

FREE PRESS 100 looks back over a period of great change in the British media, and the CPBF's role as a media campaigning group within that. But it also looks forward, with articles highlighting where we need to concentrate our energies on media reform in the coming years.

Although I've been a member of the CPBF since its launch, and edited Free Press for the past five years, I've never believed that campaigning groups have an indefinite shelf life. If they don't achieve what they set out to do then they should pack up their bags and depart after a decent interval.

Eighteen years is a long time for us to have kept going, but much of what we've accumulated over those years in the way of experience and ideas, networks of contacts, and an amazingly loyal core group of CPBF members and affiliates, can only now, in these new times, begin to move forward with some chance of realising our policies. I'm not naively optimistic, but do seize on these words by Claude Levi-Strauss: "Nothing is settled; everything can still be altered. What was done, but turned out wrong, can be done again."

Granville Williams,
editor



AFTER DIANA: FOUR STEPS TO BETTER JOURNALISM

WHO KILLED Diana? The Parisian paparazzi on their motorbikes, the picture editors willing to pay for their images, the editors who want them in the papers, or their employers — the owners who make the money?

For years and years the editors and their appointees who run the Press Complaints Commission and lead the national debate on privacy, have talked of self-regulation and voluntary self-control. But nothing has changed — except to get worse.

The truth is that the process towards increasing sensationalism in the popular press is inexorable and, if things stay as they are, unavoidable.

Readership is declining, but newspapers are still highly profitable. They are cheap to produce, with technology lowering production costs and staff cuts slashing the payroll bills. They are no longer a publishing end in themselves, but cash cows, to be milked by the big groups to fund risky new ventures in satellite and cable and electronic communications.

To hang on to their share of this lucrative market, popular papers are forced to become increasingly sensational, harassing not just Premier League celebrities like Diana but lesser folk too, in the quest for front page pictures with a salacious tinge.

The tragedy has at least exposed once and for all the fraud of self-regulation — what use is a Code of Practice when the editors who operate it will pay hundreds of thousands for surreptitious pictures?

It has exposed the hopelessness of any "privacy law". For one thing, the power of the media and the culture of British journalism would make it unworkable; for

another, it happened in France, and the French press is held up as an example of non-intrusive responsibility.

But the French press is also the most boring, high-minded and pedestrian in Europe. Their sales are tiny compared with ours. There is no real journalism in France, as we would understand it. News is "official" and infused with notions of civic importance. Investigations of corruption in high places are rare: the Hamiltons and Aitkens are safe over there.

No-one would buy such papers in the UK. The editors' argument that the public themselves are to blame is disingenuous, because the media create their own demand, but it is true that outrage, outspokenness and salaciousness are what British readers expect. A privacy law press would fail in the same way as the various attempts over the years to produce non-nicotine cigarettes; no-one bought them, because the whole point of cigarettes is the drug. The whole point of the British press is to be outrageous and generally over the top.

It is a matter of the culture of journalism. You can't legislate for better journalism. But there are four ways to allow journalists to work to the higher standards that most aspire to:

The first is to isolate them from pressure from the owners. Editors and journalists should have contractual independence, with the right to say "no" without risking their jobs.

Second, there is training: young journalists, often from colleges and poorly grounded in professional practice, are

→ continued back page

Eighteen years on!

Tom O'Malley considers the continuing relevance of the Campaign

THE WORLD of 1979 seems light years away from 1997. In those eighteen years there have been major changes in the political landscape and in the mass communications. Throughout this period the Campaign has tried to make relevant interventions in the turbulent arena of media politics. But just how relevant have we been?

The most obvious point is that in many ways our basic analysis is as relevant today as it was in 1979. We have always argued against the damaging consequences of concentrated private ownership in the media. In 1979 we argued for a more plural, accountable press. In 1982 we added greater accountability in broadcasting to our goals. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s we have pushed hard for a Right of Reply to factual inaccuracies, for a genuinely accountable system of public service broad-

casting and for the break up of concentrated blocks of media power. These basic perspectives are as relevant today as they were in 1979. We have always argued that these kinds of reforms were needed because the media are a powerful force in our society.

The damaging distortions of our political life effected by the national press in the these years are legion. The reduction of news coverage in many tabloid papers, and the general increase in entertainment, celebrity and sporting news has arguably helped to limit the range of news going to the public. This diet of often reactionary trivia, designed to line the pockets of shareholders whilst limiting the cultural diet of the public, has been served up by proprietors and editors who wouldn't dream of exposing their own families to such a constant, inescapable and limiting cultural diet. Their hypocrisy could fill their own tabloids for months on end.

The vicious attacks on those who stand

up against any injustice has been a recurrent theme in the press. These could be teachers, peace activists, campaigners for sexual and racial equality, trade unionists, poll tax protesters, or reforming local councils. The Campaign has challenged these attacks, argued for a remedy and redress, and put forward proposals for change.

Although our campaigns have often put the ethics of the proprietors and their editors at the centre of the political agenda, notably in the succession of Right of Reply bills we wrote or supported in the 1980s and 1990s, self regulation has survived.

This is arguably because of the direct political influence wielded by proprietors within the political process and has often flown in the face of opinion amongst journalists, the public and backbench MPs.

