

AFTER THE GOLD RUSH

"A MEDIA 'gold rush' of broadcasting take-over deals could start at the beginning of September when new cross-media ownership rules come into effect," writes Raymond Snoddy in the Financial Times (27 April 1996).

Well, not quite. We've already seen the MAI/United Media defensive merger, bringing the Labour Lord Hollick and Conservative Lord Stevens into an unlikely partnership, to prevent Carlton gobbling up MAI. This is even before the Broadcasting Bill becomes law and lowers the barriers to cross-sector control.

In this rush to stitch up huge areas of the media in ever larger groups there are, of course, the hunters and the prey. In this respect we should ponder the problems at the Financial Times which are directly linked to the media merger frenzy soon to be unleashed.

The Financial Times has always stood for

So much for diversity and plurality in media control

high journalistic standards. Non-partisan, independent of proprietorial influence (its editor, Richard Lambert, on the eve of the 1992 General Election recommended voting Labour) it is a paper which covers world events as scrupulously as those in the City of London. Of course, all of this costs money, and it has high staffing levels, including a network of foreign correspondents. At the same time it is facing competition from the Wall Street Journal and The Economist (in which Pearson has a 50 per cent stake).

The paper's circulation has risen from 252,895 in 1986 and stands at around 295,000 today; it makes money in the daily quality broadsheet market, where its competitors, with the exception of the Telegraph, make losses. But Pearson Chief Executive, Frank Barlow is clear about the paper's direction: "There are only three ways for newspapers to go: they reduce costs, increase revenues or close down."

But in the merger mania it's also the case that Pearson, ranked seventh amongst European media companies, is one of the hunted. It is desperately seeking to slough off its reputation as a solid but lack-lustre performer in the profit league, rejuvenate its top management and repel companies surveying it for possible take-over.

And where does Labour stand on this drive to create monster mergers? At the second reading of the Broadcasting Bill, Shadow Heritage Secretary, Jack

Cunningham, urged an increase in the 20 per cent limit on national newspaper circulation to 25 per cent. This move would allow the Mirror Group Newspapers to acquire Scottish Television in which it has a 20 per cent stake. MGN also own two of Scotland's strongest newspaper titles, the Daily Record and Sunday Mail. So much for diversity and plurality in media control!

Lewis Moonie, also on the Shadow Heritage team, says: "Cross-media ownership is a good thing. The whole point is to ensure the creation of bigger companies that can compete abroad." Such sentiments are unlikely to bring comfort to media workers. Takeovers are usually followed by 'downsizing' and 'restructuring', phenomena FT journalists will be uncomfortably aware of when writing about other areas of the economy.

And for readers, viewers and listeners such policies strike at the very heart of media diversity, and the range and quality of our media.

FT jobs under threat

IN APRIL the Financial Times announced a major cost-cutting plan, despite high profits last year. Thirty jobs in London have been axed.

A few months ago staff were asked to participate in a management consultancy exercise called Century Bold. "We were told it was to improve the quality of the paper, and was not a cost-cutting exercise," says Andrew Bolger, NUJ Father of the Chapel. But it was part of a restructure plan. As a direct result of being misled, the NUJ passed a unanimous motion of no confidence in editor Richard Lambert.

Management argue that the FT is running behind budget despite management boasting to staff last year that the FT was the most profitable daily broadsheet in Britain. The union request for information on how these budgets are forecast has thus far been denied.

Parallels have been drawn from the new FT chief executive's recent experience at Westminster Press, where in eight months 520 journalists jobs were cut. Circulation dropped. The union see the FT restructure as an exercise to increase short term profits to the detriment of long term quality.

ALRIGHT FOR SOME

FIVE directors of Pearson – owner of the Financial Times, Westminster Press, and Penguin and Longman books – have shared a £1.68 million pay-out as a reward for share price performance. Chairman Lord Blakenham's salary and bonus package increased by 65 per cent to £750,000. Managing Director Frank Barlow's remuneration was up 59 per cent to £783,000. Mark Burrell, development director, also picked up a 59 per cent hike to reach £529,000. Finance Director James Joll got a 53 per cent rise and trousered £554,000. Lagging behind was deputy managing director David Velt, whose package was up a mere 22 per cent at £621,000.

THE first edition of the Daily Mail, printed on three new rotary presses, appeared on Monday 4 May 1896. The paper's owner, Alfred Harmsworth, later Lord Northcliffe, hoped for sales of 150,000, but the printing machines could not meet the demand, which totalled 397,215 copies. "We've struck a gold mine," Harmsworth exultantly told his editor, Kennedy Jones.

