to find this out?

This cast constituted the *Mirror's* 'scoop' witnesses. The *Mirror's* original and damning allegation — repeated by the then 20 per cent Maxwell-owned Central TV's *Cook Report* — was that 'Miner's leader Arthur Scargill got 163,000 in strike support from Libya and used a large part of it to pay off personal debts'. (*Mirror* 5 March 1990) In response to the allegations of personal corruption, Scargill and Heathfield called for the Lightman inquiry and revealed details of the 17 overseas bank accounts which were set up in the course of the 1984/5 strike to avoid sequestration and receivership. This was done on the basis of instructions given at a secret NUM Executive meeting held on 8 March 1984. The monies in these accounts were used to sustain the strike and maintain the fabric of the union, but they were not NUM accounts.

The Lightman Report was highly critical of Roger Windsor's *Mirror* account of his trip to Libya in 1984. A very different version had been relayed by him to Peter McNestry, the national secretary of the National Association of Colliery Overmen, Deputies and Shotfirers.

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Code of Practice

The following are extracts from the code of practice framed by members of the newspaper and periodical industry, which the Press Complaints Commission is charged to enforce:

1. Accuracy

i Newspapers and periodicals should take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted material.
ii Whenever it is recognised that a significant inaccuracy, misleading statement or distorted report has been published, it should be corrected promptly and with due prominence.
iii An apology should be published whenever appropriate.

iv A newspaper or periodical should always report fairly and accurately the outcome of an action for defamation in which it has been a party.

2. Opportunity to reply

A fair opportunity for reply to inaccuracies should be given to individuals or organisations when reasonably called for.

3. Comment, conjecture and fact

Newspapers, while free to be partisan, should distinguish clearly between comment, conjecture and fact.

4. Privacy

Intrusions and enquiries into an individual's private life without his or her consent are not generally acceptable and publication can only be justified when in the public interest. This would include:
i Detecting or exposing crime or serious misdemeanour.
ii Detecting or exposing seriously anti-social conduct.

iii Protecting the public health and safety.
iv Preventing the public from being misled by some statement or action of that individual.

Similar considerations apply to the obtaining of information through journalists misrepresenting themselves (clause 6), intimidation and harassment (clause 7), and payment for information to criminals, their associates or witnesses in criminal proceedings (clause 8).

12. Children in sex cases

The Press should not, even where the law does not prohibit it, identify children under the age of 16 who are involved in cases concerning sexual offences, whether as witnesses or defendants.

13. Victims of crime

The Press should not identify victims of sexual assault or publish material likely to contribute to such identification unless, by law, they are free to do so.

14. Discrimination

i The Press should avoid prejudicial or perjorative reference to a person's race, colour, religion, sex or sexual orientation or to any physical or mental illness or handicap.
ii It should avoid publishing details of a person's race, colour, religion, sex or sexual orientation, unless these are directly relevant to the story.

The full code is available from the PCC, 1 Salisbury Square, London EC4Y 8AE. Tel 071 353 1248

Poachers turned gamekeepers

Self-regulation of a press dominated by a handful of media barons never has and never will work. The CPBF's attempts to get complaints against the *Mirror* coverage of the 'Scargill affair' investigated is bitter proof of this.

A long ago as 13 September 1990 the CPBF with over 220 delegates to the 1990 TUC submitted a complaint to then *Mirror* ombudsman Peter Archer MP, QC. As well as raising the issues of straightforward means and the correction of mistakes, we raised other fundamental issues of press standards.

At no time during the *Mirror*'s original seven month 'investigation' were detailed allegations put to Scargill and Heathfield in such a way that they could be properly considered and answered. The *Mirror* has never offered either official an opportunity to reply, nor did it give fair coverage to their rebuttal of Lightman's criticisms.

As for editorial independence, *Mirror* proprietor Robert Maxwell makes no secret of the power his papers give him or his hostility to Arthur Scargill. Lawyers acting for the *Mirror* claim he 'played no part in the editorial content of the revelations in the *Daily Mirror* about Mr Scargill'.

However, on the opening day of the paper's campaign Maxwell signed the editorial 'Scargill's Waterloo'. (*Mirror* 5 March 1990) On the same day, interviewed in the *Guardian*, he boasted that his ownership of papers 'gives me the power to raise issues effectively. In simple terms, it's a megaphone.' The first example he gave was of Arthur Scargill and the *Mirror*'s role in the defeat of the 1984 miner's strike.

These points were made when representatives of the CPBF finally met and made a lengthy submission to Peter Archer on 9 January 1991. The next we heard from him was a letter dated 12 March 1991 (received 22 March) advising us that he would not be able to adjudicate on our complaint because Robert Maxwell had dispensed with his services 'in order to offer the Press Complaints Commission an opportunity to demonstrate its effectiveness'.

On 18 April we duly submitted our complaint to the PCC who deliberated for over six weeks before refusing to consider it because 'the Commission cannot at this stage take over a general third party complaint stemming from matters which took place well before the Committee was founded'. When challenged, PCC Director Kenneth Morgan has now told us that 'in most cases (the PCC) will not accept a third party complaint'.