Recently the proprietors appointed Lord Wakeham, a politician renowned as the 'Mr Fixit' of the Thatcher Cabinets, as Chair of their public relations body, the Press

Complaints Commission. He hasn't, however, been able to fix the broken sensibilities of the owners who continue to trumpet their high minded adherence to the PCC's code whilst side stepping that code whenever circulation or political expediency dictates.

In broadcasting the attacks on the BBC and ITV were resisted by the Campaign. The increasing commercialisation of the BBC and the spread of concentration within commercial broadcasting have intensified problems of accountability. The proliferation of cable, satellite and digital channels in private hands has exacerbated problems of standards and accountability. Although our work, along with the work of many other groups and individuals in the 1980s, may have helped delay the end of public service broadcasting, it is still arguable the last eighteen years have seen the system fatally undermined. We have a job of work to do to persuade the current government to act to reverse the decline of the last decade or so.

The Campaign has related to all of these developments. We have published, campaigned and talked. We have published books and pamphlets on a host of topics including media sexism and racism, on ethics, on public service broadcasting and Ireland. We have maintained a comprehensive survey of issues in Free Press.

We have campaigned on Right of Reply, the BBC, the coal dispute, Wapping, Zircon and Spycatcher, to name but a few vital issues. We have worked on Campaigns with individuals from all walks of life, and with trade unions, community and pressure groups, in particular Liberty and the Freedom of Information Campaign.

We have talked to thousands of people at countless meetings in small rooms in tiny halls, to large crowds in public parks, to groups of school students, trade unionists and campaigners.

We have been part of, and have fed, a growing media literacy amongst trade unionists activists, students, academics and the public at large.

We do not, and have never claimed to have all the answers to all the questions. But our actions and policy statements show there is another, better, way of organising mass communications in our society.

That is where our relevance lies and will remain until we have achieved meaningful and wide ranging reform of the media.

Tom O'Malley, worked as national organiser for the CPBF from 1986-9, was national secretary from 1989-1995, and currently sits on the national council. He wrote Switching Channels: the debate over the future of broadcasting (CPBF 1988) and, with Jo Trehame, Selling the Beeb (CPBF 1979). He also wrote, Closedown: the BBC and Government Broadcasting Policy 1979-92 (Pluto 1994).

New government, same old problems



Tim Gopill looks back in anger and forward without enthusiasm - but we still have the CPBF and the NUJ

HERE WE ARE again.

When the CPBF started up we were preparing to resist the onslaught on our freedoms that everyone knew was coming from Thatcher's regime. Thatcher trumpeted what she was going to do; you knew where you were with Thatcher.

Now we are back with a Labour government that is picking up, not just on the ideas of the 1980s, but the worst aspects of what the last one had done.

In 1980 we had just come out of a period of Labour control, when the great

institutions of post-war Britain were crumbling: public services, including a solidly-established BBC; a regulated media environment, in which commercial broadcasting followed the "public service" ethos; political consensus, with even the right-wing papers generally supporting a centrist line; and strong trade unions, especially in our industry.

The moribund Labour government had caved in to the banks and tried to take on the unions. It caved in to the security establishment, stalled a promised Freedom of Information Act and launched a series of disastrous prosecutions against journalists (and their union) for revelations of its workings. In 1978 the NUJ had published a booklet, "Freedom Under Threat", with articles including one by an ambitious

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1997 European year



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Liberty
and many others

Telling it like it is...
Ethnic minorities and the media
Looking forward to a better future
Sat 29 Nov, Abbey Community Centre, Westminster

A day of dialogue between ethnic minority representatives in the UK & media workers from Europe & the USA
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Alex Pascall OBE (NUJ Black Members Council)
Adam Clayton Powell III (Freedom Forum, USA)
Aidan White (IFJ) & Calypsonian Tobago Crusoe

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FREE PRESS HAS REACHED 100 BUT THERE ARE PLENTY OF MEDIA ISSUES STILL TO COME

Keep up the good work

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GPMU
Tony Dubbins General Secretary
Tony Burke Deputy General Secretary
Ray Williams General President

Keys House, 63-67 Bromham Road
Bedford MK40 2AG

Telephone 01234 351521
Facsimile 01234 270580

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young barrister called Anthony Blair (nothing in it that might embarrass him now, before anyone rushes to look).

The Tories put the boot in. They realised that to destroy these institutions they had to turn "hearts and minds", so they came for the media. The attack on the unions started in the print, with derecognition in newspapers, opening the way for the sad "buccaneer" Eddy Shah (and where is he now? Running a golf club) with his cheap and nasty non-union papers, and then for Rupert Murdoch and Robert Maxwell, with the others bravely trotting behind.

The Wapping dispute of 1986-87 — when Murdoch moved his whole national paper operation overnight, sacking 5,000 printers and precipitating a bitter year-long strike — was one of the crucial events of the decade, much more significant, in the long run, than the miners' strike a year earlier, because it wasn't just about destroying a union but changing the relationship between the media and the people.

With their organisation shaken, journalists lost their collective voice in the newsrooms. Ethical standards slumped as job security vanished; most journalists now must do as they are told, unless they are happy just to churn out trivia or consumer-oriented drivel — advertising without the fancy artwork.