The paper was produced using the latest technology – linotype setting – which speeded up newspaper production. But its success was due to its price – a halfpenny – and the 'new journalism' which shaped the paper's contents, setting it sharply apart from other newspapers of the day. The first edition told of war in Bulawayo, assassination in Persia, atrocities in Cuba, murder in Reading. There was a serial, a page headed 'The Daily Magazine' which was 'a practical attempt to provide something more than the mere news of the day', and an even greater novelty, a section called 'Women's Realm'. Out went the long speeches from Parliament which filled the columns of other papers, and in its place, new specially trained sub-editors ensured that Harmsworth's order to

'WE'VE STRUCK A GOLD MINE'

100 years of the Daily Mail

'explain, simplify, clarify' was carried out. The trade journal of the day, Newspaper Owner and Manager commented, "There is no doubt that the Daily Mail has discovered a new reading public."

One hundred years later, under Lord

Rothermere, a tax exile and the tenth richest person in the UK with wealth estimated at £1.2 billion, the Daily Mail has easily won the circulation war with its mid-market tabloid rival, the Daily Express. It is in the forefront of the lobby to dump cross-media ownership restrictions, and has adopted an aggressive stance on Europe, dramatically shifting from support for John Major since the 1992 general election.

We profile here the different aspects of the Daily Mail and General Trust over its 100 year history.

Flirting with fascism

"HURRAH for the Blackshirts," Lord Rothermere wrote on the Daily Mail's leader page on 15 January 1934.

His enthusiasm for the British Union of Fascists in the mid-thirties also spread to an endorsement for Nazi Germany. In January 1933, when Hitler became Chancellor, he enthused, "This will prove to be one of the most historic days, if not the most historic day, in the latter day history of Europe."

Six months later, he urged British young men and women to study the progress of the Nazis, dismissed atrocities as a few isolated acts of violence, and alleged that Germany had been 'rapidly falling under the control of its alien elements.'

As late as the 1960s, the memory of the Mail's flirtation with fascism was held to be an important factor which discouraged the more liberal readers of the News Chronicle from switching to the Mail after the merger.



Rothermere on dogs and editors

THIS is an extract from BBC Radio Four's Desert Island Discs, 14 April 1996, in which Lord Rothermere, owner of Associated Newspapers, is interviewed by Sue Lawley.

Sue Lawley: You live abroad for the most part; you have houses in Paris and New York. How closely do you keep in touch with your newspapers? How often do you ring up London?

Lord Rothermere: Every day.

SL: Do you ring up and say, "That was a good edition today." Or do you say, "Look, I really do not think you should be running these sorts of stories"?

LR: Well, a newspaper company is a very big operation. There's more to it than just the editorial. You have a whole massive operation here. You have a very big company with policies, with finance.

SL: Of course, that is like every other business. What is interesting about the newspaper business is how much say the owner has, or cares to have, in the editorial policy of a newspaper.

LR: What I have, the way I handle this particular thing, is that I insist on very high standards of journalism – being on the ball, getting the scoops, not falling behind other newspapers. All of those sorts of things.

SL: But you have agreed before on the politics presumably. You would be very surprised if one of your newspapers suddenly started to back the Labour Party, wouldn't you?

LR: Not in the least. That is always a possibility.

SL: Do you think you might be backing Tony Blair for the next election?

LR: I think that some of my newspapers might be sympathetic to Tony and others will be sympathetic to John Major. One of the things that my newspapers insist on is that the editorial politics are those of the readers.

SL: So to be absolutely clear about this, it is possible that, at the next General Election, your newspapers may decide to back Tony Blair and the Labour Party?

LR: When I appoint an editor, I appoint only people who I believe to be of great talent, and people of great talent have their own opinions. They like working for me because I let them have their own opinions.

SL: But you are going to discuss the politics of the newspapers with them, particularly at an election. You have had lunch with Tony Blair and so have they.

