

# FREE Press

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Journal of the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom

## TWENTY YEARS ON: WE'RE STILL NEEDED

SOME things don't change, and one is the consistent support we have had from trade unions over the years. It has been there since we launched the CPBF at a TUC fringe meeting in Blackpool in 1979, and without the core continuing support of our national trade union affiliations the survival of the CPBF would have been in doubt.

Twenty years ago we launched the CPBF in the early months of the first Thatcher government, after the Conservative election victory of May 1979.

The file of back issues of Free Press attests to the range of media issues which we have addressed: from the media coverage of labour struggles during the 1984-85 miners' strike and at Wapping; issues of representation of gender, race and disability; media coverage during the Falklands war,



Still a long way to go:  
Our launch manifesto

the Gulf and the bombings in the Balkans; the assault on public service broadcasting and the destructive consequences of Conservative media policy.

Spanning twenty years, too, our continuing concerns with the insidious effects of media concentration, and a series of private members' bills on the right of reply.

But the Free Press files only tell part of the story. Stuart Hood, in the first edition of *On Television* (1980) wrote: "Just as we do not wonder where the water, the gas or the electricity come from, how they get to us, or what processes they go through, so we do not generally wonder how television pictures reach our screen".

Of course he was writing before the Tory privatisation of the public utilities, but the general point about the media remains true.

Most people for most of the time don't concern themselves with the broader issues of media ownership or how media policy is being formed.

It means that policies for media reform have to be energetically promoted and publicised, often in the face of a press hostile to the notions of media reform.

It will remain our role to be an active voice in Parliament, with government ministers, and with our members and affiliates, putting the case for a diverse, democratic and accountable media.

The shape of the media has changed dramatically over the past twenty years, but the issues we were set up to challenge haven't. Please continue to support our work.

## Beeb soaks up the punishment

THE BBC has had an awful summer. Hardly had the first well-placed leaks of the findings of the Davies Inquiry hit the newsstands and the hounds were out.

The main thrust of attack came from the commercial lobby and their friends in the press. Their target: the proposed digital supplement of £1.57 a month over seven years, falling to 99p a month at the end of the period (in 2006).

Much of this outcry could have been anticipated, although the speed with which the so-called Commercial Alliance (made up of old and new adversaries) has come together heralds a serious threat for the future.

The BBC itself has generally failed to hit back, reacting to the agenda set by rivals. As Steven Barnett wrote in the *Media Guardian* on 23 August: "Unfortunately, its (the BBC's) very transparency gives its enemies the ammunition they crave. And it does not help its case by often appearing smug and self-satisfied to those trying to report -

sometimes even benignly - on the latest leak or internal crisis."

Of course it's in the interests of the commercial lobby (including their allies in the press) to play up every difficulty real or imaginary. With around 40% of all viewing and just under 50% of UK listeners, the BBC and public service broadcasting is a success story, despite the powerful and well-funded commercial opposition. And all for only 28p per day!

Sometimes the commercial lobby gets help from unusual sources. The *Guardian* on 17 August led with a story based on a poll carried out by ICM which showed significant majorities in favour of advertising and sponsorship on the Beeb and against the digital supplement proposed by Davies. Of course the poll didn't go on to expand on the consequences of such choices!

It was, however, broadly in line with a poll undertaken by the Davies Committee which posed 42 questions under the

heading 'Future of the BBC'.

One question gave a list of 14 different programme categories and the BBC was seen as the best providers in 11. The three categories it lost on were game shows, daytime chat shows and soap operas. In every other area from nature programmes, education, to news and sport, the BBC had more support than its commercial rivals.

But the real attack has been reserved for the whole concept of public service broadcasting. Giving the MacTaggart lecture at the Edinburgh Festival, Richard Eyre Chief Executive of ITV announced that public service broadcasting will soon be dead. Instead Eyre coined the phrase 'public interest broadcasting' as the shape of things to come.

In our evidence to the Davies Committee the CPBF stated that: "an extra licence fee levied on receivers of digital equipment

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would raise serious objections from commercial operators who would argue that this was inhibiting their development and favouring the BBC. It might be vulnerable to successful challenge under competition law. It would open the door for a sustained campaign to abolish the licence fee." Of course there is a real debate as to whether users of non-digital services should continue to finance the development and production of digital services. But the view that the licence fee indexed linked to reflect real rises in labour and technology costs, balanced with an extension of the existing concessionary fee schemes to help people least able to afford the fee still remains the least divisive method of funding the BBC.

In the uproar over the digital fee, proposals to sell 49% of BBC Worldwide and privatise BBC Resources have gone almost

unnoticed (except by the media unions). Only one Committee member, Helen Black from UNISON didn't support the recommendations. She believed that unsustainable tensions would arise between the private shareholders' desire for maximum profits on the one hand, and, on the other, the licence fee payers interests. And the Governors' need to ensure fair-trading, the protection of standards and the integrity of the BBC brand. On the later she considered that it would lead to the BBC becoming a publisher-broadcaster only, because privatisation would erode the craft and skills base within the BBC and ultimately the BBC would end up paying more for programmes than it currently does. Finally Helen did not consider these recommendations to be the best way to maximise net income to the BBC in the longer term (see page 103 of the Committee's report).