There is no independence, no spark, no

rebellion in newspaper journalism now. It might surprise all the wannabes doing media studies, so keen to join this wonderful creative world, that many journalists, especially those over 30, now hate their jobs.

This approach was foisted onto the papers by a generation of Fleet Street editors, besotted with Margaret Thatcher, who presided over the most disgraceful period in the history of the British press; never before had newspapers so humbled themselves before government. Thatcher responded by giving half a dozen of them knighthoods — the certain badge of journalistic shame.

The line was individual enterprise, small business. We were all supposed to be little entrepreneurs — in our industry, freelancers, or casuals. There are companies now that never take people on full-time contracts, ever. In broadcasting, thousands work from one short-time contract to the next.

Obviously it was a sham, but it took ten years for many people to come to their senses, and in the meanwhile the big publishers and their investors had taken the media into their grip.

When you talked of multi-nationals in 1980, you meant Shell or General Motors. Now that satellite and on-line communications have given the media international

scope, we have them controlling our newsrooms.

Journalists don't work for editors now, or even boards of directors. They work for pension funds and insurance companies, massive investors who require ever-higher dividends and share values.

And New Labour is quite openly the party of big business. Anthony Blair courts the captains of industry and commerce and commands policies that benefit them. (Union rights? Forget it!) Labour's line on media ownership is explicitly to encourage the growth to world status, supposedly, of British corporations, though in truth its biggest beneficiaries are American.

Labour has again promised Freedom of Information and is again stalling: the signs are that a system will emerge that puts the government in ultimate control of what information is released — a total contradiction, of course. The Home Secretary is gagging the press from printing the confused recollections of a former MI5 agent.

So we still have the same fights on our hands. Another constant is that the NUJ is still there with the CPBF, with all the thousands of journalists who want better media to work for.

Tim Gopsill is editor of the *Journalist*, the magazine of the National Union of Journalists

Look back in angst

Mike Jempson who edited FREE PRESS from 1984-87, pays tribute to those who have given their time and talents to produce the CPBF journal over the last 18 years

West End and our £50,000 Appeal brought support from Neil Ascherson, Melvyn

Bragg, Tom Conti, Elvis Costello, Jonathan Dimbleby, Margaret Drabble, John Fowles, Richard Hoggart, Bruce Kent, Ken Loach, Pamela Stephenson, and UB40 among others.

In 1983, when the price went up to 20p, Nik Oakley moved the editor's chair to his kitchen in Kings Langley, Herts, and he reported on a devastating critique of the Press

Council produced by Geoffrey Robertson, now QC, who chaired an independent inquiry set up by the Campaign. Nik also published a seemingly innocuous (for us) article attacking the support given by the Freedom Association newspaper Free Nation to the Pinochet regime in Chile. It was written by our 'founding father', the redoubtable but sadly deceased John

Jennings, and contained the comment 'Don't call them racists or fascists. They are sensitive souls and get very upset — they may even sue you ...' They did, and John lived under the cloud of the libel action for four years, when FP announced its collapse under the banner SWEET FA!

Next came Aidan White, now General Secretary of the International Federation of Journalists, but then a sub-editor on The Guardian. He introduced spot colour (red of course) and his flair for design also brightened up our previously worthy style of presentation. He also added debating fora and our first supplement, 'Up Against the Media', a four-page special on coverage of the 1984 miners' strike.

My three years saw the introduction of advertising, 12-page issues with theme-based supplements, our first 16-page issue (No.28), and columns from Amnesty, NCCL, and CFOI, a price-hike to 30p and Murdoch's move to Wapping and our first Media Manifesto. My favourite 'exclusives' were a bizarre internal report by BBC News & Current Affairs Chief Alan Protheroe, MBE rubbishing the right of reply, and an extra-

ordinary picture of Enoch Powell by Ramesh Sharma which Fleet Street refused to use.

After Issue 40 (the Zircon Affair) I handed over to Simon Collings, then as now with Oxfam, who took us into the 90s. He had plenty to work with — Spycatcher (remember our public readings and the record Billy Bragg made for us?), the News on Sunday debacle, the Broadcasting Ban, and the 1990 Broadcasting Bill, but was forced by penury to abandon spot colour and drop back to eight pages.

For a while we had job-share editors. First came Mick Gosling — forced out of Ford in Dagenham and employed by the CPBF before moving to the Hackney Press Office from which he was to be unceremoniously dumped — and Linda Quinn of the CWU — our first and only woman editor.

They covered the Gulf War, the death of Maxwell, Clive Soley's Freedom and Responsibility of the Press Bill which gave rise to PressWise, Mark Fisher's Freedom of Information Bill, and our first ElectionWatch project in 1992 which proved to be so telling.

Linda, who had a firmer grasp of the new technologies than her predecessors, next shared her workstation with Granville Williams before passing him the cursor. Canny Granville, based in Yorkshire, has concentrated on more in-depth analytical material and kept the Campaign up-to-date with technological developments.

He eventually brought in designer Alan Slingsby to add fresh finesse to the product which remains essential reading for anyone interested in the issues behind the headlines and beneath the airwaves.