Mr Morgan appears to be suffering from serious loss of memory. As Director of the

Press Council, which the PCC replaced on 1 January 1991, he would have been aware that in its final comments on Calcutt the Council wrote: 'Despite their cost in time, money and the irritation of editors such third party complaints should not lightly be ruled out as now seems likely. They have defended from newspaper attack or injury vulnerable individuals and groups who are unable or ill equipped to defend themselves. They have played a valuable part in raising or defending ethical standards, and sometimes in mending newspaper manners. A good example is their role over the last six years in concentrating editors' minds on how newspapers should treat race and colour.' (2 November 1990)

Given that the anti-union bias, racism, sexism and homophobia which is still prevalent in the tabloid press is normally challenged by third party complaints, the chances of any improvement in standards in these areas seems more remote than ever.

This is no surprise given the composition of the PCC, the result of a very successful lobbying campaign by the newspaper industry. Funded by the Press Board of Finance, its members were selected in secrecy with nine out of 16 places going to representatives of the press, including Patsy Chapman, editor of the *News of the World*. Despite nearly 750 complaints its clear up rate is painfully slow. It deals informally with editors and has published adjudications in only 15 cases.

Cynics might conclude that ombudspersons were put in position as the proprietors representatives to newspaper readers and that the PCC serves not as a body of self-regulation of the press but one of self-protection.

Nevertheless the PCC must be pressured to allow all third party complaints and operate the limited provisions of its own Code of Practice on groups of people as well as individuals and organisations. The points which cover accuracy, opportunity to reply, distinguishing comment and fact, avoiding discriminatory references and maintaining ethical standards of journalism should be used to hoist newspapers on their own petard.

The CPBF is sceptical that the PCC will take any meaningful steps to redress press abuses. Its refusal to consider our detailed complaints about what has become one of the most discredited news stories of recent years is evidence of this.

Such monstrous abuse of press power will only end when libel law ceases to be a smokescreen for the rich and powerful to hide behind and is made available to all through legal aid, and a speedy mechanism for right to reply is entrenched in law.



Continued from page 1.

shortly after it happened. Windsor had told McNestry he had gone to Libya to address a trade union meeting. Afterwards, and unexpectedly, he was taken to meet Colonel Gaddafi for which he was 'totally unprepared'. 'Mr Windsor did not tell Mr McNestry that he had asked Colonel Gaddafi for financial support, but said he had asked for "trade union support".' (*Lightman Report* pp64-65)

Lightman reached no conclusion on the source of the money Roger Windsor had taken into NUM headquarters but insisted that 'Mr. Windsor's allegations that the cash he had brought in was used to repay Mr. Scargill's mortgage is entirely untrue'. (p83) 'Mr. Heathfield never had a home loan until much later, and Mr. Scargill had some time before repaid his home loan out of his own monies.' (p124) As for the £29,500 owed by Roger Windsor, Lightman proposed testing his 'good faith' by discharging the debt to the Miners Solidarity Fund. (p132) The *Mirror*'s star witness has to date failed this test.

The *Mirror* was at liberty to boycott Lightman, to dismiss the findings it did not like and use the pieces it did. But having made extremely serious allegations of personal corruption, it was the paper's duty to report fully and accurately what Lightman said on these points. Instead the *Mirror* claimed the Lightman report 'PROVES most of our sensational disclosures about Scargill's secret cash dealings during and after the 1984-5 pit strike were true'. (5 July) In fact the report rebutted the *Mirror*'s central allegation, and the other 'disclosures' were not some feat of investigative journalism but based on documentation voluntarily submitted by Scargill to the NUM Executive on 10 March 1990 and the Lightman enquiry. On 3 April 1990 when a *Mirror* editorial spelled out the paper's refusal to participate in the Lightman enquiry, the only allegation referred to was the Libyan money.

After Lightman the Libyan angle died a death until an extraordinary front page story headlined 'Gaddafi: I will sue Scargill'. (*Mirror* 6 August) This was based on a *Sunday Times* story. Since then not a word has appeared about this in either paper. This is not surprising. On 13 August the *Guardian* reported that the official Libyan news agency 'had no knowledge of any such plans'. The *Mirror* never retracted a story it had run over three pages.

The *Mirror*'s campaign about the 'missing' Russian miners' money did not begin in earnest until 13 June 1990. But who were its 'angry Soviet miners' leaders' chasing up to £3.6 million donated in strike aid? On 22 June *Tribune* revealed that the *Mirror*'s Sergei Massolovich and Nikolai Terokin 'aren't leaders of anything... They are members of an extremist right-wing organisation, the NTS or Popular Labour Alliance formed in the Thirties, whose members were so anti-Soviet that they collaborated with the Nazis during the Second World War. Since then NTS has been an intelligence playground.' The *Mirror* did not tell its readers this and the story only resurfaced with the publication of the Lightman report (4 July) which insisted that money intended to relieve hardship from Soviet miners had been misapplied to a Miners Trade Union International account. The MTUI was superseded by the International Miners Organisation.