The fight for public service broadcasting

is on and the gloves are off. Chris Smith will be considering the Davies Report and comments on its findings should be sent to him by the end of October. Meanwhile the Commons Culture, Media and Sport Committee, chaired by Gerald Kaufman MP propose to take evidence in this autumn into the funding of the BBC. All written evidence must be received by 1 November. The Committee plans to take oral evidence in November and early December and publish a report before Christmas.

An organised powerful lobby standing up for public service broadcasting needs to emerge. At best the government appears to face both ways and is too much under the influence of the industry and the commercial lobbyists. The Davies Committee deliberately or otherwise, has raised a serious question mark over the future of public service broadcasting. The government needs to view the future of the BBC licence fee in the context of wider developments in mass communications by holding a public inquiry into the future of media policy. Without an overall media policy, a clear vision of what we mean and want >from our broadcasters, public service broadcasting will remain under the cosh and increasing under threat from the commercial sector who look with envious eyes on the BBC share of the market.

Barry White

## WITHOUT COMMENT

"... we are starting to see significant pressure on the idea that cultural considerations take priority in broadcasting policy ... The trouble is once you abandon the cultural imperative, the logic of our present situation demands radical reform, not tinkering. Ideas which have hitherto failed to take root – the privatisation of the BBC and Channel 4, the abolition of media specific ownership rules and the statutory existence of the ITV network – will all look rather more attractive, at least to some."

Barry Cox, deputy chairman of Channel 4, Broadcast, 25 June, 1999

## Low flying.

### 270 sacked Lufthansa Skychefs workers know how low

Regular business travellers know what matters about the airline they choose is the quality of the service they get.

As a union we know that when airlines care for their staff, their staff care for you.

Lufthansa showed they don't care by sacking 270 of their Skychefs workers after six hours of lawful, official strike. Those sacked included employees on sick leave and even those on holiday.

Eight months on, the company's proposal to settle the dispute has been to offer the sacked workers the opportunity of applying for six posts.

You expect your airline to give you and its staff the best service.

## Don't fly Lufthansa

Join the T&G Don't Fly Lufthansa Campaign by writing for more information to: Bill Morris, T&G General Secretary, Don't Fly Lufthansa Campaign, Freepost, London SW1E 5YY



# End of an era?

Jonathan Hardy identifies the threats to, and arguments for, the defence of a threatened species

THE turn of the CPBF in the mid 1980s from a critique of broadcasters to 'defence' of the BBC marks out a decisively important political stance which is still widely misunderstood and misinterpreted.

The Campaign has always called for public service broadcasting to be extended, never simply 'defended'. But it recognised the importance of ensuring the survival of the BBC as a public broadcaster against the broad front of commercial media, advertisers, free marketeers and politicians who set the Thatcherite agenda of the 1980s, as well other voices from the left.

The campaign never uncritically supported the 'traditional' PSB institutions, but continued to propose reforms to ensure democratic accountability, access, diversity of representation, as well as independence from State power and censorship as well as commercial dominance. However the campaign believed that the maintenance and extension of PSB and of non-market components in broadcasting was absolutely vital. That meant defending the BBC and the public service structures and obligations on commercial broadcasters, whilst arguing for the extension of PSB obligations, not least to satellite and cable TV providers. Against those who argued for dismantling the BBC, in order to construct a more radical and diverse media ecology, we asserted that, once diminished, there could be no realistic likelihood of successful PSB systems being re-established into purely commercial broadcasting systems in Europe.

Regulation, representation, and social values have become deeply unfashionable in both media policy debates and in much academic thinking today, adding to the existing charge of 'paternalism' in broadcasting, and indifference to media economics, policy-making and the growth of corporate, as opposed to State, media power. This has gone hand-in-hand with an often uncritical embrace of the democratic potential of new communications media, especially the internet.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s the CPBF contributed to building a coalition amongst media unions, the labour movement, voluntary sector, cultural organisations and in colleges and universities. Today, more than ever we need such a coalition which the Campaign's call for a public enquiry into the media could help to generate.

During the 1990s the Campaign extended its focus to Europe, organising conferences, exchanges and joint campaigning with trade unions and social policy organisations on media concentration, public service broadcasting, journalists' rights and other policy issues. But the internationalising, broadening and diversification of media policy making remains a tremendous challenge for any media campaigning organisation, particularly when meagre resources are pitted against the largest global corporations.

Domestically, there have always been complex contradictions balancing BBC audience share, programme range and quality, public service values and commercialism. In the 1990s the issues centred on the expected loss of legitimacy for PSB arising from either the BBC's continuing loss of audience share or its increasingly 'commercial' efforts to regain it. The response of the BBC and other public service broadcasters has been to increase commercial activities globally to partially subsidise their

## Regulation, representation, and social values have become deeply unfashionable

domestic services. But while increasing commercialisation goes some way to meeting funding problems, it raises even deeper, possibly fatal, problems of legitimacy.