UNISON

Britain's largest union congratulates the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom on its 100th edition of 'Free Press'.

We will continue to support the campaign for a diverse, democratic and accountable media.

For further information write to UNISON | Mabledon Place London WC1H 9AJ <http://www.unison.org.uk>



Modest proposals for media reform



James Curran outlines his ideas

WHEN the CPBF was launched in September 1979, it was less than perfect timing. Margaret

Thatcher had just won the general election, and the Conservatives were to hold power for the next eighteen years. Many of the things that the CPBF pressed for were blocked by the most right-wing administration for fifty years.

But now the political pendulum has swung the other way, what should be our campaign priorities in addition to such perennials as a Freedom of Information Act and the right of reply?

Perhaps one modest but necessary ambition should be to repair some of the damage inflicted by the last government. It debased public appointments to broadcasting authorities through shameless political packing, and weakened the independence of the broadcasting system. For example, the previous long-serving chairman of the BBC, Marmaduke Hussey, was the brother-in-law of a cabinet minister; his predecessor, Stuart Young, was the brother of one.

Before the election, Labour was thinking of changing the system by getting the National Heritage Select Committee in the Commons to recommend appointees to broadcasting authorities. While this would be an improvement, it would still leave decision making in the hands of a minister advised by a committee with a built-in government majority. It would be far better to put more space between broadcasters and government by establishing an independent appointments committee, made up of people from leading national organisations and the broadcasting industry. They should make public recommendations which government would find difficult to override in favour of political cronies.

Another inherited problem is the way in which the clock stopped in 1982, in terms of extending the range of public service TV. That was the year Channel 4 was established: every major TV channel since then has been defined essentially by a market logic. This sclerosis has combined with the gradual erosion of creative freedom in both the BBC and ITV, due to increased centralisation in both systems.

What should the CPBF be pressing for now that digitalisation is making possible new, open-to-air TV and radio channels. One possi-

bility would be the introduction of a new type of public service organisation which would create the conditions of optimal creative freedom for its staff. Free Channels (say, a minority, national TV and radio channel based in Glasgow and Liverpool) could be established, which would be publicly funded but free of broadcasting regulation. They would be the only public service organisations in the world free of both state and market constraint. Their remit would be, simply, to make innovative and good programmes.

A third, much needed, reform is to revise the conventions of TV journalism. This stresses, rightly, the virtues of impartiality and the need to inform, but plays down participation and access. As a consequence, public debate on prime-time TV tends to be monopolised by party leaders and the accredited elite of experts and office holders. Yet there is a powerful reform movement within the broadcasting community anxious to increase the range of voices and opinions on air. It should be strengthened by making pluralism an official objective of public service broadcasting. Licensed broadcasters should have a public duty, entrenched in law, to give adequate expression to a diversity of perspectives and viewpoints, and to facilitate the participation of different groups in the collective dialogue of society.

Other reforms could include the setting up of Media 4, named after Channel 4. It would help finance innovative projects and extend diversity of ownership in low-cost sectors of the media such as specialist magazines and book publishing, local radio and indie music production. Media 4 would have all-part representation, and be funded by the lottery.

Lastly, there needs to be a new legal settlement for the press. Liberals in the press are calling for a trade-off between a new Freedom of Information Act and a Privacy Act. The terms of the trade-off need to include beefing up the largely cosmetic and ineffectual system of press self-regulation.

What CPBF should press for in the public domain needs to be distilled through further internal debate. It now has a better opportunity to influence public policy than at any time in its history. Having survived in a cold climate, it needs to take advantage of the political thaw.

James Curran is a co-founder of the CPBF. The fifth edition of his book *Power Without Responsibility* (with Jean Seaton) was published by Routledge in September.

Time to pay attention



Carole Tongue MEP on the silence of our media journalists

SOME British journalists have been poorly serving their readers as well as their industry in recent years. They have filled media supplements with concerns about the Birt reforms, speculation about digital terrestrial bids along with 'who is in or out' at the top of the UK's media pile. At the same time important developments in Europe have been completely missed.

We are bothered about the dominance of BSkyB but we should also be concerned about Kirch, Bertelsmann and Berlusconi. Media giants have a tendency towards monopoly and unlike BSkyB their broadcasts will soon be accessible to British viewers with virtually no regulation by the ITC or OFTEL.

Debates on broadcasting regulation must depend upon the fundamental assertion that culture is not just another commodity that can be traded like coffee machines or carrots, but

can TV be regulated at all in the public interest when EU single market rules tend to curb state intervention in the name of competition? The answer is yes – but only at EU level.

Take the Protocol on Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) which has now been adopted. It will guarantee EU states the autonomy to fund, define and organise their PSBs in the common interest without threats from EU rules on state aid to industry. The protocol spells out that PSB is fundamental in meeting the democratic, social and cultural needs of each society and to preserve media pluralism. It was, and continues to be, heavily resisted by commercial broadcasters. It was a massive departure for the EU in policy terms.

And it has all happened without a squeak in the UK media columns.

