

## LONDON BOMBINGS missing questions

AFTER the London bombings hate filled headlines from sections of our national press whipped up hysteria. Some, like the *Express* headline, really did plumb the depths. The day after the shooting of the innocent Brazilian, Jean Charles de Menezes, the *Sun* front page headline on 23 July was 'ONE DOWN, THREE TO GO'.

Menezes's behaviour was presented as the justification for him being gunned down. The 'facts' about the police shooting (or indeed whether it was police or special forces involved)—that he wore a bulky jacket and leapt over the ticket barrier—have now been rejected. Such 'facts' led Bruce Anderson to conclude that 'the police were right to shoot... anyone who behaves in that way cannot have been keeping abreast of current affairs'. (*The Independent* 25/07/05)

The function of such hysterical coverage is to create a groundswell of support for exceptional powers to combat terror threats. The shoot-to-kill policy is one which prompts the questions: when was it introduced and why there was no debate in Parliament or public information? Another is the proposal to close bookshops and internet sites. As *The Economist* (30/07/05) points out: 'This is both foolish and draconian. Foolish because in an open society and the age of the internet such a ban on free speech would not work.' And where would such limits on



Express story—CPBF has made complaint to the Press Complaints Commission

free speech be set?

The media should be playing a vital role in asking awkward questions and presenting information, but there are huge gaps and selectivity in their performance. The real facts about the ongoing death and destruction in Iraq or the links between the Iraq war and the London bombings get scant coverage. Indeed those that raise such issues are themselves attacked by the media. At times like this we need to go to other sources: Paul Rogers at [www.opendemocracy.net](http://www.opendemocracy.net) is one. But we also need to challenge the media for its selectivity and bias and [www.medialens.org](http://www.medialens.org) does that.

## We need your e-mail address

THE CPBF is updating its membership database by adding, where possible, email addresses so that we can improve communications with our supporters.

Could you send your email address (with your name) to our national office at: [freepress@cpbf.org.uk](mailto:freepress@cpbf.org.uk). The information will not be given to any third party.

## ofcom watch

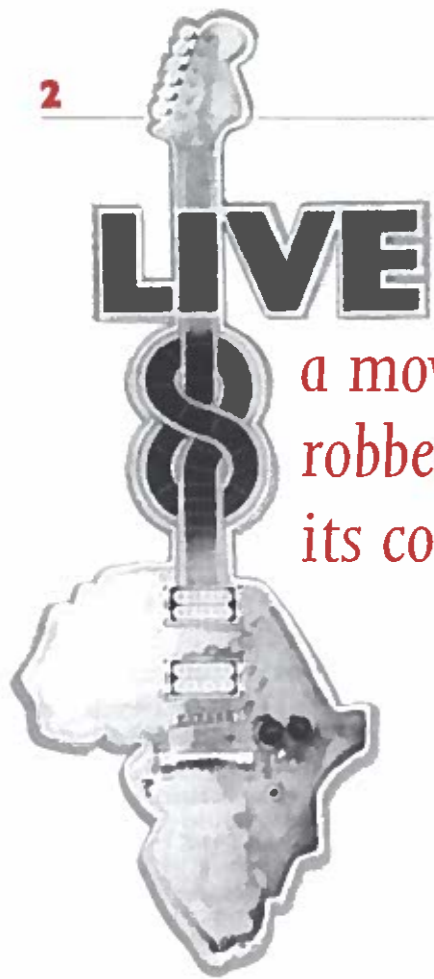
PRaise where praise is due. Ofcom is required to produce an annual factual and statistical report under the 2003 Communications Act. The *Communications Market 2005*, is extremely useful, highlighting developments in the electronic communications sector, covering television, radio and telecommunications for the year 2004 and the start of 2005.

The problem is how you interpret data in terms of regulatory policy. Ed Richards, then the regulator's senior partner in competition and strategy, used the report's findings in a recent speech to the Westminster Media Forum, and sections of it are very interesting. The bombings on 7 July were used to illustrate how people communicated with each other, shared information, found information and followed events.

But one of the problems with Ofcom is that it transfixes by communications technology. People are beginning to wake up to this. Raymond Snoddy, writing in *Marketing* (25/06/05) was particularly damning about Ofcom's Green Paper response and the Statement on Programming for the Nation and Regions where 'one fallacy and unproven assumption is built upon another'. He argues the documents propose 'solutions to problems that do not yet exist and can do great damage as we await the digital nirvana'.