At the European Union level, a last minute amendment to the Amsterdam Treaty in 1998 allows member states to provide funding for public service broadcasting without contravening competition laws. This is an important but uncertain victory. It indicates the strength of support for PSB in Europe which is vital to challenging the dominance of global corporate media players. But the insertion of this ambiguous and rather porous provision in the Treaty itself highlights the growing ascendancy of the new trade and competition law paradigm over social and cultural media regulation.

Policy making is transferring to an international and regional arena dominated by competition law and neo-liberal trade law. What has been slenderly 'defended' within the European Union, is once again having to be re-presented in the powerful forums of the World Trade Organisation, OECD and in the forthcoming GATT trade talks. And here

the terms are structured demonstrably in favour of 'market freedom', against impediments or distortions to competitive markets, such as public financing of broadcasting.

The report of the panel chaired by Gavyn Davies, The Future Funding of the BBC, calls for even greater commercial activity for the BBC, and the 49% sale of BBC Worldwide Ltd. In recent weeks, we have heard much of the 'Commercial Alliance', the self-styled network of commercial operators seeking to block a 'digital' licence fee supplement. But commercial operators are also seeking to use EU competition law, as well as their considerable political clout, to challenge the provenance of PSB in more far-reaching ways, by challenging 'unfair' trading. There are several cases against public broadcasters to be heard, including one from BSkyB dating from 1991.

As the pages of the Davies report make clear, the commercial attacks on the BBC's 'unfair' trading incursions into new media services is gathering force. Now that the licensing era is being overtaken by the digital era, commercial competitors look in alarm and greed at the BBC's potential dominance of key services. What should concern the Campaign, and what should we propose in response?

I believe that the digital supplement proposed is the best available option to fund growth, while the selling off of BBC Resources and Worldwide are both appalling and unjustified proposals which should be resisted. The BBC should be allowed to expand into new services, but, in the era beyond Birtism, the BBC, and the Government must convincingly articulate and win support for public service media, not as a residue or emulation of the market, but as access, independence, quality and diversity of programmes and services.

The Campaign has provided sustained critique of commercialisation at the BBC. We have also argued that public service outcomes and obligations should be secured across terrestrial media and new media, through regulation and support, not cornered into a diminishing ghetto of elitism or irrelevance. I believe the BBC should expand its digital and on-line offerings. I believe that the case for quality information and media and communications services to be provided outside of corporate control, driving up quality and standards elsewhere, applies with even greater force in the new multi-channel, multi-media environment. The corollary is that those standards must be demonstrably non-commercial, non-market, whatever acceptable arrangement is otherwise found between commercial sales and PSB output of the BBC.

# Changing aims

WHEN the Campaign for Press Freedom was set up the Statement of Aims were:

- 1 To challenge the myth that only private ownership of the newspaper industry provides genuine freedom, diversity of access, and to generate public debate on alternative forms of democratic ownership and control.
- 2 To carry out research into alternatives, including ownership by independent trusts or co-operatives, which would guarantee freedom from either state control or domination by major business conglomerates.
- 3 To encourage the creation of alternative newspapers of all kinds, including a newspaper or newspapers sympathetic to the labour movement.
- 4 To encourage the development of industrial democracy in the newspaper, broadcasting and television industries.
- 5 To follow up the general principles contained in the Minority Report of the Royal Commission on the Press, including proposals for a National Printing Corporation to provide a competitive public sector in the printing industry and a launch fund to assist new publications.
- 6 To campaign for a reformed and reconstituted Press Council to promote basic standards of fairness and access to the press on behalf of the public.
- 7 To work for a reduction in legal restrictions on freedom of publication and increased access to official sources of information through reform of the Official secrets Act and similar restrictive legislation and the introduction of a Freedom of Information Bill

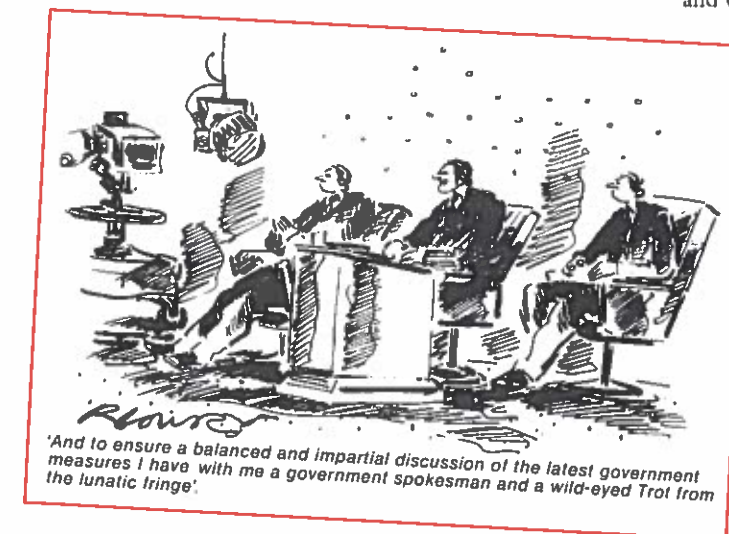
The analysis which supported this statement of aims was contained in the widely-distributed pamphlet, *Towards Press Freedom*.