Another example which they completely missed was the revised Television Without Frontiers (TVWF) directive, adopted by the European Parliament in June 1997. Since 1989, TVWF sought to ensure that 51 per cent of the TV content broadcast on EU screens was of EU origin as defined in the directive. This

was intended to address the huge structural advantage that the US has in the audio visual sector. When TVWF was first introduced the EU had an audio visual deficit with the US of \$2 billion; it now stands at \$6.3 billion and is estimated to rise above \$10 billion next year.

The logic behind TVWF is inescapable, and it is designed to ensure Europeans benefit economically and culturally from the mushrooming demand for multimedia products. But its survival is in itself a minor miracle, given the scale of lobbying from commercial broadcasters and the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA). In 1989 President Regan phoned Mrs Thatcher at the MPPA's behest and insisted that the 51 per cent quota be watered down with a very wide loophole – just two words – 'wherever practicable'. This loophole enabled pay-TV broadcasters to exploit the loophole at the competitive expense of other broadcasters.

The European Parliament sought to get rid of the loophole this time, as well as introducing an investment quota for specialist channels where a 51 per cent content require-

ment would not be appropriate. Despite significant majorities in the Parliament these amendments were ignored by the Council of Ministers, but the principle of content quotas has survived, albeit in a diluted form.

TVWF is only one of a range of devices with which the EU promotes the public interest where nation states are powerless. Last Autumn, when commentators woke up to the potential monopoly position that BSkyB were poised to take in digital satellite TV, the EU arrived with its 'common interface' rules that had been designed for such an occasion.

If the EU didn't exist we would need to invent it to provide the framework and support that our cultural industries are going to need over the next decade as multi channel TV becomes a reality. Only at EU level can we regulate to ensure that the public continue to be offered diversity rather than (as John Tusa recently said) 'Mac Food, Walt Culture, Rupert News and Television'.

Carole Tongue is Socialist Group Co-ordinator on Media, Culture, Youth, Education and Sport in the European Parliament.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

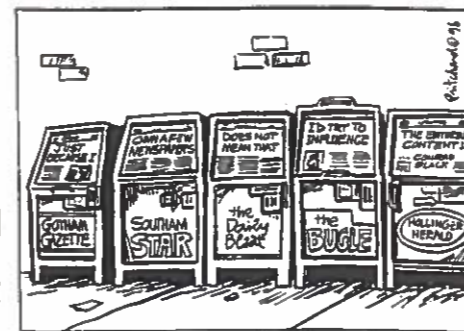
CANADIAN MEDIA REFORM GROUP LAUNCHED

WE HAD mixed feelings when a pack of materials arrived in the CPBF National Office recently. The good news is that there's now a Canadian Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom; the bad news is that one of the main reasons for its existence is the dominance of press baron Conrad Black (owner in the UK of the staunchly Conservative Daily Telegraph and Sunday Telegraph). And another is the threat to public service broadcasting.

Black, through the Hollinger group, now runs 59 of Canada's 105 dailies. This dominant position also allows him to influence the Canadian press wire service, the Broadcast News and Press services, which goes into broadcast news rooms across the country.

Jim Sinclair, a former Hollinger journalist, comments, "We witnessed the pages filled with articles from the right-wing Fraser Institute while local commentaries by reporters actually living in the communities were banned ... I picked up the Vancouver Sun and cursed the loss of local columnists who were perceptive and accountable to people of the city. In their place are Andrew Coyne and Barbara Amiel, both right-wing writers with no history in British Columbia. Just to rub it in, Black ordered all his papers to

The CAMPAIGN for PRESS AND BROADCASTING FREEDOM



print his rant against a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) show on him."

But as the media falls into fewer and fewer hands, public broadcasters like the CBC are struggling with funding cuts, whilst others, like TV Ontario, face privatisation. The CBC has to cope with funding cuts of \$400 million between 1994 and 1998, and this will result in the loss of 4000 jobs.

In 1980 a Royal Commission on Newspapers, chaired by Tom Kent, rang the

alarm bell as daily newspapers fell into fewer and fewer corporate hands, and concentration reached 'dangerous levels'. Now Kent says 'the issue is democracy ... the greater the power, the more it is abused' as Black drives up the profit ratios on his papers, and reduces the quality and diversity of the media to Canadians as a whole.

To alert Canadians to this threat the CPBF has produced a media ownership chart, Mediasaurus, and begun to develop a programme of research, mounted court challenges against Conrad Black's take-over of the Southam newspaper chain, and begun to develop a network of media activists.

The Canadian CPBF can be contacted c/o The Council of Canadians, 904-251 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, ON K1P 5J6. Tel: 1-800-837-7177. email: coc@web.net

TEAMSTER STRIKE VICTORY

THE two-week strike by 185,000 United Parcel Services workers in August was a key labour dispute. A number of aspects to the strike did not get much reporting in the UK, and one was health and safety.

UPS management raised the weight limit on packages from 75 to 150 pounds in 1994, without ensuring adequate safety measures. At the same time UPS ensured that political donations jumped so that they were spending

more money than the oil and tobacco companies to buy politicians, government bureaucrats and anyone else who could advance UPS's interests.