The *Mirror*, with its legendary respect for accuracy, got to work. On 5 July the amount was £3.6 million; 'as much as £1.8 million' (11 July); £1.4 million (20 July); £1 million (4 and 10 July) and £2 million including food (12 July). The IMO, with over 40 affiliates and 6.5 million members and recognised by the United Nations, International Labour Organisation and European Community, was described as 'shadowy' (10, 11 and 23 July) as 'the mysterious Scargill founded IMO' (23 July) and 'Scargill's IMO' (10 October). On 10 July the *Mirror* started its campaign for the fraud squad to be sent in with the attacks on Scargill becoming even more personalised and concentrating on his home.

On 20 July the *Mirror* reported the NUM executive's decision to sue for the return of the 'Russian cash' without pointing out that this was on the insistence of lawyers who had instructed other executive members that they themselves would be in 'breach of trust' if they did do so. On 26 July the *Mirror* headlined 'Fraud squad cops go in' and was 'happy' to provide 'all the help the police may require'. But who was *Mirror*'s mysterious unnamed Soviet miner who had also requested an investigation? None other than Sergei Massolovich. The *Mirror* must have known he had sworn his complaint during his June visit, but news of it was suppressed until late July to help keep the pot boiling.

Scargill had immediately rebutted Lightman's claim that Soviet miners had donated directly to the striking miners and produced evidence to support this. The *Mirror* chose not to report this. But when the NUM executive — having been pushed into litigation which eventually cost the NUM £350,000 and as a result of its own investigation — accepted this and reached an agreement with the IMO, this was headlined 'Arthur off the hook as NUM gets its £1m'. (*Mirror* 11 September) The article underneath was a travesty of the truth. It did not mention the crucial documentary evidence produced in Paris the previous day by IMO general secretary Alain Simon. 'It was a Soviet transfer document instructing Mr Simon to pay the money into (an international) solidarity fund. The transfer was made on February 12, 1985.' (*Guardian* 14 September)

Subsequently the *Guardian* and Channel 4's *Dispatches* revealed 'it was the Soviet authorities, not the NUM, which ordered money to be sent to a solidarity fund, now controlled by the IMO. The aim was to protect Mikhail Gorbachev's relations with the British government.' (*Guardian* 22 May 1991) On 11 October 1990, the decision of the NUM Conference to support the executive's position, reject Lightman's account of the Russian money and approve Scargill and Heathfield's handling of finances, received just six inches on page 5 of the *Mirror*. On 8 December 1990, in a tiny article on page two under the headline 'Scargill trial date fixed', the *Mirror* reported 'the police have decided not to carry on with their fraud probe'. As for the action of the certification officer referred to, that collapsed in court in June 1991.

All that is left of the *Mirror* story is that Scargill and Heathfield have nice homes and the inference that these have been acquired by corrupt means.

For this 'classic of serious popular journalism', 'a difficult target investigated thoroughly, vigorously and tirelessly', with the results presented with 'panache', Terry Pattinson's *Mirror* team have been made Reporters of the Year. In doing so the judges of the British Press Awards have disgraced themselves, serious investigative journalism and any pretence that the truth should be allowed to get in the way of a good story and an easy target.

Mick Gosling

ITC: Licenced to sell...

The bids are in. The consultation period is over. And from now till the end of October the Independent Television Commission will be considering the applicants for the 15 ITV regional franchises.

This is a very bald version of the reality which will deliver commercial television to the tender mercies of the market. When the tomes of franchise applications were delivered to the ITC's headquarters in Brompton Road on 15 May, the most important document was missing — the sealed cash bid. This will only be seen by the most senior ITC personnel.

Subject to applicants meeting the ITC's programming requirements or 'quality threshold' — and a detailed enough prospectus was sent out — the 1990 Broadcasting Act stipulates that the ITC is required to accept the highest bid in all but the most 'exceptional circumstances'. Too wide an interpretation of that clause is likely to generate a lot of work for corporate lawyers.

Public consultation? If it is the size of the bid that is going to count, why bother? So the ITC didn't. A member of the public who wanted to see the franchise applications had to trudge off to one of 275 public libraries around the country or regional ITC offices and submit her comments to the ITC by 26 June. The only public meetings to discuss the respective merits of franchise bids were those organised by the British Film Institute in conjunction with the *Guardian*. A number of companies boycotted these.

There may be a lot of sweating going on in the corporate boardrooms of the franchise applicants but this will not be out of concern for the discretionary powers of the ITC which is recognised as a glorified auctioneer. It will be caused by the fear of having underbid or massively overbid a rival. The only guaranteed beneficiary will be the Treasury which could net a windfall in excess of £250 million.