At the AGM in April 1982 the name was changed to the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom and the aims of the organisation have remained virtually the same since then. The most important additions were:

● Encourage debate on the implications of technological advances in the media to ensure that the public interest is



Record and postcard from the CPBF



'And to ensure a balanced and impartial discussion of the latest government measures I have with me a government spokesman and a wild-eyed Trot from the lunatic fringe'

safeguarded and that commercial interests do not override public accountability

- To campaign for the legal right of access for publications to the distribution system, and a guaranteed right of display
- To challenge the myth that the present forms of ownership and regulation of broadcasting guarantee editorial independence, democratic accountability or high programme standards

## POLITICS AND THE CPBF

The CPBF produced *Media Manifestos* arguing the case for media reform in 1986, 1992 and 1996. In 1992 and 1997 we ran the election monitoring exercise, *Electionwatch*.

## PUBLICATIONS

Over the years the CPBF has published or co-operated in publishing a number of important books and pamphlets on media

policy issues. In 1980 the Minority Press Group/CPBF published *The Other Secret Service: Press Distributors and Press censorship* and Pluto Press published *Bending Reality* in 1986.

A 1981 CPBF pamphlet, *The Right of Reply*, first developed this key demand and was followed by the establishment of a CPBF Right to Reply Unit which produced a folder of information, advice and pamphlets like *Gotcha Back!* which documented successes in demanding the right of reply.

CPBF pamphlets on the Falklands war, *Media Hits the Pits* and *Switching Channels* sold well, as did Chris Searle's *Your Daily Dose: Racism and the Sun*. This isn't a complete list of all our publications, but we should also remember all the CPBF responses to government consultations, *Green Papers* and *White Papers* which have argued for our

policies. And of course, there are the postcards; probably the most popular was the Ray Lowery 'wild-eyed Trot'. And we even produced a record, *Ballad of a Spycatcher* with Billy Bragg and Leon Rosselson.

## CHANGING OFFICES

The CPBF started its life based at the offices of the print union, SOGAT, at Hadleigh in Essex. We then moved into 9 Poland Street, which was a warren of a building housing a bewildering variety of pressure groups. When the Rowntree Trust decided to sell the building (where the CPBF had office space rent and rate

free) we moved to less than salubrious surroundings in a basement room at the Unity Club on Dalston Lane, Hackney.

We had to clear up the room and lock everything away because it was hired out for meetings in the evenings.

Since 1993 we've been at Cynthia Street. It's a small office but at least it's above ground and we don't have to vacate it in the evening.

## PEOPLE

But most important is the long list of people who have donated their time, energy, skills and commitment to the CPBF over the two decades. We can't mention everyone here and some, like Tom Baistow and John Jennings, sadly are no longer with us, but we hope many of our friends and supporters will join us at Smithy's wine bar Leeke Street, London WC1 on Thursday 23 September

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fully supports the  
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20 years of campaigning.

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UNISON  
the public service union

# Lord Wakeham's new clothes

**TIM GOPSILL**  
MARVEL at the British press! Its huge sales, its scoops, its general outrageousness. More than anything else, admire the rigour with which it polices itself. Self-regulation by the Press Complaints Commission, we are told, is an ideal to hold up to the world.

It is strong enough to withstand almost constant attack. After every outcry, every threat from politicians, every official enquiry and attempt at legislation, we end up exactly where we were at the start: the press escapes with solemn pronouncements that it will clean up its act, and sails on to the next storm.

It is not real. It is the fable of the emperor's new clothes, and over the last 20 years the emperor has been through several wardrobes.

He used to wear the uniform of the Press Council. This was set up in 1954, in the face of fierce resistance from the publishers, as a

serious attempt to institute self-regulation. It was a cross-industry body, with representatives of the unions as well as the publishers and editors. But journalists began to see it as an apologist for the editors who dominated it, whitewashing the excesses of the press, and in 1981 the NUJ pulled out.

During the 1980s things got out of hand, as the national press joined Margaret Thatcher's crusade with relish. Never had the media been closer to the state; never had they such power. They could set not just the political but the social agenda. They could create celebrity and then knock it down, like a child's game.

Unsurprisingly, the celebrities, expecting adulation, objected when reporters and

photographers started poking their noses and their lenses into their private lives. "Something should be done about it" was the cry taken up by politicians and in 1989 the government set up an enquiry into press intrusions into privacy, headed by David Calcutt QC.

