

FREE PRESS

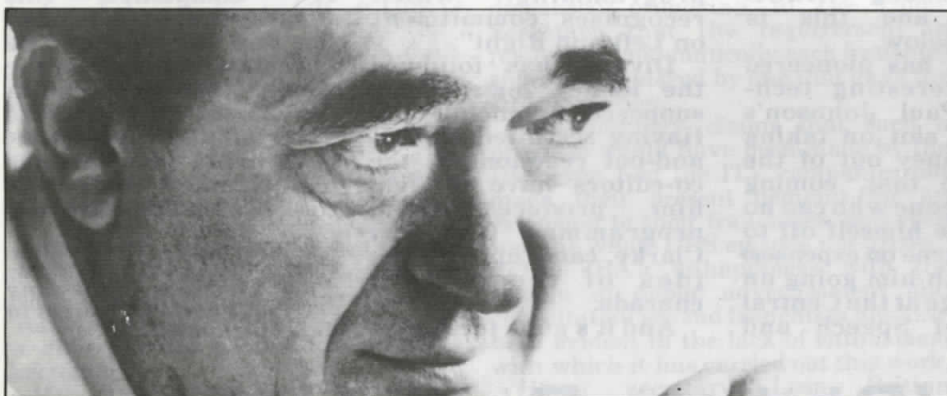
IBA ban on gay advert

THE London Gay Teenage Group have had an application for a Public Service Announcement advertising the group, to appear on London Weekend Television, turned down by the IBA. The group is GLC-funded and provides support, resources and social events for isolated gay teenagers.

The group believes that letters in support of their right to advertise in this way could help to influence the IBA.

The CPBF has already written. Any members who wish to do likewise should write to: The Chairman, IBA, 70, Brompton Road LONDON SW3.

Dirty deal cracks 'Mirror' image



• Robert Maxwell: looking forward to proprietorial power

Sun journalist rapped for sexist reporting

A National Union of Journalists appeal hearing has confirmed that a Fleet Street journalist breached union rules by writing an article which encouraged discrimination against women.

In the first case of its kind, NUJ member Terry Lovell was found guilty earlier this year by the union's executive of breaking clause 10 of the NUJ's Code of Conduct in an article in The Sun last June.

The article, headlined "What's The Sexiest Bit of a Woman?", reported a theory by American psychotherapist Dr Silvia Feldman, who claimed that the asset a woman most accentuated revealed certain aspects of her character.

But a member of the public was so angry when she saw the article that she called on the NUJ to take action.

Her complaint was taken up by a member of the union's London North branch and backed in a judgement by the national executive committee. "We are delighted at the outcome of this unique case," said, London North Branch secretary Adrian Roxan.

"This shows that the NUJ's complaints system does work and is

vastly superior to the Press Council. Not a day goes by without articles appearing in the Press which flagrantly flout the union's Code of Conduct.

It is vital now that members of the public see this and are encouraged to take up complaints through the NUJ," he said. The NUJ's Appeals Tribunal supported the executive. Lovell's original copy had contravened the Code in encouraging discrimination against women and this was made worse by the exaggerated treatment by The Sun.

The NUJ — which does not recognise the Press Council — is next year creating an Ethics Council which will deal directly with all cases lodged under its Code of Conduct by either its own members or members of the public.

Robert Maxwell's burning ambition to buy his way in to Fleet Street was realised when Reed International accepted his offer of £113m for Mirror Group Newspapers.

Reed previously turned down an offer of £100m from a consortium of Mirror journalists, on the grounds that they would not sell to any one individual buyer. Their betrayal of this promise, another triumph for greed over principle in Fleet Street, is a major setback both for press freedom and jobs security in MGN.

Despite his Labour Party credentials, Maxwell's past offers little comfort for the MGN workforce. The *Scottish Daily News*, an attempt at a worker's co-operative in Glasgow in the mid-seventies, was "fatally undermined by internal pressures, most of them centred around Robert Maxwell", according to the authors of a history of the project. More recently, all three major print unions have been involved in bitter disputes with Maxwell, with SOGAT accusing him of reducing workforces by 29%.

During the first few days of his proprietorship Maxwell has awarded himself ample space to pontificate on the future of his new acquisitions. The style of the papers, and their grudging support for Labour seem unlikely to change substantially. Since, however, Maxwell seems set to impose his own curious mix of nationalism and 'new realism' on the papers' politics, and sexist, sensationalised material will, no doubt, continue to make up most of the content, there seem to be few grounds for rejoicing.

FREE PRESS

JOURNAL OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR PRESS AND BROADCASTING FREEDOM

NO:24, JULY-AUGUST 1984 20p

Solidarity in print

Trade unionists in Fleet St. — the ordinary printers, journalists, clerical and distribution workers — have demanded, through a "Right of Reply", that the miners' voice is heard for a change. We have produced this statement because we want you — the reader — to know that the men and women who make your daily newspaper are resolute in their support of the miners.

WHY?
* WE WANT TO STOP thousands of miners — and their families — joining the 4 million people who daily endure the indignity of being without work.
* BRITAIN NEEDS COAL: We have greater reserves of coal than any country in Europe, but in 10 to 15 years' we will — on present policies — once again be dependent on imported energy. The present Middle East war demonstrates just how vulnerable we are.
* NORTH SEA OIL is a precious resource. At the moment it

is being frittered away on funding the army of unemployed. In another decade or so, the oil will be gone... forever.

* THE GOVERNMENT lied to you. The Prime Minister has repeatedly said that the Government will not interfere — but the truth is that she was deliberately been working to prolong the strike.
Were the miners to lose, Britain would be the poorer, harsher, and more divided. We will not allow that to happen.
The statement was signed by London Region NGA, London Press Branch EETPU, AUEW Fleet St. Branch, London SOGAT Branches and some members of the NUJ.

London Region NGA (1982)
London Press Branch EETPU
AUEW Fleet Street Branch
London SOGAT '82 Branches
Members of the NUJ

FLEET ST. workers demonstrated their strength and their concern for press freedom at the end of June in an historic show of solidarity with the miners.