The losers are already apparent — the workers in the industry. Whoever wins the franchises — the incumbent 'publisher-broadcasters' with their in-house facilities, or their 'publisher-contractor' challengers, who will farm out programme making to independent companies — jobs will go. If the latter sweep the board, the cuts will be a slaughter. Union recognition and agreements will be harder to maintain as

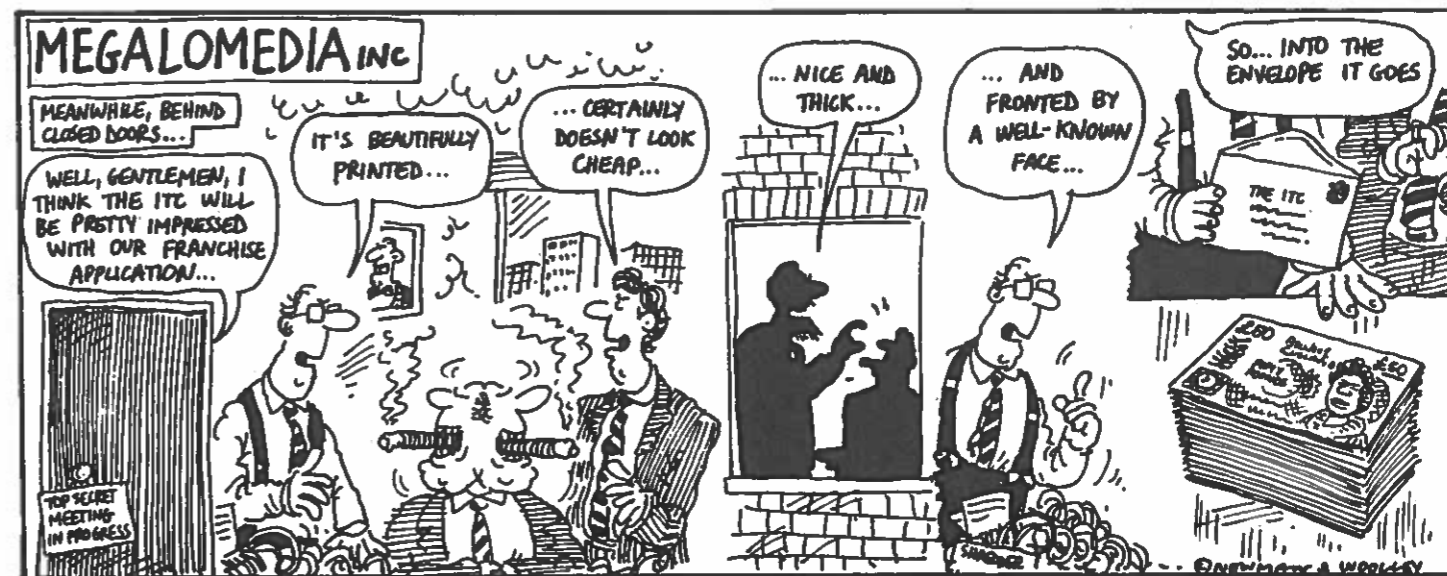
will the monitoring of equal opportunities policies. Not just that. In-house facilities provide the best base for the concentration of trained talent across a full range of skills necessary to guarantee the provision of diverse quality programming.

It is a point recognised by some of the publisher-contractors themselves. Peter Ibbotson, director of corporate affairs for Carlton Television which is bidding for the London Weekday and TVS franchises, told the *Guardian* that it is difficult to believe the publisher-contractor model could work outside London and the south-east. In the north, in Granadaland, 'there isn't enough infrastructure to make that amount of programming. If a publisher-contractor wins in Granada or Yorkshire, in reality they will end up being based in Soho.'

The other losers will be the viewers. Leave aside the question of whether the infrastructure exists to allow publisher-contractors to deliver quality programmes. What happens if the franchise winner has committed too much cash to its bid and has to cut back on programme budgets and tear up franchise promises. *Broadcast* editor Marta Wohrle argues that 'the programmes most likely to be at risk are the much vaunted regional offerings. Network spending will be committed each year and it's network programmes that bring in the audiences.'

The ITC is unlikely to act in such a situation. When the audience grabbing Roland Rat appeared on TV-am the ITC's predecessor, the IBA, warned the company about the quality of its programming. When the company responded that it was that or bankruptcy the IBA did nothing. When Sky merged with BSB the day after the Broadcasting Act reached the statute book — giving Murdoch effective control of five British based direct broadcast by satellite channels in contradiction to the law's ownership regulations — the IBA did nothing. If franchise holders argue that the only way they can finance quality programme making is to allow newspaper groups to increase their holdings beyond the legal limit of 20 per cent, the pressure will be on the ITC to accept this. If, in the words of government spokesperson David Mellor MP at the time of the Sky-BSB merger, 'the market calls the shots', these will be the consequences.

And the face of British broadcasting will be changed for a long time to come. From January 1993 the successful applicants will be with us for 10 years. After only 6 years they can seek automatic renewal of their licences for another 10 years. Renewal can only be refused if they have breached the rules set out in the Broadcasting Act and promulgated by the ITC. But whereas the successful applicants



are unlikely to fall foul of the ITC they could fall foul of the stock market. After only one year of broadcasting the original owners can be bought out.

The CPBF believes the Broadcasting Act will have a profoundly destabilising effect on, initially, the ITV network but also the BBC. Who, for example, will be running the ITV network and choosing the programmes which generate the audience numbers the advertisers want to pay for and thus fund the franchise applicants who are currently throwing their cheques at the ITC? In the past it has been the five biggest ITV companies who have disbursed of the network's £450 million budget in consultation with the smaller companies and the IBA. The ITC does not say what the new networking arrangements will be. The Broadcasting Act simply demands that the franchise holders come up with a workable system by the end of January 1992, just three months after they win their licence.