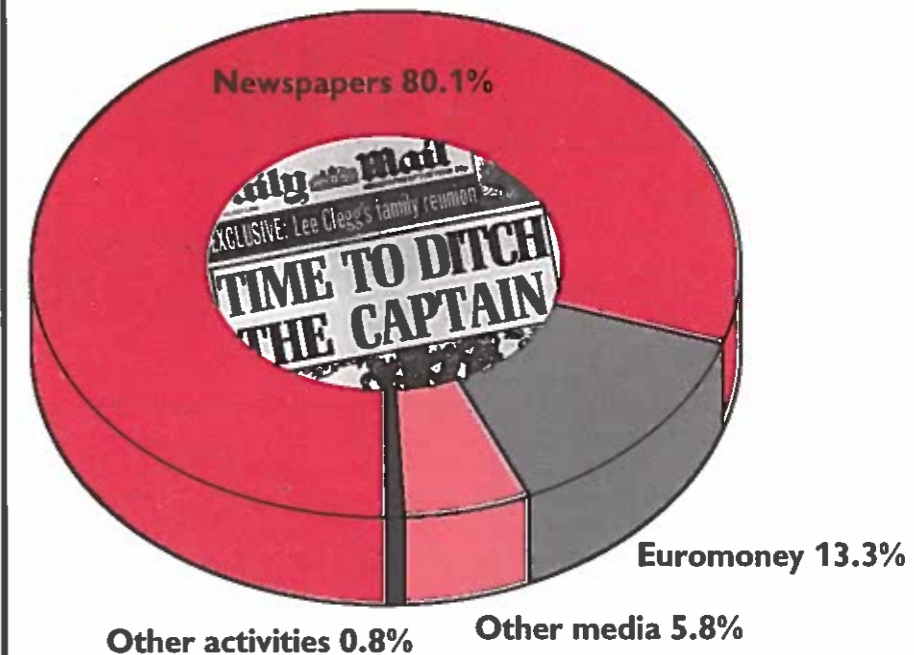
LR: Oh, of course, if you are the person who decides on their salaries, they will naturally ask your opinion. Even my dog does that!

SL: Well, I am asking your opinion. Do you think your newspapers should back Tony Blair at the next election?

LR: I have a suspicion that some of them might.

DAILY MAIL AND GENERAL TRUST

Turnover by sector, per cent of total, 1995



WHAT THEY DO

National Newspapers

Publish: Daily Mail, Mail on Sunday, You Magazine, Evening Standard

Provincial Newspapers

Second largest publisher of provincial newspapers, including Nottingham Evening Post Group, through Northcliffe

Other media

Own 70.3 per cent of Euromoney plus magazines, exhibitions, cable and TV production companies including Channel One in London, People Bank (Internet recruitment)

Associates

Various stakes including (%)

Bristol Evening News	24
Teletext	45
Westcountry TV	20
GWR Group (radio)	22
SelectTV	14
ITN	20

Source: Merrill Lynch

ITN deal has built-in safeguards

THE Daily Mail and General Trust purchase of 20 per cent of ITN for £20.5m from Carlton and Granada has some built-in safeguards.

ITN made profits of £15.5m last year, and its £57m contract to supply news to the ITN companies is up for renegotiation in 1998.

The Broadcasting Bill now going through Parliament proposes that all ITV companies will have to take their news from

one supplier. BSKyB is expected to approach the ITC for nomination once the Bill is passed, and is likely to tender a much lower bid to supply the ITV news service.

If ITV don't hold on to the ITV news contract DMGT is safeguarded against the impact of loss by 'appropriate arrangements' for compensation – from Carlton and Granada – presumably that means paying less than the £20.5m if the contract is lost.

NEWSPAPER AND MAGAZINE DISTRIBUTION

BY JONATHAN LOGAN

CHANGES over the last 10 years in national newspaper and magazine distribution have not helped to promote a diverse press.

The freeing up of markets is leading to a situation where large circulation titles emerge stronger and better able to compete at the expense of a myriad number of smaller circulation publications that face an uncertain future.

Prior to 1986 most national newspaper and magazine distribution was carried out by dedicated railway trains.

The fact that these trains were scheduled meant editors had to keep to strict deadlines in order to ensure the publication didn't miss the train. News International's (NI) move to Wapping and its subsequent dispute with the trade unions rapidly changed the way in which newspapers were distributed.

In order to avoid more widespread union opposition, particularly from the railway unions, NI hired TNT Express to transport their publications by road.