Demanding a half-page in which to state their case, the unions — acting with unprecedented unity — made clear their abhorrence of the abuse, distortion and lies which have been heaped on the miners by most national papers since the strike began.

The demand for a Right of Reply on behalf of the miners provoked immediate confrontation. Mrs Thatcher's most entrenched and reactionary supporters — the proprietors and editors of Fleet St. — were adamant that they would defend press freedom and editorial prerogative to the last drop of blood... so long as it was the opposition's.

But, faced by trade unions working to an agreed strategy, the employers collapsed like a pack of cards. Scarcely had they left their meeting at the Newspaper Publisher's Association than the common front dissolved. Some offered an advert, some a news story,

some a letter and some a blank refusal. These last — which, to its shame, included the Daily Mirror — did not publish in London at all.

The occasion for this remarkable joint action by Sogat, the NGA, the NUJ, the EETPU and the AUEW, was the South-East Regional TUC's "Day of Action" on Wednesday, June 27.

Here is what happened:

Daily Mirror did not publish after negotiations on the statement broke down.

Sun did not publish, management refusing to print the workers' statement.

Financial Times did not publish for the same reason.

Guardian published the statement as a letter plus a cartoon supporting the miners.

The Times also published the statement as a letter from the chapels.

Daily Express published the statement as a half-page "advert". No bill has been received.

Daily Star also published a half-page "advert".

Daily Mail published statement as a quarter page "advert".

Morning Star published the statement across the top of its front page "with pleasure".

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Four-page supplement on aspects of the miners strike which are being ignored elsewhere
- How Leon Brittan was blackmailed
- Controversy over 'Diverse Reports'
- Parliamentary initiatives for media reform
- Campaign news
- Challenging media sexism
- Journalists challenge Contempt of Court legislation
- Media news, views and reviews

Editorial staff ban bingo at Times

Journalists on The Times are refusing to write or process promotional material for the paper's up-market version of bingo.

Launched at the end of June, Portfolio is based on company share prices but requires no skill. The NUJ chapel at the paper has instructed all members to refuse to handle copy about the game — nicknamed "Dingo" * in honour of the paper's owner.

So far, only David Blake, the paper's home news editor, has been willing to defy the instruction. Mr Blake has, in the past, boasted of his trade union and Labour Party credentials; more recently he has been willing to do anything management asks.

The editor of The Times, Charles Douglas-Home, told the morning editorial conference the day after Dingo was launched that he did not want to over-react to the Chapel instruction.

However, in a memo to all staff he asserted what was described as his "editorial prerogative."

"Nobody except the Editor and his editors (sic) make decisions on what goes into the paper; neither management, Mr Murdoch or the NGA... and he does not think the NUJ should make the decision. He does not like the idea that the NUJ should decide whether or not it should be involved."

Apart from the near illiteracy of the memo, it is not clear whether Mr Murdoch was told of this declaration of independence! He need not worry. Later the same day Mr Douglas-Home reverted to type and agreed to publish a letter on behalf of workers at The Times in support of the miners. The letter was published in spite of the strenuous objection and declaration of "editorial prerogative" by Mr Douglas-Home.

* Dingo is an Australian wild dog.

CAMPAIGN NEWS



PUBLICATIONS

□ **People Against the Press:** the devastating report of an independent inquiry into the Press Council. Selling price £7.95 — Our price £3.95

□ **Press, Radio and TV: an introduction:** the simple guide to complex media. Selling price £1.80 — our price £1.50

□ **Rejoice:** media and the Falklands — 80p

□ **Are You in the Picture?** — 50p

□ **It Ain't Half Racist, Mum:** racism in the media. Our price £2.50. Video can be hired from the Other Cinema, tel.01-734 8508/9 or purchased from CPBF.

□ **Hunt on Cable:** Chaos or Coherence? Selling price £1.95 — Our price £0.95. Plus postcards like the new Gotcha card, pictured left. ALL from our office at 9 Poland Street, London W1 3DG.

JOIN OUR CAMPAIGN

Individual Membership £6 per annum
Organisations affiliate according to membership:

Below 1,000: £10
1,000 to 10,000: £20
10,000 to 50,000: £50
50,000 to 100,000: £100
over 100,000: £250

*I/We would like to join the CPBF and enclose £

Name (or Secretary's Name)
(if different from above)

Organisation if (if applicable)

Address

Send to: CPBF, 9 Poland Street,
London W1 3DG

Whitehead to chair new Midland group

NORTH EAST members of the CPBF on Newcastle Trades Council have begun moves to win the miners fairer treatment from the local media.

The Media Committee of the council is preparing a list of journalists who, may be sympathetic to the miners' case. At the same time the committee is in touch with activists in mining communities.

The committee also wants to monitor coverage of the dispute and initiate attempts to win the Right of Reply where appropriate.

The former MP for Derby North, Philip Whitehead, is to be the chairperson of the East Midlands branch of the campaign. Plans are under way to organise a formal launch meeting in the autumn. Meanwhile, journalists in Nottingham are putting together a media guide to help get their case across to the media. It is the fifth such booklet in various parts of the country and follows a campaign initiative in Birmingham two years ago.

After the launch of the campaign in the North West, a recent workshop on 'Reaching Out' attracted people from as far and wide as Penrith in the north, and Liverpool in the west. Local groups are being set up to organise 'one off'

meetings in towns like Carlisle, Wigan, Burnley, Rochdale and Liverpool.

In Birmingham, West Midlands members held a public showing of two new videos: the CPBF tape, 'Making News', on the 1982 health workers dispute and one of the NUM endorsed series of 10 videos on the miners strike. A food collection for the miners was taken at the door. Efforts are also under way in the West Midlands to raise funds for a full-time worker.

The miners dispute is also being watched by members in Wales. Work is going on to draw up a report of the coverage of the dispute, and a public meeting will debate the findings. Meanwhile, the Wales CPBF will be holding a fringe meeting at the Plaid Cymru conference in October, and final arrangements are being made for a one-day workshop on media and democracy to be held in conjunction with the Communist Party.