Calcutt came out with a damning report and drastic recommendations: a statutory tribunal, headed by a judge, with powers to fine newspapers, and, worse, to prevent publication of stories the targets had got wind of. They were never carried through – was it intended they should be? – for only days after the report came out in 1990, the newspaper owners announced they had scrapped the Press Council – obviously believing it was theirs to scrap – and set up the PCC.

It was still chaired by the last Press Council chair, Louis Blom-Cooper QC. He soon went, succeeded by Lord MacGregor, who came across from chairing the Advertising Standards Authority.

Lord MacGregor brought with him from the ASA a new director, Mark Bolland. The vacancy was created by booting out the former director, Ken Morgan, a former

NUJ General Secretary who had fought a hopeless rearguard action to maintain some sense of responsibility among editors.

The selling of self-regulation was a success,

at least in that the politicians went quiet for a while. The intrusions went on.

Then the Tory government under Thatcher's successor John Major did something quite radical: it established a Ministry of Culture. It was called the Department of National Heritage, but it brought all media matters under one roof for the first time. The first minister, David Mellor, decided to take on the press. The privacy intruders, he announced in a phrase he came to regret, were "drinking in the Last Chance Saloon."

They went for him. Very convertently, a little-known but ambitious young actress struck up an acquaintance with Mellor and the next thing he knew he was on the front page of the Sunday People, which had somehow obtained recordings of their intimate telephone moments.

John Major stood by his man, declaring in a phrase he too must have rued, that it was he who appointed the Cabinet, not the press barons. A few weeks later, after further revelations, Mellor had to resign.

The Mellor affair determined the relationship between government and the press that still persists. As NUJ General Secretary John Foster has put it: "the problem in Britain is not state interference with the press, but press interference with democracy." No government will dare to take on the press proprietors.

But no-one is allowed to say so. Two facades have to be maintained: that the government is about to pounce, and that the press is governing itself strictly and responsibly. Both are so patently untrue that maintaining them requires some nifty footwork at times; the emperor does need the occasional change of clothes. To this end the proprietors jettisoned MacGregor, who had served his purpose, and hired Lord Wakeham, a retired fixer from Thatcher's government who knew how to play the game.

He was able, for instance, to steer his charges through the storm that blew up suddenly with the death of Princess Diana. While accounts of mass public outrage at the tabloids were exaggerated, it was still a testing time.

It was decided to revise the Code of Practice, to forbid intrusions by photographers. The panic in September 1997 was that paparazzi photographers had hounded the Princess to death. (It may be asked, now that the official enquiry has judged this was not the case, whether the new clauses should be repealed. No need, really: no-one takes any notice of them anyway.)

Readers may not have noticed any difference, but there have been several revisions to the Code, incorporating tough rules against all kinds of journalistic misconduct that are carried out every day.

Although it is vaunted as a set of standards

**The press could create celebrity and then knock it down, like a child's game**



How cartoonist Steve Bell saw the changeover from the Press Council to the PCC, from his regular strip *The Owners* in the *Journalist* magazine

for journalists, it is not: it is designed for testing complaints, which is quite different, and it has to perform two seemingly contradictory tasks. First, it must be vague enough about general conduct to allow rulings that the letter of the law has not been transgressed; and second, it must be precise enough on particular practices to allow rulings that the spirit has not been breached. So there are finicky clauses dealing with children and hospitals, for instance, and waffly ones on general standards and the public interest.

If this appears cynical, consider the late Sir David English. As editor of the *Daily Mail* he had been censured by the Press Council for paying money to the relative of a criminal (Sonia Sutcliffe, wife of the Yorkshire Ripper) and for repeatedly lying about it.

The Code of Practice doesn't allow such payments. English knew this because they gave him the chair of the editor's committee that drafts the Code, but the *Mail* has continued to pay vast sums to criminals and their associates, the latest being the speculator Nick Leeson.

Although newspaper sales are slowly but inexorably falling, they retain enormous political clout. They make fantastic profits: while the average profit return on turnover for British companies is around 14 per cent, newspaper publishers routinely turn in figures around 20 per cent. Newspapers are cheap to produce, the

more so since they got rid of the printers and flattened the unions. But to claw their shares of the declining market, they have continually to wind up the ratchet of sensationalism.

To bring in a system of regulation independent of both government and the press barons requires, firstly, changes to the pattern of ownership. There is no other way to reduce the imperative on journalists to stretch the rules.

Secondly, it requires the establishment of an independent body. For while the press and the PCC have been weaving their way through recurrent crises, there have been several positive attempts to put things right.

Two Private Members Bills – from Ann Clwyd and Tony Worthington – have attempted the modest aim of instituting a statutory right of reply. A more ambitious proposal in 1992 from Clive Soley MP was for an Independent Press Tribunal, with power to order the correction of factual inaccuracies and a wide remit to protect press freedom, regulate the training of journalists and so on.

All were eminently sensible; all had the backing of the CPBE. All were greeted with near-hysterical opposition from the press, were cold-shouldered by successive governments, and all went down.