Since the original White Paper *Broadcasting in the 90s Quality, Choice and Competition* was published in November 1988, the CPBF has campaigned against the view that broadcasting is simply another product or service like any other economic activity which is best provided by competition and market forces. Whatever the limitations in its application, public service broadcasting meant, until the Broadcasting Act, a system regulated to ensure high quality, balanced and universally accepted output with the BBC funded by a licence fee and ITV and commercial radio raising income from selling advertising. The two systems competed for audiences but not for revenue.

The renowned American journalist Edward R Murrow wrote in 1958: 'This instrument (broadcasting) can teach, it can illuminate; yes, and it can even inspire. But in can only do so to the extent that humans are determined to use it to those ends. Otherwise it is merely lights and wires in a box.' That is why broadcasting should not be just about cash bids and 'economic activity' but about social and cultural values, informing viewers in a democratic society and providing access as well as, enjoyment, escapism and much more.

Granville Williams

...and the workers pay

Media workers are the first victims of the franchise auctions. Incumbent companies are already cutting their in-house payrolls. If they are outbid by the new 'publisher-contractors' over half the 10,000 jobs in the ITV network could go. [Job levels are indicated in square brackets]. Print and broadcasting interests are inextricably combined in the bids. Cross-media ownership and concentration will be the norm.

In the lucrative London region both Thames and LWT propose to axe another 200 jobs apiece. Thames with 1,230 in-house staff will face competition from Carlton TV [360] and the Branson-Frost consortium, CPV-TV [162]. LWT's 640 staffers must fight off a bid from London Independent Broadcasting (owned by Polygram and a plethora of independents) with only 275. The pattern is repeated in all franchise areas.

EMAP and the *Daily Telegraph*, with experience of slimming down in the print sector, have a stake in Three East [300], which is challenging Anglia [600], as is CPV-TV [266].

Wearing a different hat, the *Daily Telegraph* has got into a crowded bed with ITN in Daybreak TV's [360 including ITN] bid for TV-am's [400] breakfast licence. They each have a 20% stake as have Carlton Communications and MAI Broadcasting, leaving just enough room for NBC (15%) and Taylor Woodrow (5%) to snuggle in. TV-AM's other rival, Sunrise [140], is an even more extraordinary menage, with the *Guardian/MEN* (15%) and Walt Disney (15%) under the covers with LWT and Scottish TV, 20% each.

The Wales and West licence, straddling two countries with conflicting viewer demands and problematic advertising profiles, has surprisingly attracted bids from four companies. Incumbents HTV [700] have been lopping off staff in all directions. HTV are threatened by Merlin TV [340], backed by Associated Newspapers, who share a stake in Bristol United Press with David 'soft-porn' Sullivan. United Artists, (who won the Avon Cable franchise claiming collaboration with HTV), have a 20% stake in C3W [under 300], along with Ireland's state broadcasters RTE (10%). And C3WW [425] is the guise under which TSW [290] has hedged its bets on winning the south west of England franchise by bidding for its neighbour.

Associated Newspapers are after south west England too. They have a 20% stake in Westcountry

TV [167], as does privatised South West Water, and Brittany Ferries (15%), conjuring up the intriguing prospect of a single meter system for piped water and programmes. Those recalling the Camelford poisonings can rest assured — the *Daily Mail* will not be delivered down the tubes.

If TVS [800] retains its licence for the south and south east of England, the *Daily Mail* will be in there too, offering to bankroll the cash weak company along with Canal Plus and Compagnie General des Eaux. Those modest men Branson and Frost make the third bid with CPV-TV [318]. Meridian TV [373] (MAI, owned by SelecTV and Central TV) are also running here as are Carlton [400].

Yorkshire TV [1,296] is challenged by White Rose TV [293], a homegrown hybrid featuring the *Barnsley Chronicle*, *Huddersfield Examiner* and *Halifax Courier* Groups and production company Chrysalis. They face invaders Viking TV [under 300] led by Sir Trevor Holdsworth, now recovered from his bumpy landing with BSB.

Thompson Regional Newspapers have joined forces with the Duke of Abercorn to fight for the Northern Ireland licence as TV-NI [160], taking on Lagan TV [unspecified], run by Barry McGuigan's former manager Barney Eastwood, and backed by funds from the Republic. Ulster TV [280] will not be resting on the ropes. It hopes to be holding the centre of the ring when the dust settles.