CONTACTS:

North West: Phil Turner 061-428 6446 or Granville Williams 061 226 4170
North East: Malcolm Wright 0325 484374
West Midlands: Rob Burkitt 021-359 5545
Wales: Trevor Wright 0222-396409
East Anglia: Brian Morrey 0603 612872
East Midlands: Derek Cox 0602 56101 ext 2714
South East London: Jad Adams 699 6718

Code of conduct on sexism a priority for women

Much in this issue of Free Press is about how the miners are having their say in some of the national press. This is an important and encouraging example of how groups of workers can exercise some control over what gets said about them in the media.

Unfortunately, other groups who get similar or even more consistently bad treatment are not so fortunate in their attempts at redress.

Industrial action to gain a Right of Reply is, for the present, the prerogative of well organised and powerful sections of the socialist movement. Women and black people can only look for the day when they achieve such solidarity.

Meanwhile, organising for change continues and an exciting example was the Campaign's meeting for women which took place in June.

Forty women came from a variety of campaigning groups, and trade unions, as

well as individual members and supporters of the Campaign. Examples of the ways in which women are portrayed in the media provided a useful starting point for a discussion on what can be done to achieve change.

Complaints were considered important but of limited value as was the NUJ code of conduct; a union whose existence is based on protecting members cannot also effectively discipline them for ethical lapses. Nevertheless, a code of conduct on sexism was generally thought to be a useful propaganda weapon for getting the issue raised in the minds of journalists and programme makers.

Developing such a code must now be a priority for the Campaign. We intend to hold a conference specifically to discuss such a code and other related issues and make sure that the code is adopted by the media trade unions.

The group will be meeting every month, beginning in September, and we will be sending out the dates and venues soon. Women members should keep an eye on Free Press for further news.

NEWSPOINT

MP in bid for right of reply law

By Aidan White

AUSTIN Mitchell, Labour MP for Grimsby and a former journalist, introduced a Right of Reply Bill in Parliament last month.

Mr Mitchell's new law would give members of the public the right to reply to allegations made against them or to misreporting or misrepresentation in the press, radio and television. He has also called for the establishment of a media ombudsperson to keep an eye on the media — an acknowledgment of the failure of the Press Council.

Although Mr Mitchell's Bill is unlikely to make it to the statute book given expected government opposition, he took the opportunity of introducing the Bill to launch a scathing assault on the irresponsibility of the media.

Mr Mitchell told MPs: "With the single exception of the *Daily Mirror*, which I regard as a cut above the rest of the popular press, we have a vicious, prostituted press, which besmirches the democracy which it should be serving and educating.

"It is overwhelmingly Tory, with no higher sense of duty than to act, not as the Prime Minister's lapdogs, but as her yapping dogs. Its members yap and bite at whoever stands out, whoever is different, whoever is a trade unionist, whoever stands up for his rights and whoever believes in the values of liberty.

"We have a press which sensationalises and trivialises and whose only deference to the great American tradition of inquiring and vigorous journalism is a prurient interest in sex and anything that is sordid and sensational and in personal trivia. It grovels before power, and indeed positively clamours for honours — the crumbs from the Prime Minister's table — while the Prime Minister buys support in a contemptuous fashion. At the same time, it clobbers anyone who is too weak or powerless to look after himself, and anyone who steps out of line. The measure is directed at such a press.

"The ownership structure at the centre of this network is difficult to tackle. The circulation war, which debates, sensationalises and trivialises, is difficult to stop. If we cannot tackle those two problems, we cannot protect the individual against the distortions, misrepresentations, misreporting and hound-



● Austin Mitchell — scathing attack

ing, which are becoming all too common in the popular press.

"We could protect the individual by creating a legal right of reply, such as exists in statutes in France, West Germany, Austria, Sweden, Denmark and Canada. Such a statute should exist in the United Kingdom. In most of those countries the right of reply extends to individuals and organisations, which have a legal personality."

Mr Mitchell went on to give some specific examples of media bias and concluded: "A quick reply is needed, and the Bill provides it. The Bill provides a media ombudsperson, which is an important innovation and one for which there are important overseas precedents. In the United States, about 30 newspapers, including the *Washington Post*, have set up their own ombudspersons to adjudicate complaints against themselves.

"The measure could be criticised as a restraint on the freedom of the press. It is not. It is an incentive to use that freedom responsibly and a restriction on the licence, which the press, under the impetus of the circulation war for survival, has recently misused."

The Union will support any member who refuses to work on anti-union material which does not provide a right of reply. ACTT Policy

● Fighting talk: an extract from an ACTT poster issued to members.

Journalists hit back as BBC axes Sixty Minutes

By DAVID ALDRIDGE

THE AXING of the BBC's early evening news and current affairs show *Sixty Minutes* isn't just a case of one more not particularly good programme failing to make the grade. It represents the latest, and arguably most serious, step in a retreat from a crucial aspect of public service broadcasting that the BBC has been engaged in over the past five years.

Sixty Minutes, which included a news bulletin, regional news and national current affairs, is to be replaced by an extended news bulletin, followed by regional news programmes — spot the missing ingredient.

Current affairs output has long been a thorn in the side of the BBC. Going back to Harold Wilson's row about 'Yesterday's Men', through the roasting that Mrs Thatcher received at the hands of Diana Gould about the Belgrano on *Nationwide*, up to the recent *Panorama* programme exposing the links between the Tories and the extreme Right, it has been current affairs output which has caused the Board of Governors, not to mention the Government, much anguish and anger.

Five years ago there were two daily current affairs programmes on the BBC's main channel. Now, after *Breakfast Time* which ends at 9 in the morning, there are no daily current affairs programmes on BBC 1 — only *Newsnight* on BBC 2 at the very end of the day, still keeps the current affairs flag flying — not that there are too many people around to notice it, at that time of night.

No one within the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom will be under any illusions that the BBC's editorial output is not seriously flawed, yet the demise of current affairs programming and its replacement by news bulletins and perhaps even light entertainment is a development that must be challenged. NUJ members at the Lime Grove are challenging it — and should receive all our support for their action.

NEWSPOINT

Boards of trustees to protect the public interest have a poor record in the media. JOHN FOSTER argues that they are worth exploring further.