In effect, the British press is out of control. People who complain about that should stop paying lip-service to the pretence of current self-regulation and work seriously for measures to force some sense of responsibility onto it. Tim Gopsill is editor of the *National Union of Journalists* magazine the *Journalist*.

## PRESS FREEDOM HAS TO BE FOUGHT FOR

**NUJ**  
NATIONAL UNION  
OF  
JOURNALISTS



EVERYBODY is in favour of press freedom, so they say. In practice, governments and other powerful interests always try to restrict it when they can.

Media workers are on the front line and it is up to them to defend press freedom. The NUJ is the union for journalists and always supports its members when they need to fight for it.

Ed Moloney (left), Belfast editor of the *Sunday Tribune*, is facing prison for sticking to the journalists' cardinal rule that they do not betray confidential informants nor surrender material to the state. He is defying a court order to hand over his notes of an interview with a man who alleged there had been collusion between the RUC and the loyalist terror gang who murdered a Belfast solicitor.

The NUJ is giving him total support. We are working with his legal team, we have organised pickets at the court and the support of journalists' organisations around the world.

Ed Moloney is following the NUJ's Code of Conduct. He will not give in, and nor will the union.

All journalists should be in the NUJ. When they need support, the union will always be there for them.

Contact: General Secretary John Foster 0171-278 7916.

Email: [acorn.house@nuj.org.uk](mailto:acorn.house@nuj.org.uk)

# CODE OF CONDUCT

# NUJ

NATIONAL UNION  
OF  
JOURNALISTS

1 A journalist has a duty to maintain the highest professional and ethical standards.

2 A journalist shall at all times defend the freedom of the Press and other media in relation to the collection of information and the expression of comment and criticism.

3 A journalist shall obtain information by straightforward means and accurate, avoid the expression of comment and conjecture as established fact and falsification by distortion, selection or misrepresentation.

4 A journalist shall rectify promptly any harmful inaccuracies, ensure that correction and apology is of sufficient importance.

5 A journalist shall obtain information, photographs and illustrations only by straightforward means. The use of other means can be justified only in the public interest. The journalist is entitled to exercise a personal conscientious objection to the use of such means.

6 Subject to the provisions of this Code, a journalist shall do nothing which entails intrusion into private grief and distress.

7 A journalist shall protect confidential sources of information.

8 A journalist shall not accept bribes nor shall he/she allow other inducements to influence the reporting of news.

9 A journalist shall not disclose if others to the detriment of the public interest the truth because of advertising or other considerations.

10 A journalist shall not mention a person's race, colour, sex, religion, political opinions (or lack of it), gender or sexual orientation if this information is strictly relevant. A journalist shall not express prejudice or hatred on any of the above-mentioned grounds.

11 A journalist shall not take private advantage of information gained in the course of his/her duties, before the information is public knowledge.

12 A journalist shall not by any means endorse by advertisement any commercial produce or service save for the promotion of his/her own work or of the medium by which he/she is employed.

**Book Branch**

**London Freelance Branch**

**London Magazine Branch**

**Oxford & District Branch**

**Congratulations to the CPBF on 20 years of campaigning against tycoons, censorship and imbalance in the media.**

**We look forward to continuing to work with the CPBF on issues such as effective freedom of information legislation, trade union rights within the media and an end to monopoly ownership.**

**The National Union of Journalists promotes professional standards across the media and has successfully defended members such as Bill Goodwin who refused to break the NUJ Code of Conduct when ordered to reveal his sources.**

**Freedom of the press includes the freedom for staff and freelance media workers to be represented by a strong, independent media union.**

### CHURCHILL AND THE H-BOMB

Secret state papers released at the end of August reveal that Winston Churchill was personally responsible for banning the BBC from broadcasting any programmes about nuclear weapons and the true effects of fallout from a nuclear attack in the 1950s.

After hearing that the BBC was preparing a programme on the H-bomb, Churchill issued his secret instruction in December 1954 to the postmaster general, Earl de la Warr.

"I doubt whether it is wise that they should do this. I am sure that ministers should see the script in advance in order to satisfy themselves that it contains nothing which is contrary to the public interest," he said.

Churchill told de la Warr to write to the BBC chairman, Sir Alexander Cadogan, saying that unless scripts "on any programme which contains information about atomic or thermonuclear weapons" were submitted in advance to the government, they would be banned by ministerial order.

Whilst there were protests by Cadogan over the request which amounted to "a measure of control by the government over the BBC without precedent in peacetime" the broadcasting chiefs acquiesced after they were promised there would be no direct censorship.

The papers are designated "highly confidential" and contain details of a meeting between the BBC Director-General, Sir Ian Jacobs, Cadogan and de la Ware who states it would be "quite wrong to have programmes on this subject which tended to persuade the public in the UK that there was no point in trying to defend themselves against such all-destructive weapons".

Once the BBC was assured that it would not have to submit scripts in advance, it fell in line with the suggestion and confirmed "it was unlikely that the BBC would wish to mount any feature programme on 'fallout' or other effects of nuclear weapons".