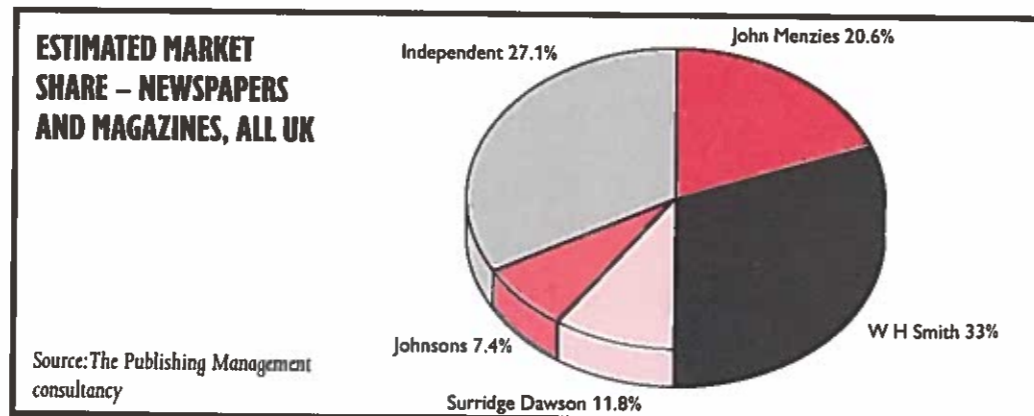
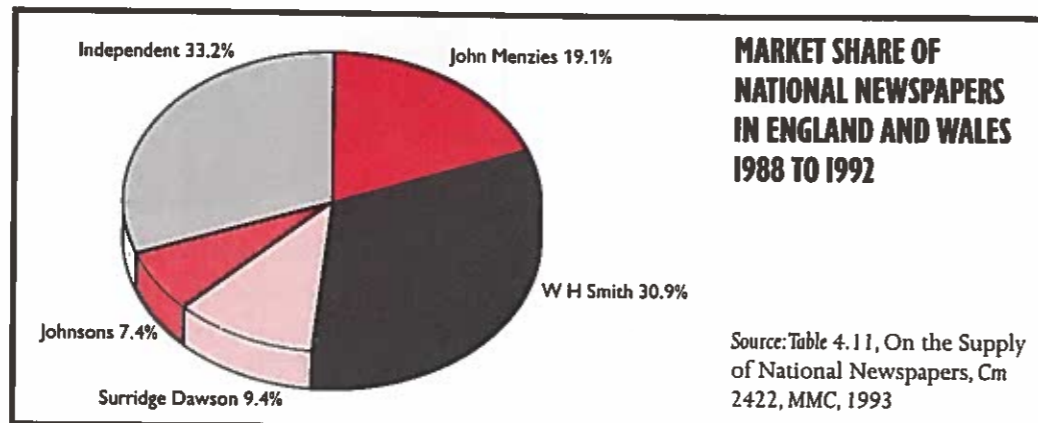
The switch found favour with editors, who found more flexibility with deadlines by being able to alter lorry departure times and by managers who found the road costs to be cheaper than rail.

By the middle of 1987 Mirror Group Newspapers (MGN) had also swapped from rail to road, and the effect of just two national publishers withdrawing from rail to road meant British Rail's newspaper trains were no longer viable.

By the end of 1988 all of the national publishers had moved from rail to road with just two companies, TNT Express and Exel Logistics, carrying 90 per cent of all the national newspapers.

In 1987 NI issued 90 day termination of contracts to all existing wholesalers and drew

The strong get stronger, the small go to the wall



up 180 distribution areas in England (but outside London) and interested parties were invited to tender for exclusive distribution rights for NI titles.

Not to be outdone, MGN, Express, Mail and other publishers copied this idea, but re-drew their own boundaries.

This means the retailer has no choice of supplier and 60 per cent of retailers have to deal with more than one supplier to receive the full range of national newspaper titles.

NI, when giving evidence to the MMC on newspaper distribution as to why they had implemented these changes, reasoned: It was to maximise the

profitability of each title and to sustain a healthy independent wholesale section to prevent the four large wholesalers gaining a monopoly position.

This has clearly not worked with this oligopolistic structure having been consolidated over the last three years in spite of an increase in retail outlets selling newspapers and with the number of independent wholesalers falling from 73 to less than 40 over this period.

As a result of the MMC report a voluntary code of practice was

adopted lifting any restrictions on who could sell newspapers and magazines.

The result is that 7,500 extra outlets now sell newspapers and magazines - mainly supermarkets and petrol stations.

These outlets will only stock the most popular titles and don't have ordering or home delivery services.

Wholesalers are now concentrating on supplying big corporate customers at the expense of local retail newsagents who complain of being unable to obtain leading titles and of late deliveries.