Alternatives to Press Council

THE ARGUMENTS against the Press Council are well rehearsed and documented. The CPBF and NUJ, have drawn attention to the unsatisfactory nature of the council. That said, we have to admit that we have not been able to persuade even the labour and trade union movement of the validity of withdrawal of either membership or recognition from the Press Council.

Our failure to win support for boycott of the Press Council is, partly because we have not thought through the difficulties of what should replace it. In this article, I hope to focus attention on ideas for a real alternative to the Press Council.

To be accepted such ideas must be based on existing values, particularly "freedom of the press", which is comfortably accepted by most people in Britain. We must also turn the arguments about concentration of power and the resulting diminution of choice within the newspaper industry to our benefit. Our case is strengthened by the way in which many newspaper proprietors are deeply involved with the new technologies in broadcasting.

This concentration of power should not only be opposed by those on the left, but should be recognised across the whole spectrum of public opinions as a real threat to democracy. The strength of our position is that we can argue for real press and broadcasting freedom, and our campaign on an alternative to the Press Council merely highlights this question, just as the right of reply has become more than a simple slogan.

It may be helpful to look at existing

structures within the media and try to use these as models for an alternative to the Press Council.

The recent conflict between the owner and the editor at the Observer has hinged on the role of the trustees. Control of a newspaper should be increasingly dependent upon the proprietor accepting trustees who will protect editorial integrity.

It would be interesting to find out how often trustees meet and whether they feel they have any power to influence the owner and to do the job for which they are appointed. Although it may seem that trustees are no more than a facade erected to protect the owner's interests, in the Observer case, they clearly did play a positive role.

Our campaign should consider the advantages, as a matter of policy, of each newspaper having a board of trustees. Such a board would have an over-view of the editorial functions of the newspaper, answerable to the general public for individual criticisms and, if necessary, to Parliament. The board would have statutory responsibilities for ensuring the right of reply and a duty to report annually on their activities.

Arguing that news stories, but not editorials, should be balanced and impartial, would provide a popular basis for our campaign, and also a positive role for the trustees. It could, therefore, be possible for print workers, journalists and the general public to argue the right of reply within each newspaper because of the requirements of the law.

In addition to this, we should consider arguing for a re-constituted Press Council with real authority and responsibility direct to Parliament for ensuring the health of the industry.

This suggested framework forms the basis

Cheque-book journalism under fire

Alf Dubs, Labour Mp for Battersea, has introduced a Bill in the House of Commons to restrict cheque-book journalism. The Bill was given a first reading on June 5 and was due to come up for second reading on July 6. Although it was not expected to survive, the Bill reflects the growing desire at Westminster to curb the appalling behaviour of the gutter press.

Introducing his Bill, Mr Dubs noted that cheque-book journalism had been condemned by the NUJ, the Press Council and the House itself, though he did not seek to make the practice illegal. He sought, instead, to "give the public the right to know when it occurs" by making it obligatory for newspapers to disclose how much they have paid for stories and to whom the money has been paid.

Mr Dubs identified four types of cheque-book journalism:

(i) payments made to witnesses, or people who were likely to become witnesses, in court cases (e.g. Jeremy Thorpe case)

(ii) payments to criminals, or people associated with them (e.g. Yorkshire Ripper case)

(iii) payments made whereby the newspaper has a monopoly (e.g. Zola Budd)

(iv) sexual scandals where one of those involved is a 'national figure'.

Mr Dubs said he had thought hard about making cheque-book journalism illegal, but he had realised that there were times when the public was the beneficiary, such as the thalidomide scandal. He did not seek to make cheque-book journalism illegal, merely more difficult.

of a real alternative to the Press Council, whose own record condemns it as incompetent and impotent. I hope that there will be a real attempt by the CPBF and the NUJ to evolve an alternative to the Press Council, which could then form the central plank of our campaign on this issue.

NEWS BRIEF

A FOUR-PAGE SPECIAL REPORT ON HOW THE MINERS' STRIKE HAS BEEN REPORTED AND THE BATTLE FOR A RIGHT TO REPLY

UP AGAINST THE MEDIA



National Union of Mineworkers President Arthur Scargill and his most enthusiastic followers - the media. Inside we look at some of the treatment he and his members have received.

FLEET ST: STILL A MALE PRESERVE

Preliminary results in a survey carried out by the NUJ in Fleet Street chapels show that women are discriminated against, and where they are employed they remain, on the whole, at the bottom of the heap.

The NUJ does not come out unscathed either. Few women sit on chapel committees; fewer still hold official union posts.

One ray of hope was that all the returns showed that an NUJ Equality Officer had been elected.

At *The Sun*, 8.5 per cent of all staff members are women. There are no women among the 55

sports reporters and only one woman photographer in a department of 30.

At *The Guardian* 10.5 per cent of all staff members are women. The proportion of sub-editors is even lower - 4 per cent.

Out of the 35 general news reporters, only 9 are women and in a department of 35 news sub-editors there is one woman.

There are six heads of department and seven photographers, all men.

At the *Daily Mirror*, there are three women general news reporters out of 32 and only 1

female sub-editor out of 23 in the news section.

There are 37 women out of a staff complement of 300 at the *Financial Times* with no women assistant editors or deputies.

Women are relatively well represented on the chapel committee - six of 13 - and the paper has a woman deputy FOC.

Out of the 160 staff members at the *Sunday Times*, 37 are women. Out of the general news reporter team of nine, there are no women and out of eight foreign reporters, only two are female.

The *Sunday Times* has 14 heads of department, four of whom are women. Its chapel committee has six ordinary members - four men and two women.

At the *Press Association* women feature in only three areas - five women out of 21 news reporters, eight sub-editors out of 41 and 11 female court/parliamentary reporters and sub-editors compared with 14 men.

This article is an edited extract from Equality News, bulletin of the NUJ's Equality Council. Copies from NUJ, 314 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1.

FIVE PAPERS BRAND PICKET A BLACKLEG

DERBYSHIRE miner Frank Branwell was dubbed a blackleg by five national newspapers who printed this picture of him apparently crossing a picket line on his way to work. In fact, far from defying pickets, he spent the day, as usual, on the picket line.