Ed Richards has now been promoted to chief operating officer in Ofcom, and Kip Meek will be responsible for Ofcom's work with European and international decision making bodies. He will play a key role in the revision of the EU Television Without Frontiers Directive (see p3).

Ofcom seems to want to play an interventionist role at the national and European levels. It really does need watching!



a movement  
robbed of  
its colours

#### MUHAMMAD IDREES AHMAD

MORE than a decade after Andre Agassi declared 'image is everything', we are assured by Bono and Geldof that nothing has really changed. In a comical revival of the 'white man's burden' credo, the aging pop stars ignored the legitimate voices of Africa and turned a global movement for justice into a grand orgy of narcissistic philanthropy. As the mainstream media heaped lavish praise upon them, astute commentators took a different view. Dubbed 'bards of the powerful' and the inane 'barkers of the circus' the duo was declared not qualified to play arbiter for the movement.

The saga of Live 8 is rooted in the consciousness of the G8 leaders and their lack of a popular mandate. With critically damaged personal profiles and the attendant decline in trustworthiness, matters have only been made worse by the increasing political consciousness and activism amongst the younger generation. Given the cynicism engendered by their politics, they are cognizant of the difficulties of appealing to this constituency directly. This presents the need for intermediaries—to rebrand them as the doers of good; herald their deeds and resurrect them as well-intentioned saviours merely in need of a push.

Enter Bono and Geldof.

The context for this co-option had already been set by the Make Poverty History campaign with an avowed aim to 'welcome the G8' and cheer them on as they went about solving the world's problems. The empty symbolism of the white band played well in the media while the irony of its manufacture in a Chinese sweatshop was dismissed offhand. Sir Bob took things a step further by announcing the Live 8 concerts to coincide with the summit. Bono also joined in to make an 'intellectual case'—unlike the 'Molotov cocktail in hand' crowd—by thanking Gordon Brown and Blair for 'their generosity'.

By diluting the real message the crowds were essentially asked to bring their collective ignorance to bear on a single project: legitimating the very institutions creating poverty. While Geldof declared the G8 leaders 'real heroes of the day', and gave them '10 out of 10 on aid, eight out of 10 on debt', even the conservative MPH expressed its disappointments. While Africa was clearly not the winner, not all departed empty handed, including Geldof, whose TV production company provided the two big screens in Hyde Park. According to Ann Talbot, the company has close ties to the government and enjoyed a 400 percent increase in profits last year

## Clear Channel move in on Glastonbury

CLEAR Channel is the US's largest radio chain, with 1,125 radio stations. It also owns 120 concert venues and 39 television stations. Internationally it has media outlets in 66 other countries and 700,000 billboards worldwide.

The sheer size of its operations is bad enough, but Clear Channel combines its commercial monopoly with strident support for the Bush administration. For example, Clear Channel sponsored and promoted the 2003 pro-war 'Rallies for America'.

Now Clear Channel has bought out concert organiser/promoter Mean Fiddler Music Group, which owns 39 per cent of the Glastonbury operating licence. Clear Channel also has stakes

alone—which are only likely to increase given Live 8's high profile.

Besides an immediate jump in the sales of the participating act's records, this opportunity to 'appeal to people's emotions' was also capitalised on by corporate sponsors, such as Volvo and Nokia. Time Warner received the US broadcasting rights which it licenced to the Walt Disney Company. EMI's stock value tripled after signing a lucrative deal for exclusive rights on the DVDs of concerts in six countries. Profits were also reaped by PR firms, including Freud Communications run by Matthew Freud, close to New Labour and married to Rupert Murdoch's daughter—needless to say, the event received favourable coverage in Murdoch's *The Sun*. Some white bands even carried logos of brands such as Tommy Hilfiger, a company that has been accused of violating workers' rights.

The final outcome of the G8 summit wasn't quite the victory for millions that Geldof proclaimed; however, Live 8 did furnish millions in financial assistance, although not quite to the constituency one would have had in mind. The prime beneficiaries of this media extravaganza were the rock dinosaurs and the participating corporations. All in all, Live 8 was one big political white-wash.