This has led some to write to customers explaining they cannot always guarantee the home delivery of national newspapers because of a lack of or late supply. This leads to the loss of core business for newsagents which is making many unviable.

'W H Smenzies' and Press Freedom

"ALL MAGAZINES are distributed - but some magazines are distributed more than others."

This ironic parody of the lines in George Orwell's 1984 was the title of a chapter in the excellent little booklet *Where is the Other News?* published by the Minority Press Group in 1980.

As the authors pointed out, years of struggle have established the right to print and publish, unimpeded, dissenting opinion and radical ideas, but debates on the freedom of the press have never seriously included the problem of distribution and access to information.

Events in 1996 have reminded us that the problems identified in 1980 in *Where is the Other News?* have multiplied with a vengeance. The industry, then and now, concentrates on 'producing commodities', 'shifting tonnage' and selling bulk lines'.

In January W H Smith, the retail giant which sells around 40 per cent of the newsstand magazines in the UK, announced that they intended to withdraw some 350 low-circulation and low-revenue magazines from circulation. They included *Tribune*, the *Morning Star* and a range of religious, hobby and other specialist interest magazines.

"We're a commercial organisation," a W H Smith spokesperson said. "If one magazine is not doing so well, we'll give the space to one that does."

The background for this action by W H Smith was an interim profits slump from £45.2m to £17.3m.

In February John Menzies announced a phased reduction of up to 40 per cent of the titles from their display shelves. They are planning to reduce "the long tail of specialist magazines" and give more space to best-selling titles.

These actions by the retail giants strike at the very heart of choice, diversity and the freedom of the press, and pose a real threat to smaller circulation magazines operating

on small margins. The Periodical Publishers Association fears that the reduced range could kill off some low-volume titles which rely on impulse buying for their survival, and Peter Hain, chair of *Tribune* publication, fears that the paper will lose out on casual sales after articles from *Tribune* are reported in broadsheet newspapers.

But there is a broader point about media policy. In many European countries such moves by W H Smith and John Menzies would be illegal: commercial viability is no justification for refusing to stock a magazine. The right of display would be a modest but important reform for freedom of expression and diversity. Let's hope Labour's National Heritage team think so too.

Media policy on distribution and access to information also needs to look to the future and the emerging new technologies of the digital age. As new networks are developed by cable, satellite, telecoms and

terrestrial operators the issue of 'set-top boxes' that unscramble the digital signals and control access to the signal by the viewer will be crucial. We cannot have the 21st century equivalent of W H Smenzies, global media corporations which develop their own systems, and exclude competitors

from access, shaping this issue.

Governments have to ensure that different parts of the system interconnect, and that a regulatory framework guarantees access for universal services. If this gateway is open only to commercially driven systems who are also the 'gatekeepers' we will reproduce in the electronic media the systems of dominance in distribution and retail which have developed in print. The result would be dominance not diversity; control not choice. Of course such a policy position will not be popular with the Bertelsmanns, BSkyBs and Time-Warner but governments should give citizens priority over the media moguls in deciding access to the information superhighway.

Actions by the retail giants strike at the heart of choice, diversity and the freedom of the press and threaten smaller circulation magazines

CUTTING WHERE IT HURTS

FREE PRESS editor, Granville Williams, lives in Upton, a former mining village in West Yorkshire, a region hard hit by the massive economic dislocation following the pit closures.

The nearest towns - Pontefract, Doncaster or Wakefield - are easy to get to by car, but for people dependent on public transport the local newsagent, doubling as the Post Office and much more, is a vital local resource.

This is part of a letter sent out recently by the couple who run it:

"For several months we have experienced shortages in our standard order from our wholesalers for *The Guardian*. The solution to maintain a satisfactory service entailed scouring the district to top up supplies to ensure we could complete deliveries to our customers.

"To obtain supplies on the last occasion meant a journey to Pontefract to meet our requirements. The majority of traditional newsagents that are prepared to open early and undertake a delivery service are facing this problem.

"On the other side of the Retail News, supermarkets etc. are ensured supplies and no doubt will have more wastage than traditional newsagents. Yet it does seem to be very unfair that established *Guardian* readers are being penalised at the expense of casual sales through these other channels.

"John Menzies plc, our wholesaler, do not appear to be unduly concerned about our predicament.

"We shall endeavour to maintain a delivery service for *The Guardian* provided we are supplied with sufficient copies."