The CPBF's Right of Reply Unit was called up by Willie Lane, a regular picket at Markham colliery and a neighbour of Frank Branwell. He wanted to know how to correct the false impression given in the papers that Frank was breaking the strike. The Campaign gave him a list of contacts on each newspaper — The Guardian, The Daily Telegraph, The Daily Express, The Sun and The Times.

The confusion arose because a rumour had swept through the Markham community that a return to work was imminent.

Although the rumour was untrue, Frank Branwell turned up ready for work and found, to his surprise, a picket line. He was photographed walking along the picket line, but when the real situation was explained to him he took up his position on the line. He did not go to work. He did not defy the pickets. He did not go into the pit. Three facts which were ignored in The Guardian's 17-word caption to their front page picture.

To be branded a blackleg is a serious charge and the sudden glare of national newspaper publicity severely embarrassed Frank Branwell and his family. As a result, Willie Lane, who is also chair of the local Labour Party, sought prominent correction of the error. The Guardian reluctantly published a paragraph the next day but a letter from Willie Lane was taken out of the paper shortly before it went to press.

Other newspapers were even less helpful although efforts were being made by Campaign contacts to get letters or corrections published.

Had Frank Branwell been a more substantial public figure there is no doubt that his reputation would have been protected.



The eclipse of the Sun.....

By Lesley Wood

THE Right of Reply hit the headlines when printworkers at the Daily Express and The Sun took action to confront appalling editorial bias against the mineworkers.

At the Sun the NGA chapel intervened to prevent publication of a front page photograph of Arthur Scargill giving a Nazi salute, headlined 'Mine Fuhrer'.

John Brown, Deputy Imperial FOC of the Sun Composing Chapel said: 'The editor refused to change the "Mine Fuhrer" headline. Members of the NGA process and composing departments were threatened with dismissal for not being prepared to handle it but this didn't deter us. When other production chapels heard about the intended front page, they asked to be associated with our action. The chapels involved were NGA composing, process and machine chapels, SOGAT machine and publishing chapels, the AEUW and EEUPTU. Together we represent over 75 per cent of the SUN workforce.'

Earlier, at the Daily Express, after weeks of appallingly distorted reporting of the dispute, SOGAT members objected to



● The Sun front page, Left, that was spiked by the right of reply, Right.

'The truth that Scargill dare not tell'. This article, a fabricated speech in which Arthur Scargill 'admitted' that he was lying to his members, was signed away by the Express machine room with 'Signed under protest' written on the proof.

The Chapel then contacted SOGAT and



Bill Keys intervened to ask Lord Matthews for Arthur Scargill's Right of Reply. The Express proprietor agreed but the Editor, Sir Larry Lamb, objected to the demand by Bill Keys for equal space and prominence for the reply, and threatened to resign.

At this point the Express NUJ chapel was consulted. They agreed that a Right of Reply should be given, but objected to what they saw as interference by Bill Keys in editorial decision-making. The journalists were then shown a proof of the centre-spread, which was blank, with the exception of a statement saying that the NUJ chapel had refused to produce the pages. The chapel objected to this, having made no such decision, and asked for the statement to be removed. Sir Larry then left and returned saying that the managing director had refused to take out the statement (the journalists say that the managing director was not, in fact, consulted). Further arguments ensued by which time the London edition was lost.

An extensive reply from Arthur Scargill was printed the following week, though Sir Larry insisted on having the last word by cutting sections of the piece. In the meantime, however, the issue of the Right of Reply and anti-NUJ bias was high on the media agenda.

The CPBF featured prominently with articles in the national dailies and the left press, items on Union World, Right to Reply, Channel 4 News, and even Radio 4's Start the Week. The case for the Right of Reply and corresponding recognition of media bias was enormously strengthened.

How the media acts as a strikebreaker

By BILL GOODE,
NUM, South Wales

MINERS are not happy with the media's handling of this dispute. The clearest evidence is shown in the reports of physical violence and abuse towards camera crews and the press by our members on picket lines.

These attacks have occurred, despite the fact that there are many inside the NUM who know only too well that most journalists belong to the NUJ and that the attacks are therefore being perpetrated against fellow trade union members.

The attacks have arisen directly from a deep-felt sense of frustration with the

completely lop-sided coverage given by the media. Put very simply, the emphasis has been placed right from the start, on one aspect of the dispute, to the virtual exclusion of all others.

The aspect is the issue of whether or not the NUM executive should have called a ballot, rather than conduct the strike in the way it has so far. During the current dispute the press has been obsessed with their self-appointed task of lecturing the NUM on how to run its affairs.

Certain newspapers like the Sun, Daily Mail and Express have conducted a non-stop campaign of vilification against Arthur Scargill. He has been portrayed as Hitler, Mussolini

and Galtieri combined. His private life has been investigated and everything from his car to his hairstyle condemned.

Our pickets are referred to as boot boys and their arguments condemned out of hand as "stupid". The unholy alliance of Thatcher, Tebbit, Walker, King and MacGregor is portrayed as the fountain-head of all wisdom and goodness and the Sheffield headquarters of the NUM as the control bunker of the Empire of Evil.

And who exactly makes these condemnations? They are precisely the same semi-literate journalists who previously echoed everything Thatcher and MacGregor told them about the coal industry: No hit-list, no closures, no run-down, not a political issue, and so on.

Those brainless parrots, whether they work in broadcasting or in the press,

are the witting or unwitting dupes of those who control the money. The Rupert Murdochs and Norman Tebbits of this world desperately need whole teams of journalists, ready at the drop of a fiver to forget everything they ever believed or learned about professional, objective reporting — about telling the truth.

As its lamentable performance during the Falklands War proved, our press is not a "free" press. It is a cringing, lapdog press, afraid of offending its masters and one, moreover, which is trapped in a downward spiral of gimmickry, sexism and royal sensationalism which might succeed in selling more papers but which serves only to destroy what few standards of decent journalism still survive.

But the NUM is not beyond criticism. The union believes that if it ignores the press and

tells it nothing, that it will either go away or treat it with tenderness. NUM leaders are notorious for savage attacks on a hostile press whilst at the same time refusing in many cases to take the time and effort to put their case properly either in the form of a properly constructed press statement or as interviews or regular press conferences.