*Idrees is a research student at the University of Strathclyde*

in other UK music venues: the Brixton Academy, the Astoria and the Leeds, Reading and V festivals.

You can get a flavour of the way Clear Channel operates in this extract from 'Radio's big bully' by Eric Boehlert on [www.salon.com](http://www.salon.com): 'Want your record played on one of those stations? Be prepared to pay—dearly—for the privilege. Want your band's concert to be sponsored by a radio station? Be careful: If you pick a competitor, the behemoth might pull your songs off its playlists overnight—from two, 10, 100 stations. Looking for classy radio programming? Don't look here. Welcome to the world of Clear Channel—radio's big bully.'

## GRANVILLE WILLIAMS ON TWO EUROPEAN POLICY DEBATES

# Alter-Net launched



SIM Kallas, the European Union Commissioner, received a gift when he attended the launch of Alter-EU in Brussels on 19 July. It was a magnifying glass. Alter-EU is a new coalition which wants mandatory disclosure and ethical rules for EU lobbyists. The coalition—calling itself the Alliance for Transparency and Ethics Regulation—was making the point very clearly that the EU needs to look very closely at the power of unaccountable lobbyists in Brussels.

Kallas has a tough task to rein in the powerful lobbyocracy in Brussels. Lobby activities in Brussels are worth an estimated \$60 to 90 million a year,

and employ 15,000 professional lobbyists, most representing corporate interests. Whilst he acknowledged the Alter-EU initiative had created enormous interest, he was 'reluctant to go down the mandatory road' and suggested Alter-EU's proposals adopted a 'radical approach'. He did however accept that there needed to be a register of lobbyists so that we can know 'who is doing what and have a description of what the lobbying organisations are doing'.

Damning evidence of the present unaccountable status and deceptive techniques used by lobbyists was presented by Jorgo Riss of the Greenpeace European Unit. 'The public pays a heavy price for the big-money lobbying that goes on in Brussels,' he said. 'For example, eight years ago after the EU started addressing the environmental problems caused by 4.1 million tonnes of PVC plastic waste annually, the PVC industry has succeeded in preventing any real progress, and has recruited two senior Commission officials to a public relations exercise that recycles a mere 0.44% of this waste.'

## Television Without Frontiers

AN EU policy directive (they are the ones all European countries have to incorporate into national law within four years of a directive being agreed by the Commission and member states) is up for revision. The *Television Without Frontiers* (TWF) directive, first introduced in 1989 and revised in 1997, now has to take into account the surge in internet and mobile phone traffic and make proposals for the future regulation of other aspects of the media.

It is a fiercely contested, and long-delayed, revision of the legislation, and the focus for intense lobbying by the media, telecommunications and advertising industries, who want to roll back any attempt to place restric-

tions on their business operations (FP142). One body, the World Federation of Advertisers, claims it has delayed the implementation of the directive by two years. The International Communications Round Table (ICRT) represents 25 leading media, computer and communications companies, including Time Warner, News Corporation/News International, Bertelsmann and Microsoft. It wants 'a liberal and clearly less restrictive regulatory framework for the audiovisual sector'.

Now the UK has the Presidency of the EU until December 2005 and the Commission wants to get a draft directive out by then. In one sense this is unfortunate timing because the

Erik Wesselius of Corporate Europe Observatory cited the use of 'deceptive lobbying practices, such as pseudo-NGOs or front groups established to advocate industry positions'. The Bromine Science and Environmental Forum, for example, established by Burson Marsteller, is one such industry front dedicated to promoting favourable research skewed towards the chemical manufacturers and companies using their product. This is one reason, Wesselius argued, why 'transparency and ethics around lobbying cannot be left to voluntary initiatives'.

Will Dinan from the University of Strathclyde countered the argument lobbyists used that registration would be costly and bureaucratic, and urged Commissioner Kallas to look at the disclosure laws in Canada and the USA where registration systems, including online databases. 'Lobbying transparency would enable citizens to scrutinise the role of lobbying in policy-making,' he said.

A broad group of over 140 organisations has signed up to support this initiative to bring the powerful, unaccountable role of the lobbyists in Brussels into the public arena, including the European Federation of Journalists, the European Federation of Public Service Unions and the CPBF.