China syndrome

IN CHINA, draconian state censorship laws are forcing journalists to work in fear for their lives and are creating outrage among human rights organisations.

British Amnesty's Journalists Network is calling for the release of imprisoned journalist Gao Yu, sentenced to six years' imprisonment in 1994 for contravening the sweeping Protection of State Secrets Law in her reports of reforms in the wage system and a speech by Chinese leader Jiang Zimin.

This law, introduced in 1988, made information about the economy, 'social development' and 'political parties' (the Communist Party) a state secret. A 1990 amendment declared that not only the information itself but also its possible 'consequences' could render it a state secret.

Under the Chinese constitution all citizens are obliged to safeguard state secrets and disclose all breaches, including private conversation. Conviction can carry the death penalty.

The former assistant foreign editor of the

official Beijing Daily, Qi Lin, was sentenced to four years in April 1992 for "leaking state secrets" about former party official and Tiananmen Square activist Hu Jiwei - information that was common knowledge among intellectuals at the time.

In March 1994 Chinese national Xi Yang, a reporter for the Hong Kong paper Ming Pao, was sentenced to 12 years for passing on financial information that Amnesty sources say was already public in Hong Kong.

Chinese 'whistleblowers' Bai Weiji and his wife Zhou Lei were sentenced to ten and six years respectively for passing on 'state secrets' to the Beijing correspondent for the Washington Post. These were internal party documents such as economic reports, foreign policy analyses and speeches available to many party members which reach a much wider audience in China.

For details of how to protest to the Chinese authorities, contact British Amnesty on 0171 814 6200.

Europe in mad media row

BRITISH reporters in Brussels provide much of the European Union news for UK audiences, and the hostility by sections of the British tabloid press is now at a new level of intensity.

BSE, European Monetary Union, Euro-sceptic Tory MPs, and judgements by the European Court of Human Rights fuel the increasing Euro-hostility in the tabloids and some of the broadsheets.

Do you STILL believe all you read in the Newspapers? published by the European Commission in September 1995 is worth reading as an antidote to mad Europe media reporting.

"Euro mythology has become part of the European diet of Britain today. Self-delusion governs much public discussion and for those who believe the headlines in the

tabloid press, tales of bent bananas, widespread fraud, corruption and the politics of the gravy train have come to dominate the national scene," writes Geoffrey Martin, Head of the European Commission in the UK.

The booklet contains 45 'stories' divided into categories 'untrue', 'muddles', 'EU or UK', and 'True Myths'. The booklet points out it is impossible to say why and how a particular myth arose.

For example, one old myth relates to the standardisation of Christmas trees. This had nothing to do with the European Union, but was a recommendation from the growers' own association!

■ Copies of the booklet can be obtained from the EC London office - 0171 973 1992.

Protection of sources victory

THE RIGHT of journalists to protect the identity of their sources has won powerful backing from the European Court of Human Rights. It was the culmination of a six year legal fight by NUJ hero Bill Goodwin, who defied the courts to protect a source.

The union backed him all the way, and in a landmark decision, the court upheld his appeal against the British government over the £5000 fine imposed on him by a British High Court judge in 1990.

Bill Goodwin, then a reporter on Morgan Grampian's *The Engineer*, refused to comply with the order to identify the source who gave him information about a computer software company, Tetra Ltd. The Company prevented publication of the story by obtaining an injunction.

Morgan Grampian - now called Miller Freeman - gave backing to his stand, but a year later sacked him in a wave of redundancies.

Welcoming the decision of the Strasbourg-based court, Deputy Secretary Jake Ecclestone said: "Bill's courage and integrity have been brilliantly vindicated. Once again, British judges have been exposed as the true enemies of press freedom and free speech.

"Our judiciary has a long and tawdry record in cases affecting journalism in Great Britain, and this is merely the latest in a line of humiliating defeats by the European Court of Human Rights.

"This historic decision in favour of a journalist's right to protect his or her sources means that press freedom is a little more secure today that it was yesterday. Journalists can go about their work with greater confidence and security, thanks to Bill.

"It also means that Section 10 of the Contempt of Court Act will have to be re-written - something the NUJ has long advocated.

"This judgement reinforces the urgent need for the European Convention of Human Rights to be incorporated into British law. For more than 40 years British governments have declared their support for the European Convention, but have consistently refused to give these rights to British people."

Beware of the watchdog

BY BOB FRANKLIN

IN THE run-up to the next general election, Michael Heseltine is spending £600,000 to finance a media monitoring exercise designed to alert Ministers to adverse press reports about the government in regional and local papers.