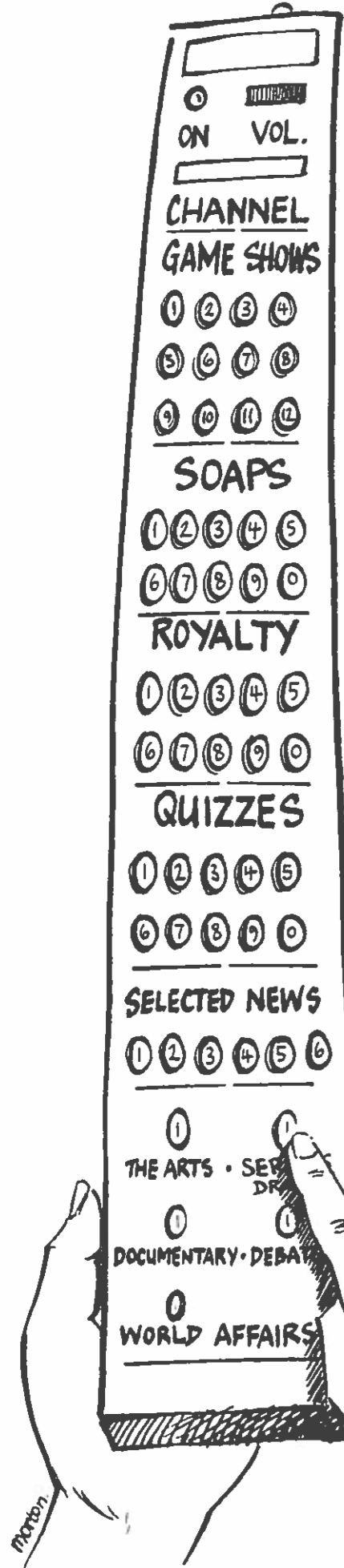
In a predatory bid for Tyne Tees' [323] licence, Border TV has giant Granada as a minority shareholder along with the *Newcastle Chronicle* and *Journal* in its North East TV consortium [210].

Granada is concentrating its energies on a more even struggle for its license against North West TV [425]. Regional neighbours Yorkshire and Tyne Tees (10%) and Yorkshire TV (20%) have combined with Trinity International, the holding company that publishes the *Liverpool Echo* and *Daily Post*, to wrest control from Granada's 1,077 staff with little more than a quarter of that number.

Employees of Channel TV [98] have gone for the throat of their erstwhile bosses who have held the franchise for 30 years. C13 [54], led by John 'Bergerac' Nettles, aim to take the tiniest segment of the C3 audience and advertising revenue cake.

If you are looking for a stable career in TV broadcasting apply to Central TV [997], Border TV [140], or Scottish TV [600]. There are no challengers for their licenses this time round.

Mike Jempson



Selling sexism... ...and fighting it

In her report* on the portrayal of women in advertising, Sue Phipps finds herself in the same position as most women who make complaints to the Advertising Standards Authority. She has had to sugar coat her pill so that the men in advertising agencies (who have the most power and influence) can swallow it without choking and coughing it back up.

That said, it is a well-balanced report, though perhaps a bit conflicting, since Phipps' method is to accept all opinions as equally valid and never strongly come down on one particular side. But opting for the gentle nudge approach, however, is no bad thing, for in an industry as inundated with sexism as advertising, it's a great step forward just to get a bloke to read this booklet. And it is no good spitting in the fellow's face now that you've got him moving in the right direction.

According to Matti Alderson, Director General of the ASA, who spoke at the December 1990 Advertising Association conference on which this report is based, women who complain about their portrayal in advertising hold views that the general public will come to hold in five years time.

Because of the slurs directed at those who do raise their voices it is no wonder that the great majority keep their views to themselves. And even if, as Phipps implies, a greater number of women are not bothered by advertising, one has to ask what they could possibly have to lose by getting rid of the stereotypes of thoroughly contented, but hugely overworked and under-appreciated housewives, pouting bimbos and women who find chocolate orgasmic. Interesting this last phenomenon was overlooked by both Kinsey and Hite.

However, a random survey published by the Advertising Standards Authority in February 1990 showed that 76 per cent of women and 62 per cent of men agreed that 'using sex as a selling device in advertising is offensive'. The reactions of the 2,128 people broadly compared with an identical survey among 117 people who had actually written to the ASA to complain about the portrayal of women in advertisements, 95 per cent of whom thought that using sex as a selling device was offensive. The previous year the ASA had only upheld three complaints out of 296 relating to the portrayal of women.

The gist of Phipps' report concentrates on the views of the speakers at the AA conference. These range from the reactionary stand of Sue Tollworthy of BSB Dorland, who says of complainants that 'advertising is a soft

target for people's prejudices and obsessions' — indeed Sue, so what are we to make of those of male copywriters and art directors — to Carol Reay of Reay, Keating, Hamer, who feels that 'advertisers are much more prepared to negatively stereotype woman than men.'

Also on the panel was that rarest of things, a feminist ad man Adam Lury, whose agency Howell, Henry, Chaldecott, Lury included in its founding principles a stipulation that they would never stoop to using sexism to sell products. He says that men like to use nudity in adverts because they 'have fun looking at the pictures and casting and shooting it.'

If this is indeed the case, why can't those men find some other way of getting their kicks which doesn't imply to the female population of the country that their bodies are less deserving of privacy than a man's body and that the structure of society reserves the right for men to look at naked women but no vice versa. By constantly exposing women, but treating men's bodies as something sacrosanct, the media acts as if inherent female sexuality were either non-existent or so passive as to be totally in the service of the male of the species rather than to each woman herself.