To sign up go to: [www.alter-eu.org](http://www.alter-eu.org).

stance of the UK government is clearly supportive of the media industry's call for deregulation. As the *Financial Times* (19/07/05) pointed out: 'Business stands a chance of being heard when the EU has a Commission being led by José Manuel Barroso, and a UK government in the rotating council presidency chair...'

In September there will be a major conference in Liverpool to discuss the TWF directive. The media industry, regulators and politicians will be well-represented but the CPBF and the European Federation of Journalists are supporting a call for representatives of civil society to have a stronger representation at this key policy debating forum.

Also the Commission has circulated six 'issue papers' for consultation and the CPBF will be responding to them.

# It's money that matters

**MILES BARTER** on the grim state of the local press  
BRITAIN'S local papers—and the journalists who work for them—are being run into the ground by five big companies who care nothing for communities, and are obsessed with profit.

The vast majority of regional titles are owned by one of these companies:

- **Newsquest**—the UK arm of giant US publisher Gannett. Last year's record world-wide profits were 1.3 billion dollars. Yet many Newsquest journalists are paid so badly they have to claim family tax credit.
- **Trinity Mirror**—publishers of the *Daily Mirror* which wants to make poverty history. Last year they made record profits of more than £200 million but fully qualified senior journalists on their Midlands weeklies earn £14,000 pa.
- **Northcliffe**—owned by the *Daily Mail*. They make profits of more than £100 million but have just announced a cuts package of £25 million. And they aggressively oppose union recognition.
- **Johnston Press**—based in Edinburgh. Their owner, Freddie Johnston, was placed above the Queen in this year's rich list. Graduate trainees on many of their weekly papers routinely start on less than £13,000.
- **Guardian Media**—yes the ones who own the liberal *Guardian*. Fully qualified senior journalists on their weekly papers in Greater Manchester earn £17,172—that's £172 more than a McDonald's trainee manager earns from day one. The company even de-recognised the NUJ when journalists at the Greater Manchester group had the temerity to vote for industrial action in 2002. Journalists are streaming out of the industry for jobs in PR, teacher-training courses, and—in a

growing number of cases—to work as train drivers.

The news editor of the *Salford Advertiser* left this summer for a management job at McDonald's on nearly twice the money and with a car thrown in.

Despite the cash overflowing from their bank accounts—all the big players made record profits last year—there are almost constant cuts.

At the *Yorkshire Post*—where profits have been rising steadily—journalists over 55 have been asked if they would like to volunteer for redundancy.

At the *Manchester Evening News* and the *Birmingham Evening Mail* the number of pages has been slashed in the past two months.

Journalists at the *Sheffield Star* have voted for industrial action over the non-replacement of people who leave.

The companies say they are being hit by a fall in advertising revenue—but they aren't in danger of losing money, just faced with the prospect of not making record profits again.

These cuts, low morale, poor training, the constant loss of experienced staff, and ever earlier deadlines mean that the news service provided to communities is becoming worse and worse.

When the *Manchester Evening News* outraged staff by announcing an early morning edition with no consultation one sub-editor summed things up at a chapel meeting by quipping: 'It'll be yesterday's news tomorrow.'

It is taken as read that most evening papers are already yesterday's news today. New technology, staff cuts, and printing in remote sites are forcing deadlines earlier and earlier.

The editor of one Lancashire evening paper boasted to me that they never missed their print deadlines—they hadn't even tried to change pages on 11 September 2001.

Coverage of courts, of councils, and of almost everything else is being run down.

The editor of the *Lancashire Evening Telegraph* issued a memo to staff urging them not to challenge secrecy orders in court without checking first that he really wanted to. The journalists were outraged. The implication was that it was best not to bother, and getting the editor to the phone would take so much time it would become pointless.

The commitment to the local community has almost completely disappeared. The last time I checked with Companies House the directors of Newsquest (Blackburn) and Newsquest (Bradford) were the same four people. Three lived in Surrey and one in Staffordshire.

Everyday these companies suck thousands of pounds out of local economies they claim to

champion and send the money to rich shareholders hundreds, or even thousands, of miles away.

The *Bradford Telegraph and Argus* ran a campaign called Buy it in Bradford. Everyday the newspaper was taking more than £10,000 out of the West Yorkshire economy and sending it to shareholders in McLean, Virginia, USA.