And these same leaders demand what they call "fairness" from the media. As if the likes of Rupert Murdoch were interested in "fairness" when, by its very definition, it would mean allowing capitalism's main opponents — the organised working class — a chance to put their case across.

This is a nonsense, as the coverage of the current dispute shows only too clearly. The fact of the matter is, is that the unions (and the NUM. in

particular) are very good about moaning at our pathetic media but very bad at putting forward an alternative to it.

Similarly, the T.U.C. and its constituent unions must examine with great urgency the possibilities of buying part shares in private radio stations, cable T.V. channels and newspapers. Our movement must come out of its shell and begin to understand and assess the technological advances in communication systems with a view to using them to our best advantage.

If we don't then as the lamentable and corrupt coverage of the present dispute shows only too clearly, we shall continue to fight a losing battle for public opinion.

This is an edited extract from a speech Bill Goode made to broadcasters in Cardiff in June 17th.

Miners' side of the story on tape

By Lesley Wood

EARLY in the mining dispute some media workers undertook to use their skills to present the miners' side of the story.

The Miners' Campaign Tape Project was set up by trade unionists in film and broadcasting who understood the sense of betrayal and frustration felt by miners over media coverage of their affairs.

The object was to produce a series of films explaining the background to the strike, and expressing some of the positive aspects of the dispute normally ignored or distorted by the mainstream media — the strength, solidarity and humour of the communities at the heart of the dispute; the role of women; and the economic and political background to the strike which has been inadequately explained.

Several of the films are already in circulation and have been particularly well received in mining communities. It has even been suggested that the broadcasting authorities should be asked to show them as part of a right of reply to biased reporting.

This very successful initiative is an important step towards breaking down the distrust between miners and media workers, and helping to identify areas of

common interest.

The films are also important because they give confidence to those at the receiving end of media bias by presenting a view of the world drawn from their direct experience. In doing this the films reveal the very different value systems which underlie the form and content of establishment broadcasting.

Each film runs for 10 minutes and is available on VHS cassette (free to miners) from local NUM offices, Platform Films, London (Tel 01-278 8394) or Trade Films, Gateshead (Tel 0632-775532).

Titles include:

- THE COAL BOARD'S BUTCHERY — NO PIT IS SAFE

- REDUNDANCY — THE ROAD TO NOWHERE
- SOLIDARITY — TRADE UNIONS SUPPORT THE MINERS
- THE LIE MACHINE — MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE STRIKE
- THE STRIKE AND THE INDUSTRY — FACTS AND FIGURES (with Dennis Skinner)
- NOT JUST TEA AND SANDWICHES — MINERS' WIVES SPEAK OUT
- ONLY DOING THEIR JOB? — THE POLICE, THE LAW AND THE MINERS (with Paul Foot and Dennis Skinner)
- THIS MAN MACGREGOR — PORTRAIT OF A PARASITE

Debate in Fleet Street



• Picture shows Brenda Dean (SOGAT 82) addressing the Fleet Street meeting. Seated, left to right, John Geleit of the NGA, Jake Ecclestone, NUJ, and Jack Holt, Kent NUM. Picture by John Smith (IFL).

BY ALAN RICHARDSON

PRINT-WORKERS, journalists and miners packed into a CPBF meeting in Fleet Street to debate issues raised by media coverage of the miners' strike.

Brenda Dean, President and General Secretary-elect of SOGAT '82, defended her union's actions in demanding a right of reply for Arthur Scargill after the Daily Express published its infamous bogus statement by the miners' leader.

"This is not censorship. We do not want to stop the presses," she said. "But in the absence of a legal right of reply we often have no other course of action. The only way out is to have a right of reply under law."

It was a theme taken up by other speakers on the platform and on the floor of the meeting.

John Geleit Assistant Secretary of London Region NGA took up the industrial links between Fleet Street and the miners, and spoke of the government's strategy to frighten working people out of trade union activity with the threat of unemployment.

Affirming the NGA's position that scurrilous copy would not be handled unless a right of reply was given, he told the assembled printworkers: "We need to support the miners. There is an extension of the same struggle as the NGA's at Warrington."

Challenge to secrecy at Old Bailey

By Jake Ecclestone

CONCERN at the way the Contempt of Court Act (1981) is being misused by the courts continues to grow. The latest challenge to the judges, who are going far beyond what Parliament intended by the Act, comes up for judicial review in the Divisional Court at the end of July. Tim Crook, a freelance journalist, supported by the NUJ, is seeking to have an order made under the Act set aside as being ultra vires.

The order, made under Section 11 of the Act, prohibits publication of the name of the chief prosecution witness in a case of kidnapping and theft. Judge Robert Lybery, Q.C. the trial judge, allowed "Miss X" anonymity outside the court though not during the Old Bailey trial itself.

Crook and the NUJ, advised by the NCCL, are asking that the order be set aside on the grounds that Judge Lybery did not have the power under Section 11 to grant anonymity once "Miss X's" name had been used in court — as it was throughout the trial.

Two preliminary hearings have already taken place with Geoffrey Robertson* appearing for Crook and the union. At the second, he was given leave to seek judicial review — the two High Court judges hearing the argument being clearly taken by the implications of a refusal.

One consequence would have been — as already may be the case — that precedent is established whereby a judge can prohibit publication of any name if those involved are wealthy enough to employ counsel to argue that publicity would be damaging in some way. For this is what happened in the case of "Miss X", who is the niece of a prominent Tory MP as well as a former prostitute and heroin addict.

Although it is still open to the Divisional Court at the full hearing to uphold Judge Lybery's order, the applicants have already achieved one significant success in that their lordships have accepted that they have jurisdiction. Normally, "any matter relating to a trial on indictment" in a Crown Court is outside the scope of judicial review.

While there is no certainty that Crook and the NUJ will get the Section 11 order

quashed, the case does illustrate the way the Act is being misused. At the Old Bailey alone, more than 90 orders prohibiting publication of court reports have already been issued by judges. One judge issued four separate orders during the course of a trial, and another judge even broke his own order during a newspaper interview!