Ten press officers, working in the regional offices of the Central Office of Information (COI) and responsible directly to the Cabinet Office, will analyse all stories critical of government policy and activity and file monthly reports. According to a report in the Guardian, "Ministers will then be alerted to visit the areas concerned to put over the government's case" (18.4.96). It seems clear that the government intends to orchestrate a substantive news management exercise in the regional press prior to the election; and with the entire project financed by public money.

This media monitoring exercise highlights at least two difficulties with the Government Information Service (GIS).

First, it illustrates how easily and readily governments can subvert the neutrality of civil servants and involve them in party activities. Official guidelines are uncertain and there are genuine difficulties in defining the increasingly elusive boundary between a Minister's legitimate request for information and the wholly illegitimate attempt to involve civil servants in activities which will bring party advantage. An official handbook offering guidance to GIS officers states that 'it is impossible to treat party politics and the work of the information division of a Whitehall department as if they were chalk and cheese. They are inextricably mingled and not least in the minds of Ministers'. In some instances

timing and context are crucial to defining the boundary. But asking for information concerning the nature of press reports about government in the run-up to an election seems to cross the divide and involve publicly paid civil servants in an essentially partisan activity. There is a precedent here: Bernard Ingham, press secretary at No 10 and a non-partisan civil servant, allegedly attended meetings of the election strategy team within the Conservative Party to help design and plan the Party's media campaign for the 1987 General Election.

There is a second problem. Governing parties appear to try to use their access to the GIS to enhance their electoral opportunities. This is certainly one conclusion to be drawn from the consistent pattern of increased government expenditure on the COI in the year prior to an election, or in the election year itself, for every general election since 1964 without regard to which party is in office. Increases are evident and significant in the election years 1969, 1970, 1983, 1987 and for the years preceding elections, 1969, 1973, 1978 and 1986. In the case of the 1992 election, the 'blip' in expenditure occurred in 1990 (£183 millions compared with £178 millions), but it must be remembered that initially the election had been anticipated for June or November 1990.

There is a final worry. Will the information gathered by publicly funded civil servants working in the COI regional offices, be passed directly to Michael Heseltine at the Cabinet Office and, from there, find its way into the Conservative Party's Media Monitoring Unit headed by Julian? It is only possible to speculate. I'm not a gambling man, but I know a safe bet when I see one!

ITC awards poor marks to ITV and Channel 4

THE Independent Television Commission (ITC) Performance Reviews for 1995 on ITV companies, Channel 4 and Teletext were published in April.

As the mergers of the ITV companies settle down, new strategies are being adopted by them to meet the minimum requirements of their licences.

The ITC directed particular criticism to the increase in co-productions as part of

regional output and signalled it intends to review policy and may come up with a tighter interpretation of what constitutes a regional programme.

Peak time documentary interest revealed a "pre-occupation with the police and emergency services. There was little sign of high quality in *Police, Camera, Action!* which consisted largely of traffic police video recordings with a linking commentary".

Without Comment

W H Smith and 'adult' mags

The solution is simple. Put the sex magazines in the sex shops. This is not censorship. It is simply to remove material that some people may find offensive to a place where it would be impossible to stumble upon by accident... W H Smith says it has an obligation to balance "commercial and moral obligations". If this means an uninterrupted diet of glossy magazines of one type on the lower shelves and glossy magazines of a distinctly different nature on the top shelf, it is a short-sighted approach. Without the margins, the mainstream stagnates. Why not free up some space on the top shelf for *Top hats* monthly, *Racing Pigeon* Pictorial, and *Tribune*?

The Guardian, April 13, 1996

BBC: Facing both ways

The BBC has two masters these days - its licence-fee funded channels and BBC Worldwide... Imbued with 70 years of public service ethos and protected by a guaranteed income, the BBC is finding it hard to play against huge and less principled international business companies and awkward foreign regimes. It burnt its fingers over its satellite news service into China (Rupert Murdoch threw it off because it antagonised Peking) - and then came the Arabic fiasco.

The BBC had a 10-year deal worth at least £150m with Orbit Communications for the Rome-based satellite firm to beam Arabic television into the Middle East but Orbit is owned by a cousin of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia. Riyadh fumed at the BBC's coverage of Saudi dissident Mohammed al-Masari in this month's *Panorama* on human rights in Saudi Arabia, which was shown on Arabic Television. BBC executives argued that it would be craven not to transmit the *Panorama* but Orbit thought otherwise and pulled the plug on the deal last weekend.