For example, in 1992 Dorothy Strunk, acting head of the federal Occupational and Health Administration, was formulating new ergonomic standards, but she then became a consultant for UPS. The result of the increased load weight was that there were 33.8 injuries per 100 workers, resulting in 60,000 injuries. One reason why UPS hired 180,000 part-timers in 1996 was because 40,000 full-timers couldn't keep up the pace and left. As an International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) press release commented: "Instead of dealing with their workplace safety problems, UPS has spent millions of dollars to lobby Congress to take away workers' health and safety rights."

UPS Chairman, James Kelly, and his top management found that the anger amongst full- and part-time workers generated through a company system which they created was too strong to break when the strike took place. Interestingly, sections of the media were forced to acknowledge wide-spread public support for the UPS strikers. CNN, for example, published a poll as talks were taking place which found that only 27 per cent of people supported the company, and 55 per cent supported the union.

of communication

The CWU has more than a quarter of a million members, within BT, the Post Office, Alliance and Leicester Girobank, cable TV companies and many other related workplaces.

Scratch a communication worker in this country and you'll find a CWU member underneath. The woman who delivers your birthday cards to your door, the voice advising your organisation on the best telecommunications system it can use, the engineer putting your phone back on line and the man handing you your urgent Parcelforce package are all our members.

For all of us, the CWU is committed:

⇒ to a post office secure in public hands, intent on developing Crown counter services and affordable, reliable and universally priced mail and parcel delivery

⇒ to universal access to the social and individual benefits of the most advanced information superhighway for you and your children – giving our whole society the ability to benefit from our latest technology.

⇒ to a modern communication network which will guarantee a buoyant financial and commercial infrastructure for the UK.



⇒ to protect them when things go wrong at work – we won more than £21m compensation last year.

⇒ to negotiate the better terms and conditions with employers – we deal with more than 40 different businesses in the communication industry.

⇒ leading by example by helping provide some of the best pension schemes in the country and working with the new Labour government to protect and improve Britain's communications network.

⇒ to give practical help – through our welfare fund and discounted services and schemes

The CWU is the union committed to its members and to free and fair media - for everyone

COMMUNICATION WORKERS UNION

Derek Hodgson • Acting Joint General Secretary
Tony Young • Joint General Secretary

CWU House, Crescent Lane, Clapham, London SW4 9RN
Greystoke House, 150 Brunswick Road, London W5 1AW

Foul play: Pay per view football

BY MARTIN CLOAKE

"PAY-PER-VIEW is a good thing, because for years fans who pay at the gate have subsidised entertainment for armchair fans. Now those people are going to have to pay just the same as we do, and the clubs can make some money." That was the view of one fan I spoke to last season, and there's plenty more who share it.

It seems to be accepted as fact that pay-per-view is the inevitable next step for football. BSkyB has already conducted some successful test runs with boxing, but football is the big one. The game is still being carried along on a huge wave of popularity, and there will be no problems with games stopping after just seconds, viewers with the strongest brand loyalty in the market are guaranteed 90 minutes of selected brand action. Football can be used to grow the pay-per-view market, just as it was for satellite. But accepting this is inevitable means failing to ask pertinent questions about the increasingly unhealthy relationship between football and the media.

One of the most pernicious things about Sky's pompous new advertising campaign – Football is our life – is that it discourages any consideration of the big picture. The game is important but it isn't life, just a part of it – albeit an unfeasibly large one for many of us. But our devotion to the game

shouldn't blind us to trends such as the control of the media falling into fewer and fewer hands, of the management of news or the worrying power of the major transnational media companies.

If you listen carefully you can hear worries being expressed about whether TV now covers or controls football. The Premier League may crow about the huge sum they secured for their 'product', but games are now played when the TV companies want them to be, not the football authorities, and the TV people are increasingly keen to ensure that, on or off the pitch, football is moulded to the image they've created.

The critical voices are quiet because TV does not want them to be heard, so it denies them access. You see plenty of fans on TV, but increasingly only as colourful, quirky characters, not real people with real opinions. If TV encounters a difficult issue, it ignores it unless it can be used to stoke controversy and feed the hype. Just think of last season's final home game at Anfield, when 40,000 Liverpool and Tottenham fans holding red cards aloft to demand justice for the Hillsborough victims, were totally ignored by SKY, which was covering it live. Even the fact that both sets of players walked on to the pitch before the game carrying a banner calling for justice didn't prompt any coverage. And the print media were almost as bad.

There's some speculation that the current OFT investigation into the Premier League/Sky TV deal will rule the Premier League acted as a cartel and lead to the blocking of any further deals. The assumption then is that Sky will be dealt a serious blow, and the clubs will be able to launch their own pay-per-view channels and make even more money.

There's a fundamental point, even an unfashionable one which concerns principle and even – gasp – ideology. Is it right that football, or indeed any sport, should be accessible on TV only to those who can afford premium prices? I don't think it is. Those who can't afford today's inflated ticket prices should still be able to watch the game, together with those who couldn't get tickets because of demand for the live event, or those who could not travel for one reason or another. TV companies talk a lot about choice, but the drive to pay-per-view is all about restricting choice.

And what of the long term effects of fencing televised football off for a privileged elite? If younger fans can't get into the grounds, and can't watch the game on TV, where will football attract future audiences from? And when audiences diminish, TV will look for something new. This is an edited section from an article for When Saturday Comes.