Much is made of the question of advertising's role in society. Primarily of course it is to sell the client's wares, but does it also attempt to maintain an unsatisfactory status quo or should it be pushing at the boundaries of society and moving attitudes forward?

Employing no small amount of selling talent herself, Phipps emphasises women's increasing purchasing influence (cars as well as custard these days) and how ad agencies must wake up to this new woman if they want to continue to shift kit.

Advertising need not be a force for social change. It can still be fantasy. It can still be aspirational. What it should not be, however, is a conduit for male sexual fantasies. It should have respect for women's right to privacy over their bodies. It should not, especially, distort female sexuality in a way that is pleasing to male advertisers and marketing men, and is unsettling and uncomfortable to many women including those that may not articulate what it is they do not like about an advertisement.

We are not asking advertising people to change society. On the contrary, it is society that has changed and we simply want advertising to reflect this.

Lizanne Cordwell

*Sue Phipps: The Portrayal of Women in Advertising. The Advertising Association, Abford House, 15 Wilton Road, London SW1V 1NJ
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CODE OF CONDUCT ON MEDIA SEXISM

The Campaign For Press and Broadcasting Freedom opposes sexism and is committed to promoting an anti-sexist policy throughout the media.

The media today are a major source of sexism. Women are represented in a way that does not reflect the reality of women's lives. Press and broadcasting in this way participate in the sexual oppression of women by men. Besides, the prevailing assumption in the media that everybody is heterosexual offends and marginalises lesbians and gay men. Those who work in the media, whether in origination, in production or in distribution, are partly responsible for this sexism and heterosexism and can play an important role in ending it.

As a Campaign we are opposed to external censorship. We believe however that press and broadcasting freedom includes freedom from injurious content. We therefore support a system of voluntary monitoring to eliminate sexist material in the media.

We resist:

- gender stereotyping, including the routine representation of women as sex objects and as 'housewives'
- the neglect and racist portrayal of black women and women of other ethnic groups in the media
- hostility to and misrepresentation of lesbians and gay men in the media
- the display of women's bodies in the media to appeal to male prurience
- the erotic portrayal of children
- trivialising or sensational media treatment of instances in which men kill, attack or harass girls or women

We seek to promote:

- a positive representation of women that reflects all aspects of their contribution to working, social and political life
- a new use of language to avoid sexist terms
- recognition of the women's movement as a responsible and necessary social force.
- equality of opportunity and employment for women in the media
- support for media workers who protest against sexism in media content
- a right of reply for those adversely affected by sexist material

1991 Annual General Meeting Report

Over 70 delegates attended the Annual General Meeting of the CPBF on Sunday 28 April which reviewed developments in the media in the previous year and the Campaign's response.

Secretary Tom O'Malley explained how the failure of BSB and its takeover by Murdoch's Sky illustrated two major themes of the year: the devastating impact of the recession on the media industry and the continuing power of the transnational media corporations. Media trade unionists had suffered assault after assault as a result of employers' efforts to deunionise or cut staff or both. The recent mergers of the print unions, NGA and SOGAT, and the broadcasting unions, ACTT and BETA were welcomed not only as promoting strong trade unionism in difficult times, but also increasing pressure for media reform.

1990/1 was the year of the Gulf crisis. On both sides of the Atlantic the media was mobilised behind the UK and US governments in a way which echoed the jingoism preceding the First World War. The media's almost unqualified support for war had the effect of silencing many well informed critics and had illustrated once again just how unaccountable the press proprietors and the people who run broadcasting are. The CPBF had provided an indispensable focus for shaping opinion and raising issues of media freedom on these and many other issues.

The unique role played by the Campaign was reflected in the continuing stability of the CPBF's membership. Since the start of the year another two national trade unions had affiliated — Manufacturing, Science and Finance and the teaching union NAS/UWT — bringing the total to 28. The Campaign office had been re-equipped with new technology allowing origination of *Free Press* and other publishing activities to be brought in-house

with the agreement of the NGA. This has increased the topicality of our journal and allowed us to professionalise the organisation's image.

Of major concern to delegates was continuing funding problems. While the CPBF had eliminated £12,000 of debt in the past two years, the 1990 funding appeal — along with membership the CPBF's only source of income — had fallen nearly £8,000 short. The AGM approved an appeal for £20,000 in 1991 to further the work of the Campaign.

There was unanimous approval of the Women's Section motion to approve the CPBF Code of Conduct on media sexism (see page 6). The Women's Section had also been active in lobbying for equal opportunity amendments to the Broadcasting Bill and promoting the Bill of Location of Pornographic Materials which would restrict top-shelf porn to specially licensed outlets.

A major debate on a framework for media reform in the 90s in the wake of the deregulation of commercial broadcasting and the continuing growth of media monopoly was opened around the document *Choice, Freedom and Diversity: Arguments for a New Media Policy*. Following amendment and further consultation this will become a basic policy statement of the Campaign and be used to identify specific campaigning objectives in the run up to the next general election. A motion moved by the MSF identified two of these: it called on the next Labour government to break the ownership monopoly in the press, and introduce measures financed by an advertising levy to assist the minority press to secure its fair share of advertising revenue and display in every newsagents.