Richard Brooks

The Observer, April 28, 1996

Education, religion and arts were "often in the margins, whilst the balance of the schedule shifted towards entertainment-led programmes". However, the award for chutzpah was the attempt (rejected by the ITC) to classify *The Great Sex Guide* Abroad as educational!

C4 was rebuked for not producing enough original material and for too many repeats.

NOTICES

MEDIA MANIFESTO

The CPBF's Media Manifesto will be available in draft form for the May 18 Conference. We then plan to consider any final comments and launch the Manifesto in June.

If you can help in any way to distribute copies of the Manifesto and stimulate debate, please contact the National Office.

W H SMITH CONDEMNED

The NUJ Teesside Branch has condemned moves by wholesaler W H Smith to reduce the choice of papers and magazines in its stores.

The Branch agreed to press the union and MPs for laws to safeguard diversity in the media. Branch Chair, Nic Mitchell, said: "Many smaller-circulation papers will close because of this. Media distribution is a public service as well as a business and the large distributors should have a duty to enable people to find a paper they want."

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NEW FACES NEEDED

The National Council of the CPBF meets monthly to discuss and shape the work of the organisation.

We want to strengthen the National Council by drawing in new members. If you



WATER WORKS PHOTO EXHIBITION

CPBF North's office is in the Media Centre, 7 Northumberland Street, Huddersfield where there's currently an exhibition of black and white photographs by Linda Whitwam, Water Works, which documents the water shortage which hit the Yorkshire region last year, and the subsequent tanker operation.

It's on until 31st May, 9.00am-5.00pm and admission is free. Worth seeing.

are interested in standing for the National Council, your nomination needs a supporter and a seconder, from within the CPBF. There are different categories in which you can stand for the NC. Please contact the National Office if you need advice or information.

However, it's important we receive all nominations for the NC by 17 June so that the Annual General Meeting can agree them.

CPBF ON THE INTERNET

We now have a web page and e-mail address.

Web page: <http://www.inin.co.uk.cpbf>

e-mail: cpbfinin.co.uk

AGM 22 JUNE, BECTU

111 Wardour Street, London
11.00am - 3.00pm

This year's AGM will deal with the usual business - election of the new National Council, report on the year's work and finances. But we are also at an important point where we need to look again at the CPBF's policies and future strategy.

That's why we urge all members and affiliated organisations to come along and participate in the discussion.

If you haven't received a form to book your place, contact the National Office on 0171 278 4430 to let us know you're coming.

MEDIA ETHICS PRIVACY, PUBLIC INTEREST AND CENSORSHIP

20-21 September 1996

University of Leeds

Too often in public debate, media professionals, critics and academics tend to talk past one another. The Centre for Business and Professional Ethics is holding a conference at the University of Leeds to bring these people together to discuss impartiality, media bias, rights of privacy and the public interest, journalistic integrity, censorship, regulation and freedom of expression.

Speakers include Martin Bell (BBC Foreign Correspondent), Tony Hall (Managing Director, BBC News and Current Affairs), Greg Philo (University of Glasgow, Mass Media Unit), Lord Wakeham (Chairman of the Press Complaints Commission), and Peter Preston (former Editor in Chief of the Guardian and The Observer).

For more information contact Cornelia Shirley 0113 233 3233.

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BROADCASTING

FREEDOM

MEMBERSHIP RATES PER ANNUM

- | | |
|--|-----|
| a) Individual membership | £12 |
| b) Unwaged | £6 |
| c) Household (2 copies Free Press) | £20 |
| d) Supporting membership (includes free CPBF publications) | £25 |
| e) Institutions (eg libraries: includes 10 copies of Free Press) | £25 |

AFFILIATION BY ORGANISATION

- | | |
|--------------------------|------|
| f) Less than 500 members | £20 |
| g) 500 to 1,000 | £25 |
| h) 1,000 to 10,000 | £45 |
| i) 10,000 to 50,000 | £105 |
| j) 50,000 to 100,000 | £200 |
| k) Over 100,000 | £400 |

I/We want to join the CPBF and enclose a cheque/PO for £ FP92

Name

Address

Postcode Tel.

Organisation (if applicable)

Return form to CPBF, 8 Cynthia Street, London N1 9JF

Tel: 0171 278 4430