GAGGING TIME AGAIN

THE death of Diana pushed one story to the margins – the injunction against the Mail on Sunday by Mr Justice Keene, a High Court judge, which prevented the paper from exposing waste and incompetence in the security service in its 31 August edition.

It appears Alastair Campbell rang the Mail on Sunday editor Jonathan Holborow to ask what the paper intended to publish about MI5. "I would like you to tell me," he said, "otherwise the heavies will move in." Quite rightly the editor pointed out it wasn't his job to submit articles to Downing Street for official clearance.

The judge who granted the injunction is a personal friend of Tony Blair – just a few days before the Blairs finished their holiday at Mr Justice Keene's chateau at St Martin d'Otdes, near Toulouse. However we can take comfort. The judge refused some of the government's requests, including a demand that the newspaper should hand over all tapes of what the former MI5 officer, David Shayler had told them. So much for open government. Surely a better response would have been to draw the line under the sort of

MEDIA MONITOR

indefensible antics which have demonstrated the dangerous incompetence of MI5 and use the case to dismantle its operations.

ITV PLC

SCOTTISH Media Group (SMG) has moved to take over Ulster Television, and only a few tiny franchises remain outside the control of the big ITV companies. Granada Group chairman Gerry Robinson recently suggested that there should be a single ITV company.

Against this backdrop, a session at the Edinburgh International Television Festival, ITV PLC?, was revealing. It demonstrated how far the original ideals enshrined in the franchise bids of the early nineties have been abandoned.

The session opened with Anthony Fry, head of global media at investment bank BZW, making the now familiar, and erroneous, case that only the biggest media companies will be able to compete globally.

Channel 3 will only survive if the government changes the ownership rules, "otherwise it faces marginalisation domestically and internationally". Underlying his speech was the selling point that if ITV was turned into a single company it could be worth £2.5 billion more.

Where will this leave all those old fashioned ideas about serving the regions, and encouraging TV production away from London? High and dry. The lofty claims in Granada's franchise application to the ITC in May 1991 now look pretty thin: "Regionalism remains perhaps ITV's most distinctive characteristic and is a relevant factor to be taken into account in assessing the quality of a particular company's non-network service."

All of which raises interesting questions for National Heritage Minister Chris Smith and the regulator, the Independent Television Commission. Are we going to see yet another lobbying group, like the British Media Industry Group, which succeeded in changing media ownership in the 1996 Broadcasting Act, move discreetly into action to do the same to change the rules on ITV ownership?

NUJ

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'The authentic voice of the Conservative Party'

BOB FRANKLIN AND JON PARRY

AFTER the 1992 election the Sun, made a proud boast about the part the newspaper believed it had played in the unexpected Conservative victory. MacKenzie's headline became a cliché; 'Its The Sun Wot Won It' he claimed. In 1997, the paper supported a different political party, but its headline on May 2nd was remarkably similar to its now famous predecessor - 'It's the Sun Wot Swung It'. Local newspapers are no less enthusiastic about their political sentiments. If the Yorkshire Post was unable to 'swing it' for the Conservatives in the 100 Yorkshire constituencies in which it circulated, it was certainly not for the lack of trying.

In 1997, as in 1992 and 1987, research on local press coverage of general elections, revealed the newspaper was by far the most partisan of the 25 local papers in the study. A surprising finding perhaps, given that the paper is now part of the United Newspapers/MAI group headed by socialist Lord Hollick (an interesting oxymoron!). Local papers, it seems, are more loyal than their national counterparts. The editor of a rival newspaper described the Yorkshire Post as the 'authentic voice of the Conservative party'.

Election reports in the Yorkshire Post favoured the Conservatives according to four measures. First, the paper gave prominence to the Conservative party in more election reports (151 or 40 per cent) than Labour (94 - 25 per cent) or the Liberal Democrats (13 - 3.5 per cent). Second, the newspaper published a greater number of quotations by Conservative politicians (240) than Labour (180) or Liberal Democrats (49). Third, by election day the paper had published 68 (2144 sq inches) photographs of Conservative politicians compared to 46 (1423) Labour, 6 (114) Liberal Democrat and 10 (177) pictures of politicians from minority parties. Fifteen colour photographs of Conservative politicians enjoyed prominence on the front page compared to only four of Labour politicians. Front page pictures of Labour politicians, moreover, were used to illustrate negative stories. On 25 April for example a (small) picture of Tony Benn accompanied the headline "Benn Toes New Labour Line - For Now"; on 10 April a photograph of John Prescott illustrated a story about 'open

warfare' in the Labour party headlined "Prescott Exposes Cracks". Finally, the paper published more negative appraisals of Labour (60) than Conservative and was more generous in its positive appraisals of the Conservative party (28) above Labour.