The ban imposed in 1955 continued under the Labour government in the 1960s with the suppression of the documentary film, *The War Game* by Peter Watkins.

### NTL CUTS THE MUSTARD

NTL recently spent £20m on a profile enhancing campaign – you know, the one which had the posters and adverts showing childlike drawings linking you and me via NTL to the information superhighway or the ITV Network and Channels 4 and 5.

NTL seems to be winning recognition and plaudits in other ways, too. Compared with the terrible take-up rate of some cable services, NTL's penetration rate of 45% is the best. The recent deal to buy the residential cable assets of Cable and Wireless for £8.2 billion means that a merger or takeover of the last remaining cable group, Telewest can't be far away. The result will be a single, united UK cable provider. Not a happy prospect for BSkyB, which after years of facing puny competition from cable might now find itself facing a real competitor.

NTL also has powerful shareholders – Microsoft has a 5% stake in the company, and France Telecom put up much of the cash for the Cable and Wireless deal.



Congratulations  
to the CPBF on  
20 years of  
campaigning

“  
No more **Speculation**  
**No more spin**  
”

Derek Hodgson  
for the Communication Workers Union  
at the 1998 Labour Party Conference

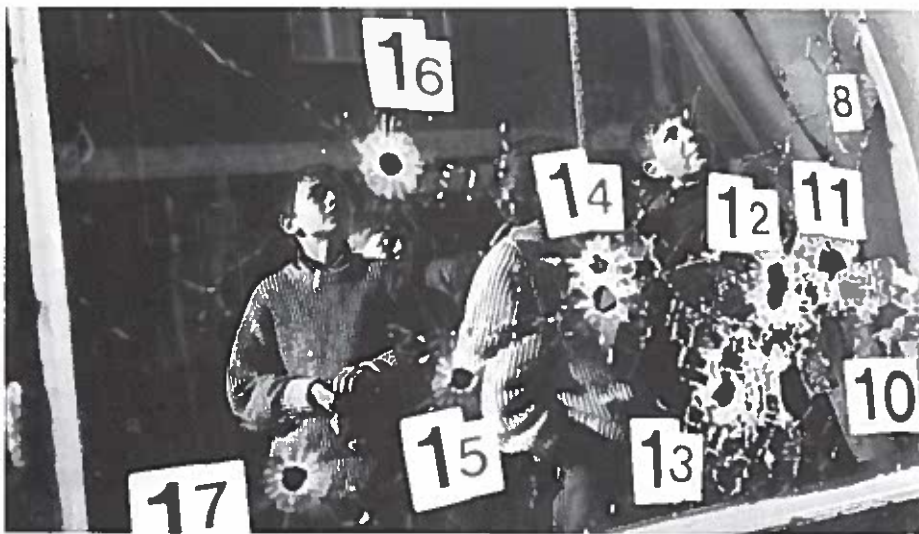
**We stand with the CPBF,  
campaigning for a free, open and honest media**

If you'd like more information about the  
Communication Workers Union

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visit our website at [www.cwu.org](http://www.cwu.org)

write to General Secretary Derek Hodgson  
at 150 The Broadway, London SW19 1RX



Most of the prints in the exhibition were produced from digitally-scanned negatives, a situation forced on Andrew Testa as Serbian police confiscated materials prior to his expulsion from Kosovo

## Views from the ground

Andrew Testa's Kosovo photographs  
Duncan Forbes

AS NEWS from Kosovo recedes from the front pages and the generals and politicians commend each other for having such a 'good war', how will the rest of us recall this most barbaric of post-war conflicts? Chances are that it will be photographs that stay most powerfully imprinted on our brains.

Readers of the Guardian and Observer will already be familiar with Andrew Testa's photography and in Edinburgh this summer he brought together 24 images summing up his experience of the war.

Before his expulsion from Kosovo at the beginning of the NATO bombing, Testa recorded the massive influx of Serbian forces into the province and their brutal engagements with the ethnic Albanian population and the KLA.

He subsequently covered the refugee crisis in Macedonian and Albania, before returning to Kosovo – and the full horror of ethnic cleansing – alongside British troops.

Testa's photography and selection of images for this exhibition emphasise the

## Views from the ground

swift, disruptive character of the immediate conflict as enormous forces were unleashed against an almost defenceless population.

There are few images of heavy weaponry, but its effects are everywhere: bombed buildings, dismembered bodies and the frightened faces of the displaced and dispossessed.

Western forces and aid agencies are entirely unrepresented – a striking contrast

**When it comes to war reportage photography continues to be the most challenging and revealing visual medium**

with the sanitised photo-ops and press conferences that formed the staple diet of the television war.

There are echoes, too, of previous conflicts as Testa recalls Robert Capa's Spanish Civil war imagery with a grizzled, low-angled shot of a queue of refugees dragging

itself towards the Macedonian border.

Is he adopting the visual cliché to remind us that forced expulsions have happened before?

Throughout the exhibition children figure most powerfully: a girl pleads, apparently rationally, with her distraught, child-like mother; the suspicious, sidelong glances of the young remind us that this was often a neighbours' war.