The *South Yorkshire Times* recently slashed its sports pages by half to save money. How can, for example, Mexborough judo club be expected to find a medal winner for London 2012 when its local paper is being forced to cut coverage of community sport?

The *South Yorkshire Times* is owned by Johnston Press—a company with a profit margin last year of 34 percent. That's higher than the HSBC Bank.

All the other media companies point to that figure, say their shareholders are clamouring for the same, and use it as an excuse to pay low wages and to slash and burn.

In an Orwellian move Northcliffe have called their £25 million cuts package Aim Higher. They don't want higher standards. They don't even want higher sales. They just want

higher profit margins.

It's short-term thinking on a giant scale. Only this year's profit margin matters. High staff turnover is regarded as good—because gaps between replacing people mean less money spent.

As well as low pay journalists on local papers complain constantly of over-work, long hours, bullying bosses and stress.

People are starting to notice. In South Wales a group of businessmen have announced plans to start a new morning paper because they perceive the *Western Mail* as down market and irrelevant to them.

But there is some light. The NUJ has won back union recognition at scores of new papers. Thousands of young people, a large proportion of them women, have joined the union and taken militant action over pay—although it is never reported in the mainstream media.

The lowest paid are 20 to 30 percent better off than they were in 2002 when the strikes started.

This summer journalists in Coventry and South London have been on strike over poor wages.

The provincial press in 2005 is living proof of

one of the CPBF's key principals—that organised labour is the best tool for fighting for a properly resourced and diverse media.

**Miles Barter** is the NUJ official for the North of England, based in Manchester

## ...and in the USA

'TODAY chains own 80 percent of America's newspapers... (and)... most of the corporations that own newspapers are focused on profits, not journalism. Editors who once spent their days working with reporters and editors on stories now spend most of their time in meetings with the business-side executives, plotting marketing strategies or cost-cutting campaigns. Chain editors now routinely have two titles: editor and vice president of a big corporation. Many editors of big papers are millionaires whose compensation is directly dependent on their papers' profitability'

'*Newspapers: Where the News (Mostly) Comes From*' in *The News About The News* by Leonard Downie and Robert Kaiser (Vintage)

many genres. Different ITV franchises had distinctive strengths: Central for documentaries, Anglia for wildlife, Granada for the development of hypotheticals, drama documentary and current affairs with *World in Action*. ITV's strengths—the history series, dramas (single plays and series), children's programmes and news and current affairs—were all there in *The Story of ITV*.

In the last of the series, covering news, current affairs and documentaries, the commentary said ITV 'supported inquisitive, awkward programmes that challenged establishments worldwide, and placed investigative journalism and documentaries squarely on ITV'. It then continued, 'They are still there' followed by a clip from John Pilger's powerful *Stealing the Nation* (2004).

As David Herman points out in *Prospect*, July 2005: 'The implication is clear: that a great ITV tradition of investigative journalism and documentary-making is still alive and kicking. Is it? John Pilger made 21 programmes for ITV in six years in the early and mid-1970s. In the last six years, ITV has shown six Pilger documentaries.'

Other current affairs programmes fared less well. *This Week* stopped in 1992; *World in Action* in 1998... Are *Tonight with Trevor McDonald* or *Dimbleby* a substitute for these?

Herman is spot on when he writes, 'The collapse of ITV, both in terms of its ratings and its creative output, is the biggest story in British television in the past ten years. It haunts *The Story of ITV* but no one addresses it directly.'

**ITV began broadcasting in the London region on 22 September 1955. As the 50th anniversary approaches GRANVILLE WILLIAMS notes a painful contrast between past and present performance.**

ITV has had some very good business news in recent years. The creation of a single ITV was allowed as a result of a Competition Commission report and the 2003 Communications Act. Ofcom has also delivered two birthday presents: it has cleared the cuts in regional programming, saving £100 million, and also exceeded expectations by slashing the payments for ITV's twelve licences. In 2004 the payment was £215 million; now the company will pay less than £80 million. ITV shares leapt 6 percent after this news.

ITV chief executive, Charles Allen, was fulsome in his praise: 'The regulator has done a very thorough and a very good job. It is a very good regulator and they are very bright people who really understand business.' He said it was 'the second part in a ten-part journey' in getting

regulations eased. ITV still reckons it spends £250 million on its public service broadcasting obligations, and would like to shed these. It also wants advertising rules relaxed.