But what is worse is the general uncertainty which surrounds the scale of the prohibition orders in the rest of the country. In February this year, Harriet Harman MP, asked the Attorney General Sir Michael Havers, in a Parliamentary Question, for details of the number of order issued so far. He claimed, disgracefully, that statistics were not available. This was strange if not a deliberate lie — since the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Lane, had given instructions only 15 months earlier that all Contempt of Court prohibition orders were to be recorded and collated.

Why did Sir Michael dodge Ms Harman's questions? Perhaps because the Government, as well as many of our judges, find it convenient on occasion if justice is not actually seen to be done.

* Author of *People Against the Press*, a study of the Press Council initiated by the CPBF and available to members at £3.95 through our office in Poland St.

VIEWPOINT



LETTERS

In spite of everything, C4 is the best bet

I HAVE read with interest the reports in Free Press on actual and threatened limitations to the range and the radicalism of programmes on Channel Four. These are cause for pessimism and regret, of course, yet I continue to be surprised favourably by the amount of innovative, dynamic, and sometimes hard-hitting material which does get transmitted.

Channel Four remains one's best bet, for all the faults and ominous signs, for stimulating and informative views and viewing. It remains, as yet, a real improvement on the other channels. I continue to be astonished at how the fiction of political 'balance' generates ruthless and unsympathetic treatment of, for example, the miners' strike — while Tory politicians are allowed to get away with murder by supposedly 'tough' interviewers.

In the other channels, 'balance' is sometimes approximated to — but only in terms of crude, quantitative measures.

Perhaps one of the most valuable campaign issues that the CPBF can mount in the future is one aimed at getting the principle of balance redefined, in such a way that it can no longer be invoked to preclude taking a partisan stance, even when the arguments and facts clearly point one way.

Yours sincerely,
Ian Vine
36 Duckworth Grove, Bradford.

(● Channel Four Row-Page 11)

A PLEA FOR MEDIA BIAS...

I AM writing a book on the Labour Movement and the Press. The analysis will be based on press coverage of Tony Benn, Aneurin Bevan, Michael Foot, Arthur Scargill, Ray Buckton, Peter Tatchell and Ken Livingstone. There will also be a chapter on newspaper coverage of the Greenham Women Peace camp.

I would be grateful if CPBF members and Free Press readers could send me any information — cuttings, quotes, anecdotes, examples of bias etc. All correspondence will be treated in confidence.

Mark Hollingsworth, 47 Margetson House, Hillside Estate, Stamford Hill, London N16.

NEWSPOINT

By Patrick Hughes

'Blackmail' bid by TV companies

THE cost of starting a Direct Broadcasting by Satellite (DBS) service in the UK will be increased by a backdoor deal between the Home Office, the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) and the commercial television companies.

The television companies have said that they will only agree to share the costs of Britain's first DBS service with the BBC if their present franchises are extended. The present franchises awarded by the IBA run from January 1982 until the end of 1989.

This demand for a change in the franchising process is, in effect, a form of blackmail by the television companies. They are demanding a better franchise deal and threatening to kill off DBS if they don't get their way.

The companies are backed by the IBA. At the beginning of March the Financial Times reported that the IBA had submitted a proposal for "rolling franchises" to the Home Office. This would replace the present statutory requirement (under the 1981 Act) on the IBA to re-advertise automatically each radio and television franchise at the end of its eight-year period. Instead, the decision whether a franchise should be "rolled over", or terminated and put-out to offers, would be left to the IBA's discretion.

Mr. Derek Guinnery, the IBA's

Deputy Head of Information denies that the IBA had made such a proposal. However, he says that the IBA had discussed proposing to the Home Secretary that the requirement to re-advertise automatically each franchise should be replaced by one that gave the IBA discretion.

Mr. Guinnery claims that such a proposal would have been made by the IBA even had the ITV companies not made their present demand for an extension to their franchises, and even had the whole DBS episode not arisen.

The IBA's unhappiness with the system of public advertisement and consultation around franchises has long been evident in the lack of enthusiasm with which it has carried out this work.

Home secretary Leon Brittan

announced on 8 May, in the House of Commons debate on the Cable & Satellite Bill, that he had decided to overturn the 1981 Broadcasting Act, and to give the commercial television companies extensions to their franchises.

When the current franchises end in 1989, the IBA will be under no obligation to re-advertise them, and may instead let them "roll over" until 1997. This will ensure that the government's botched-up plans for DBS proceed in the lifetime of this Parliament.

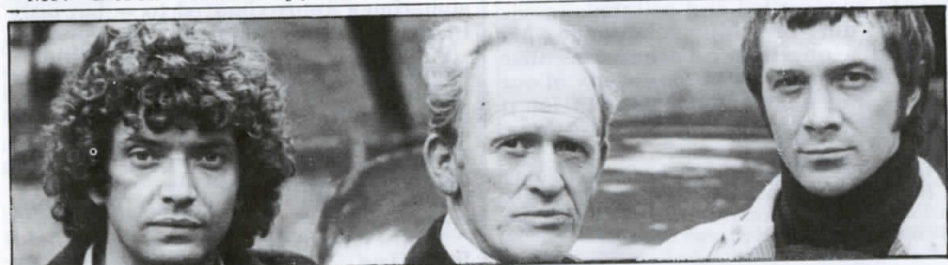
His decision seriously undermines the notion of Ministerial accountability to Parliament for the development of communications policy.

Changing DBS policy by Ministerial whim only compounds the lack of Parliamentary discussion over the decision of February 1982 to start DBS. Then, Home Secretary Whitelaw announced that the BBC was to be allocated two DBS channels from 1986. The lack of prior consultation with interested parties meant that the plan steadily drifted into crisis. For instance, the BBC was given inadequate resources to fund the programme, and thus had to appeal to the IBA for assistance.

Now, the future of the IBA's regulatory arm is dependent on the caprice of Leon Brittan — a man who is passionately devoted to people's "right to vote" when discussing the miners' strike, but who takes first prize for indolence when it comes to democracy and accountability in Home Office business.

Since Brittan's announcement, the Department of Trade and Industry has come under increasing pressure to abandon its franchising procedures for the "experimental" cable systems, due to start in the next twelve months. The eleven consortia which have been awarded cable franchises are complaining that the recent Budget's removal of tax allowances on capital spending effectively increases the cost of establishing these new systems.