Most of the prints in this exhibition were produced from digitally-scanned negatives, a situation forced on the photographer as Serbian police confiscated materials prior to his expulsion from Kosovo.

If Testa's work is anything to go by, the often greater independence of the lone photographer working in the field means that when it comes to war reportage photography continues to be the most challenging and revealing visual medium.

This exhibition may lack the immediate context of newspaper coverage, but its proximate and disturbingly distilled imagery adds to our understanding of how the conflict was experienced on the ground. And that, as Testa would no doubt argue, is the best way to begin to grasp the reality of war.

■ The exhibition was mounted in support of the ongoing work of Workers' Aid for Kosovo. Anyone wishing to make a donation or find out more, please contact 0161 233 9998

## Right to know?

*The Culture of Secrecy: Britain 1832-1998*

David Vincent; Oxford University Press; £25.00

The dust jacket of David Vincent's book quotes Tony Blair's preface to the White Paper, *Your Right to Know*, published in December, 1997: "The traditional culture of secrecy in Britain will only be broken down by giving people in the United Kingdom the legal right to know."

In an afterword, written in February 1998, the author described the surprise which accompanied the publication of the White Paper: "... to widespread applause, a radical reform was outlined which had every prospect of becoming law by the end of the century". That was then, and as a social historian, maybe he now regrets anticipating the future so certainly because he, along with many other will have been amazed at the way the hopes for a radical Freedom of Information Act have been dashed.

John Vincent's book is important because it is a meticulous and fascinating historical analysis of the growth of the culture of secrecy in Britain. It is also an invaluable reference source with wide-ranging research, and a confident analysis of the material he has unearthed.

GW

**Usdaw congratulates the CPBF  
on its ongoing 20 year campaign to  
maintain freedom in the media**

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Bill Connor

President  
Marge Carey MBE

**Usdaw**  
Union of Shop, Distributive  
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## Wish us a happy birthday – support our financial appeal

THIS birthday edition of FreePress reflects on the work of the Campaign as a media pressure group over two decades.

Throughout this period we have relied on affiliations and donations for our core funding. Our record speaks for itself, but if this work is to continue into the millennium we need additional funds to respond to the challenges that face us.

This month we are holding fringe meetings at the TUC and Labour Party Conference.

These and other important initiatives stretch our limited resources. This means we need additional cash now. You can help by raising our financial appeal in your trade union or political party branch.

Recruitment is the life blood of our organisation. If you could recruit just one new member in the next few months, our financial position would look healthier.

We are determined to remain a pro-active campaigning organisation promoting policies for a diverse, democratic and accountable media. So in wishing us a happy birthday, please dig deep and support this appeal.

Geoff Mason, Treasurer

## CPBF NEWS

### LABOUR PARTY FRINGE MEETING

Monday, 27 September, 12.45pm

Public Service Broadcasting – Is It Safe in Labour's Hands?

**Speakers:** Jean Seaton, University of Westminster

Tony Lennon, President of BECTU

**Venue:** Lampeter Hotel, Exeter Park Road, Bournemouth

### NEW AFFILIATIONS

We'd like to welcome UNISON, Scotland, who have just affiliated to the CPBF.

### OBITUARY

DAVID Munro, the director and producer of documentary films by John Pilger since 1978, died in August, aged 55. The first Pilger/Munro film, Do You Remember Vietnam (1978) established the collaborative nature of their working partnership. The ideas and the editorial and political stance of the film was Pilger's but he wrote, 'David was brilliant at interpreting my reporting and the conclusions I wanted to draw.' This first collaboration was described by Variety, the US magazine, as 'a monument to the documentary art.'

Together they made four films about Cambodia, beginning with Year Zero (1979) which alerted the world to the horrors of Pol Pot, and their collaboration produced 20 films.

Inevitably the choice of subject was controversial or dangerous, and, for example, Death of a Nation (1994) and its sequel, The Timor Conspiracy (1998) were shot at great personal risk.

LORD Orr-Ewing, who died in August will be remembered for two activities which had an impact on broadcasting. As Conservative MP for Hendon North he was part of a group of younger Conservative MPs who in the fifties lobbied effectively for the breaking of the BBC's monopoly.

As a life peer, along with Lord Wyatt and Baroness Cox, he introduced a clause to the 1990 Broadcasting Bill which required ITV current affairs programmes to observe 'due impartiality'. Observers were concerned that this was designed to curb criticisms of Thatcherite policies.

The reality was that the 1990 Broadcasting Act unleashed other forces which ultimately had a much more dramatic impact in curbing ITV's hard-hitting current affairs programmes. Censorship through commercial pressures has been far more effective than "due impartiality" in silencing ITV's distinctive current affairs programmes.

Free Press is edited by Granville Williams for the National Council

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| e) Institutions (eg libraries:<br>includes five copies of Free Press) | £25 |

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| i) 10,000 to 50,000       | £115 |
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