Faced with a plethora of new regulatory bodies in the press and broadcasting the AGM identified the Campaign's attitude to these bodies. Delegates decided not to extend the Campaign's boycott of the Press Council to

the Press Complaints Commission (see page two). This was a tactical decision which was not counterposed to our ongoing campaign for a statutory right of reply.

It was also noted with concern that the shift in the ITC's function from a publishing to a licensing authority had placed fundamental aspects of the policing of broadcasting in the hands of the courts, for example, through the extension to radio and television of legislation such as the Obscene Publications Act. The ITC's own 'impartiality code', a last gasp amendment to the Broadcasting Bill, was seen as a fiction based on a fraud. The AGM also called for the scrapping of the 'sex and violence' quango, the Broadcasting Standards Council, and its replacement by an independent research body which would set its own agenda and be concerned with all ethical issues in the media.

Finally, the AGM expressed its support for Liberty's Northern Ireland Human Rights Assembly, which will take place in April 1992, especially in relation to the area of freedom of expression. This is a continuation of the CPBF's work against the suppression and manipulation of information on the northern Irish crisis and specific acts of government censorship such as the broadcasting ban.

CAMPAIGN FOR PRESS & BROADCASTING FREEDOM

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John Jennings - an appreciation

John Jennings, who founded the Campaign For Press and Broadcasting Freedom, died on 24 May aged 54. He succumbed to cancer after a long and painful illness.

John was undoubtedly instrumental in shaping the attitudes of large numbers of people in the labour movement on media issues. His idea for 'a campaign for a free press' emerged from his involvement in the Institute for Workers Control which he took part in during the early 1970s. His work as a journalist, as circulation manager for *Tribune* and editor of the *Sogat Journal*, gave him enough practical experience to know how abysmally trade unionists are treated by the media.

John was concerned about how to establish structures that would create an accountable media. He wanted to influence the programmes and policies of the main political parties, but was aware of the need to develop a movement that would gain legal changes. It was his ideas that spawned many early CPBF initiatives. These included the commission of inquiry into the Press Council, which published its findings under the title *People Against the Press*, the Right of Reply campaign, and the campaign for a legal right of press distribution.

The Press Council is now gone, largely thanks to the Campaign's efforts. The industrial efforts to help health workers and miners, which led to printworkers taking strike action for the first time in decades in order to gain rights of reply, were directly inspired by the CPBF. They also inspired the attempts of several backbench Labour MPs like Ann Clwyd and Tony Worthington to promote private members bills to secure a legal right of reply.

The British political establishment rallied and did the usual fudge, with the Calcutt committee and ultimately 'son of Press Council' in the form of the Press Complaints Commission. But the issue of media accountability and the low ethical standards



of much of the media remain matters of public debate in a way that was not thinkable 12 years ago.

All this and much more are tributes to John's integrity and concern for humanity and justice. It was these qualities that brought him into conflict with the right wing Freedom Association. As a result he has the honour of being the only person to have forced the Freedom Association to drop a libel writ.

It was a remarkable battle. In 1983 John wrote an article in *Free Press* attacking Brian Crozier, a member of the Freedom Association's governing council. Crozier had described General Pinochet's murderous dictatorship in Chile as 'one of the most interesting economic and constitutional experiments in the world today'. John, in his usual forthright way, denounced the apologists for torture and repression. They sued him, but John wanted to fight and a defence fund was launched. It raised over £20,000 and he offered to see the Freedom Association in court rather than back down. Three years later they gave up. But John felt cheated because he had amassed what he felt

was an unanswerable case. So he published it all in *Enemy Within: The Freedom Association, the Conservative Party and the Far-Right*, repeating the 'libel'. No further action was taken — the Freedom Association was beaten.

John had a long and honourable record as a campaigner for human rights. I first met him in 1960 soon after he arrived in south London from his home town of Leamington, when he was studying art at Goldsmith's College. We worked together in the Deptford Youth Anti-racism Campaign, and on Saturday afternoons we took it in turns to make fiery speeches from a soapbox on Deptford Broadway, denouncing the emergence of what was to be a precursor of the National Front.

From this early streetwise political apprenticeship he developed a formidable and direct speaking style, which was used to Labour's advantage in the October 1974 general election. He stood against the former Prime Minister Ted Heath in Bexley, and scored the biggest ever increase in the opposition's vote in the constituency.

But Parliament was not for him. Super efficient though he was, he was not keen to become enmeshed in parliamentary bureaucracy. His politics were informed by a profound sense of humanity and justice and he always wanted to get things done. So he threw himself into setting up ALCARF, the All Lewisham Campaign Against Racism and Fascism, which worked to expose the National Front.

John was more than a political activist. He was also a talented pianist, artist, graphic designer and journalist. He always threw himself into local activity, which was often time consuming, unglamorous, but nevertheless essential: whether as a chair of school governors, helping pupils to produce a school newspaper or organising events. And whatever he did was done to his legendary standards of perfection.

John is survived by his wife Vi, and his son and daughter Ben and Ellen.

Mike Power

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FP64

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