But all is not bright as ITV 50th birthday approaches. Audiences for ITV have shrunk, and ITV executives are at pains to explain this in terms of the squeeze on audiences when people have a range of channels to choose from. This is partly true, but ITV has also made some terrible commercial decisions—ITV Digital was a disaster and lost £1 billion at least. The deal struck with the Football League was just incompetent.

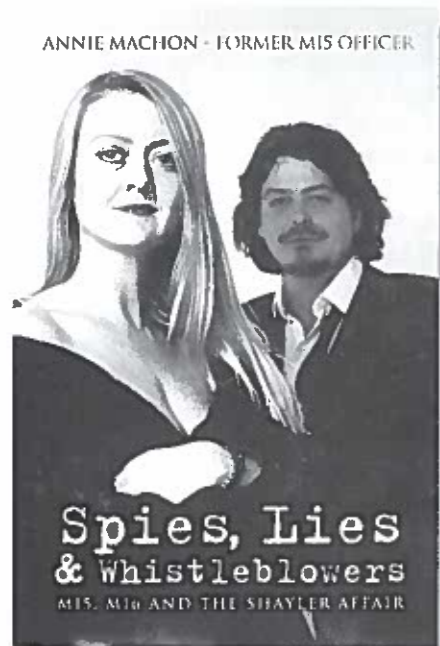
ITV could have retrieved the situation if it had put money into programming but this has been characterized in recent years by a succession of low-budget, down-market programmes. As viewing figures fell, advertising revenues did too.

Melvyn Bragg's five-part history, *The Story of ITV: The People's Channel*, unintentionally highlighted some of these problems. Each of the five programmes was arranged chronologically around different programme strands. Bragg is absolutely right that ITV's achievement was outstanding. No other commercial network has produced so much great television across so

itv 1  
Happy  
50th  
Birthday?



Photo by Stefano Cagnoni



**STEPHEN DORRIL REVIEWS A BOOK WHICH PROVIDES A 'DEVASTATING INSIGHT' INTO THE MINDSET OF MI5**  
Annie Machon, *Spies, Lies & Whistleblowers: MI5, MI6 and The Shayler Affair* (Book Guild) £17.95

At one level this is not a very good book. It is badly edited, too large print size, too many acronyms, pages of material which stray into areas the author is not an authority on, and a largely tedious read for the average reader. However.....

With bombs going off in London, there can be no more important book at this moment in time. This is an absolutely devastating insight into the mindset of MI5 and its inability to deal with terrorism. A middle-ranking officer (and they are officers not agents) at the heart of the counter-terror campaign against the IRA and middle east terrorism. Ms Machon details in mind-numbing detail the processes and modes of operation used by MI5.

Here is an agency crippled by bureaucratic fixtures of a Kafkaesque nature; staffed by disillusioned and largely inexperienced young people—the best leave early or turn to drink; unable to respond to new technology (there were no computers ten years ago—intelligence was sent by post); ruled over by what seem incompetent time-servers; and lost in a maze of factional infighting and non-co-operation with other agencies.

If this all sounds like yesterday's

news, readers should be aware that the police are currently scathing about MI5's huge intelligence failure (not the media spin 'intelligence gap') which surrounds the latest bombings. The same structures which operated against the IRA are still in place. The same lack of co-operation still exists.

Some of us were waiting to see what Ms Machon would reveal. She stood behind David Shayler and never said a word. But we were aware that she probably knew more than David did. There are no great revelations here, but she does add considerable detail to David's various accusations, and provides the evidence that MI5 was obsessed with 'subversion' and built up thousands of files on people, whose worst crime was to write to the local paper.

If this seems, again, like yesterday's news, people should be aware that MI5 has simply changed the labels—'subversive' becomes 'Muslim fundamentalist'.

Machon's great virtue, however, is to have written a highly detailed account of the inner workings of a security agency. This is an agency laid bare. Every journalist should read this book in order to rectify the myths and misunderstandings even the most experienced writers on this area perpetrate every day on screens and in our newspapers. All the so-called security experts (and I include myself) barely rise above the level of speculation.