But it is a newspaper's headlines and editorials which betray its deepest political sentiments. The Yorkshire Post published 19 election headlines; three related to the 'sleaze row' involving Martin Bell and Neil Hamilton and made little reference to the main two-party contest. Of the remaining 16 headlines, ten were unashamedly anti-Labour including "Roasting From Major On Tax and Scotland; Blair Gaffe Adds Gloss To Tories Big Rally" (5 April 1997) and "Premier Delights Tory Rally With Attack On Labour Leader Who 'Cannot Be Trusted With Britain's Future'; Blair Unfit To Be Prime Minister Says Major" (22 April 1997). By contrast, there were no headlines criticising the Conservative Party. Some headlines, however, were inexplicably optimistic about the Conservative's prospects given the state of the electoral contest. The paper's headline on 23 April, for example, "Poll Shows Labour Lead Slashed To 5 Percent; Amazing Turnabout In Tory Fortunes" is simply misleading. In a less partisan paper the same story might have been headlined "Labour 5 per cent Ahead In Final Week" or "5 per cent Labour Lead Promises 100+ Seats Majority".

The Yorkshire Post published 14 editorials across the election period; one attacked the Liberal Democrats, another focused on fishing policy, while a third was critical of John Redwood. The remaining 11 launched a series of diatribes against the Labour party, Labour policies and Labour politicians - especially Tony Blair. The editorial on 12 April denounced the Labour manifesto as 'old Labour baggage' which left Blair 'shackled to the social chapter, a minimum wage and a pernicious windfall-profits tax' (p12). An editorial headed 'Quack Medicine' exposed 'the myth that the NHS would be safer in Labour's hands' (21 April 1997, p12), while an editorial devoted to the issue of leadership favourably contrasted John Major's 'experience and wisdom' with Tony Blair's 'callow youthfulness' (22 April 1997, p12). In the final week of the campaign, the paper decried Labour's policy on Europe as 'vapid sound-

bites and empty slogans' (23 April 1997, p12). The following day the Yorkshire Post, in clairvoyant mode, predicted a Labour government would 'impose tax increases'. Labour, moreover, lacked any original policies; Blair was 'running for the final tape bereft of vision for Britain' (25 April 1992, p14). This closely orchestrated anti-Labour editorialising reached a predictable crescendo on the eve of poll when the Yorkshire Post's editorial "Deserving Better" expressed 'fundamental doubts' about whether 'messianic Blair' was 'fit to govern'. Just in case readers had any remaining doubts by this stage about the paper's political commitments, the Yorkshire Post spelt it out; Labour 'should not be given a chance' (30 April 1997, p12).

A letter requesting an interview to discuss the paper's coverage, triggered the following reply: 'I do not have time for the procedure you outline. I am happy to let the paper's coverage speak for itself'. Bob Franklin is the author of *Packaging Politics and numerous other books on media topics*. Jon Parry worked as a researcher on the study of West Yorkshire papers' coverage of the 1997 general election

100 NOT OUT - KEEP BATTING

Congratulations from BECTU



NEW MEMBERSHIP LEAFLET

THE National Union of Journalists has sponsored the production of a new CPBF membership leaflet. We are currently talking to a range of trade unions and magazines about taking the leaflet for their magazine distribution. So far it has gone out with the current issue of The Journalist, and CPBF members will have received a copy with this issue of Free Press.

Please use the leaflet to get a friend, or



an organisation you are in, to join the CPBF. Between now and Christmas we want to use the 100,000 leaflets we've had printed to put on 100 new members – it may seem a modest target, but it would increase our revenue flow and help us to move to a more stable financial position. If you can take extra copies of the leaflet for distribution in your organisation please contact the National Office.

AUTUMN PLANS

Free Press 100 will be distributed widely. We plan to do a briefing on media reform and distribute it with a copy to MPs when they return after the recess. At the Labour Party conference we are sharing



a stall with Tribune which will enable us to raise the profile of the CPBF amongst delegates and visitors to the conference, as well as publicise what we hope will be an attractive fringe meeting.

If you can help with leaflet distribution or staff the stall at the conference from 29 September-2 October we'd like to hear from you.

The CPBF needs to put some time into its Parliamentary work, and to build support around our programme of media reform. Also we desperately need to fund raise to realise some of the ambitious plans which we discussed at our

AGM/Conference. Again if you have the skills or expertise to help us on either of these projects on a voluntary basis we'd like to hear from you.

LABOUR PARTY FRINGE MEETING

Joint CPBF/Pluto Press Meeting
LABOUR AND THE MEDIA

Past, Present, Future

Chair: **Georgina Henry** (The Guardian)

Speakers: **Michael Foot, Geoffrey**

Goodman, James Curran and

Huw Richards (author of *The Bloody Circus* – a history of The Daily Herald)

5.30pm, Wednesday October 1, Royal Albion Hotel, Old Steyn, Brighton,

After Diana: four steps to better journalism

→ from front page

becoming dangerously dependent on in-house standards. The new drive to eliminating the subbing skill and make individual journalists responsible for pages makes them easily prey to a mindless corporate conformity, at the expense of an independent professional judgement.

Third, is to make sure that the legal framework established by the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights ensures that the public interest is taken into account in conflicts between the rights to privacy and to freedom of expression. In Europe, Article 10 of the convention (free speech) takes predominance over Article 8 (privacy). The law enacting them must allow the "public interest" to be considered by the courts in the press's defence when privacy cases are brought. Test cases will then establish where the boundaries are drawn.

And fourth, everyone should stay calm and not allow a hard case to make a bad law.

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