The only ones who appear to have the details at their fingertips are nothing more than, as Ms Machon details, stooges of the intelligence services, dependent on secret briefings, which are more often than not, deliberate disinformation.

Again, this may seem like some arcane subject of interest to anoraks and the media, intent on dealing with intelligence either as a mysterious science which no ordinary person can understand, or a jokey subject which must always have a James Bond angle. However, as the Iraq/WMD debacle and the recent bombings illustrate, 'intelligence' has become, with the demise of ideologies and voter apathy, one of the few means by which governments can reach the people. Its elusive nature and lack of accountability enables politicians to hide

behind the flag of 'national security'. Ms Machon has blown away those kinds of excuses and puts forward a good case that more democratic accountability would lead to an agency better equipped to deal with terrorism.

Terrorism can only be defeated by good intelligence or by politics. Tony Blair has dismissed the latter (the Iraq war connection) and exonerated the recent performance of MI5. Reading Ms Machon's book leaves one pessimistic about the future. The alternative left is the security route beloved by MI5 (and rightly attacked by Machon as being counter-productive)—the abuse of civil liberties, increased staff and resources, and increased powers under new counter-terrorism laws. It is a route which has already failed.

**STEPHEN DORRIL** is the author of *Blackshirt: Sir Oswald Mosley and British Fascism To be published by Viking in October 2005*

**The Politics of Marketing the Labour Party** by Dominic Wring, (Palgrave Macmillan) £16.99.

**NICHOLAS JONES**

HAVING been rightly chided so often in the past by Dominic Wring for allowing myself to become mesmerised by the supposed novelty of New Labour's manipulation of the media, I can say without hesitation that he has set the record straight. One of his aims in *The Politics of Marketing the Labour Party* was to place Blairites like Peter Mandelson, Philip Gould and Alastair Campbell in their true historical context and Wring has unquestionably achieved that objective while delivering at the same time a fascinating insight into earlier attempts to promote the party.

I was always conscious of the fact that my own books lacked a proper sense of perspective. My starting point was the rapid expansion of news outlets which was well underway by the early 1980s and which provided seemingly unlimited opportunities for a new generation of aggressive and ruthless media manipulators hired by both Conservatives and Labour.

While always acknowledging the possible value of yet another of my breathless tomes chronicling the latest antics of various spin doctors, Wring

would calmly suggest that I should try reading copies of *Labour Organiser* from the 1930s because I would soon discover there was nothing new in concepts like the permanent campaign, perpetual electioneering or for that matter in soundbites, spin doctors or gory infighting over the appointment of advertising agents.

Wring has pulled together in a concise and readable way the various twists and turns within the party as control passed back and forth between those who sought to 'sell' socialism by exploiting advertising and the news media and others who saw themselves as educationalists and were scornful of slick presentational techniques.

What I found fascinating was the contrast between the 'archetype persuasionalist' Harold Wilson and Michael Foot who 'believed in the power of ideas not soundbites'. Wring concludes that Wilson's role in 'developing Labour's media campaigning was his organisational legacy'. His successor Jim Callaghan was less 'media conscious' and, after the party's 1979 defeat, there was 'hostility towards marketing professionalism' within the leadership.

By charting the way presentation of the party has evolved over the years and by reminding readers of Wilson's popularisation of images now more associated with Blair such as 'New Britain', Wring judiciously debunks Philip Gould's characterisation of Labour's approach to communication prior to the mid-1980s as having 'abhorred photo opportunities...and harangued the party faithful at rallies'.

Alastair Campbell's 'robust news management techniques' are carefully dissected and I agree with Wring that it was the resulting 'culture of mistrust' which contributed to Campbell's eventual departure from Blair's government in 2003.

The opening sentence of the book's conclusion asserts that a 'defining characteristic of the so-called "new" Labour project is its ignorance of history'. The preceding chapter highlights Peter Mandelson's claim that the Blairites formed 'the finest, most professional campaigning machine that Labour has ever created'. Well done Dominic! Your book is a well-researched antidote to New Labour spin.

## US threat to protection of sources

A FEDERAL judge jailed Judith Miller on 6 July after she refused to cooperate with an investigation into whether any Bush administration officials may have violated federal law by leaking the identity of CIA officer Valerie Plame to columnist Robert Novak.

Matthew Cooper of Time magazine who also faced jail on this issue, agreed to testify about his confidential source and stayed free. He said his source had released him from promises of confidentiality.

But the decision of his publisher Time-Warner on 1 July to surrender Cooper's notes, e-mail and other documents was a 'profound betrayal' of principle, said the International Federation of Journalists. Judith Miller told a federal court in Washington DC that she would not reveal her source no matter how long she was imprisoned. If she maintains this stance she will be inside until October at least.

Many of the opponents of the jailing have in the past been loud critics of Judith Miller for her stories before the attack on Iraq playing up the likelihood of weapons of mass destruction being present there.

'This case is being used as a way to censor journalists,' said Linda Foley, president of The Newspaper Guild-Communications Workers of America union. At a rally in Washington, Linda Foley said journalists nationwide were taking a stand for freedom of the press that is critical to democracy. She said many US states provide some protections for journalists but that a national 'shield law' was needed to ensure that the public would continue to have the knowledge it needs about its government.

Last October, Ms. Miller and Mr. Cooper were sentenced to 18 months in jail for civil contempt of court, but those sentences were stayed pending appeal. The Supreme Court has



**Time's role in protecting sources a 'profound betrayal' but the man at the centre of the controversy, Karl Rove, is still there.**

refused to consider the case.

Opponents of the jailing point out that neither Judith Miller nor Matthew Cooper had outed the CIA agent and that other journalists—notably the right-wing columnist Robert Novak who did—have not been prosecuted. Miller could remain in jail until October when the grand jury investigation into who leaked the name of the agent will be over.

Media organisations and journalists' unions and other organisations have rallied to her defence. If you want to show your support for Judith Miller here are the best ways to do it:

• Sign a petition started by the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press:

[www.rcfp.org/shields\\_and\\_subpoena/s/support\\_judith\\_miller.php](http://www.rcfp.org/shields_and_subpoena/s/support_judith_miller.php)

**Visit the CPBF website for more details of what you can do.**

## SIR FRANK ROGERS

THE obituary for Frank Rogers in *The Times* (22/07/05) described him as 'a notable guardian of the freedom of the press'. Well, up to a point. His role in the ousting of Cecil King as chairman of the International Publishing Corporation, which owned the *Daily Mirror*, could support this view. King became increasingly disillusioned with Harold Wilson's second Labour government and published a signed editorial, 'Enough is Enough', stating Wilson should go. Rogers was one of the directors, who along with Edward Pickering and Hugh Cudlipp, voted for King's sacking.

But in his later life Rogers was instrumental in setting up and promoting organisations which

challenged media ownership limits and attempts to regulate the press. In 1993 he was a key mover in the British Media Industry Group, established to lobby for an end to restrictions on cross-media ownership. Also around this time he was a key figure in the European Publishers Council. The body was set up to lobby at a European level for deregulation, liberalizing media ownership rules and challenging any EU legislation the EPC deemed to threaten the freedom of the newspaper groups.

In the late 1990s he was also active in the British Internet Publishers Alliance, set up in 1998 to challenge the BBC's successful internet activities. It might be more accurate to say he was a notable guardian of the commercial freedom of the press.

## THE MEDIA AND THE BRITISH LEFT

WEDNESDAY 7 September sees the launch of *Culture Wars, The Media and the British Left*. Written by James Curran, Ivor Gaber and Julian Petley, the book examines the role of the media in the political process in Britain during the 1980s up to the present day. It also analyses the political complexion of the British press, its journalistic standards and the widening gulf between press and broadcasting journalism. The launch is being held at City Hall, headquarters of the Greater London Authority from 6pm. Further details contact the CPBF national office or the website.

## GETTING INVOLVED

THE CPBF national council is anxious to involve more media activists, who are Campaign members, in its work. One way is by coming along to meetings of the national council. Meetings are held at UNISON, 1 Mabledon Place, London WC1 (between St Pancras and Euston Stations) from 6.30pm-8.30pm. Dates for the rest of the year are (Mondays): 26 September; 24 October; and 28 November. Details of the December meeting will be announced in a later issue of *Free Press*.

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You can buy a copy of the booklet from the publishers for £4.00 inc p&p. Send cheques to B&D 6-8 Church Street Church Accrington BB5 4LF

Free Press is edited by Granville Williams for the National Council



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