They say that since the TV companies' higher costs — due to DBS — are to be defrayed by longer franchises, then the cable consortia's higher tax costs — due to the Budget — should be similarly defrayed. Once again, the future of a government regulatory agency (this time the yet-to-be-established Cable Authority) is threatened by the very companies which it is meant to control.



•The Professionals — just one image of terrorism on the telly.

Visions of violence

"Televising Terrorism: Political Violence In Popular Culture" by Philip Schlesinger, Graham Murdock, Philip Elliott. Comedia 1983, available from CPBF at £4.95.

THIS book offers us three tools with which to understand the televising of terrorism: a method of categorising representations of terrorism on television, a survey of recent research and writing on the subject, and a (brief) consideration of the ways in which television audiences make sense of those representations.

The book examines programmes as diverse as The Professionals, Panorama, Tonight; single plays such as The Psywarriors; and feature films like Who Dares Wins. The authors draw on these analyses to illustrate their suggestion that terrorism is represented on television from one of four perspectives: official, alternative, populist, and oppositional. That categorisation is overlaid, in their view, by two formats: "open" and "closed", depending on the extent of a programme's adherence to that official perspective.

Such a complex and subtle analysis of programmes provides an effective counter to current orthodoxies: that of the Right, which says that television gives extensive publicity to "terrorist" views and mobilises support for them; and that of the Left, which says that broadcasting is a largely uncritical conduit for official views on terrorism.

The only criticism I have of the book is that it concerns itself with television programmes almost to the exclusion of television audiences. It is only in their conclusion — and then only fleetingly — that the authors consider the ways in which we make sense of the programmes. Even there they do little more than list "factors" which may lead audiences to respond to programmes in "a variety of ways".

Their decision to concentrate on the production of programmes rather than their "consumption" predisposes the authors to make an assumption similar to the Right orthodoxy they criticise: they assume that people watch the "official perspective" on television uncritically and unquestioningly.

NEWSPOINT

PERVERSE REPORTING FROM DIVERSE

By Geoffrey Sheridan

WHERE do you find the crassest, most right-wing TV? On Channel 4's *Diverse Reports*. Why? Because, say the programme makers, they are showing alternatives.

Courtesy of these "radicals" guest presenters of *Diverse* this year have included Ferdinand Mount, late of Thatcher's private office; Paul Johnson, no stranger to *Daily Mail* readers; and Walter Williams, a Reaganite black American.

No matter that their 'alternative' opinions — on driving women back into the home, removing arts subsidies and abolishing welfare benefits — can be found any day of the week in half a dozen Fleet Street papers.

And this from a programme and a channel that were welcomed as an alternative to the stifling Conservatism and con-

servatism of conventional broadcasting.

Worse, *Diverse* felt obliged to advertise for a reporter 'sympathetic to the political right'. Hence Peter Clarke, late of Enoch Powell's private office, who brought viewers the caricature of Nalگو on June 13.

Clarke is certainly an innovator, his Nuisance Arrogant, Lawless, Grumbling, Obsolete (NALGO, geddit?) episode included several stimulating Cartoon caricatures of trades unionists. It caused understandable outrage among NALGO members and this is reported below.

Diverse has pioneered other interesting techniques. Paul Johnson's half-hour slot on taking public money out of the arts (nice that, coming from someone who can no doubt take himself off to Glyndebourne on expenses) began with him going on to the stage at the Central School of Speech and

Drama to berate the students. These dramatics continued through the programme. At no point did his audience have the opportunity to respond.

Last November Anna Coote, one of the co-editors of *Diverse*, wrote in *New Socialist*: "I am firmly convinced that the ideas and values of the new right ought to be exposed and scrutinised on TV, not merely as a price for getting Left-wing material screened, but as a means of developing a strong strand of innovative political programming, which recognises commitment on Left and Right".

Diverse has followed the looney logic of its supposed balancing act. Having recruited an out-and-out reactionary, the co-editors have to help him produce 'good' programmes. They, not Clarke, came up with the idea of the NALGO charade.

And it's gone further. A

proposal from one of the co-editors for a Right-wing chat show has been put up to Central TV and rejected for budgetary reasons. The next step would be to appeal for cash to Reaganite bodies in the USA...

Trades unionists and other 'minorities' should draw one particular lesson from the *Diverse* experience. However liberally-minded the managers of alternative programmes may be, the channel is accountable to the establishment-stuffed IBA, and is funded by the ITV companies; this ensures that at the end of the day they cannot be depended on to deliver the goods. More to the point the Labour Party and the TUC should set about demanding programmes and channels under the control of the dispossessed.

Geoffrey Sheridan represented CPBF in countering *Diverse's* Right-wing programmes on C4's *Right to Reply* on June 22.

WHEN TV'S 'Right to Reply' is bogus

By Brendan Martin

NALGO, Britain's largest public service trade union, was caught in a right of reply confrontation last month.

The cause was a *Diverse Reports* in which Peter Clarke, made an extraordinary attack on the union.

His crude, attempt at sowing division in the union, succeeded in uniting all 2,000 delegates to NALGO's annual conference, who unanimously condemned the programme.

Arrangements were made for Nalگو to appear opposite Clarke on the Channel Four programme, *Right to Reply*. The Union's new president, Bill Gill, went to London to state Nalگو's case. It was worth the effort, but right of reply it was not.

If anyone had the right of reply it was Clarke himself.

For example, Clarke had claimed in the original programme that a MORI poll of Nalگو members commissioned by the union had revealed that one in five were pleased with their union. This showed, he claimed, that four out of five regarded Nalگو as 'mediocre or worse'. In *Right to Reply* Gill presented the actual results of the MORI survey, in



which the word 'mediocre' was not used at all.

The figures showed that 46 per cent of those polled thought Nalگو an 'average' union, 16 per cent 'above average' and five per cent 'one of the best'. Only 26 per cent regarded Nalگو as 'below average'.

But Clarke had another lie up his sleeve. Why he asked, if Nalگو was

satisfied with the results of the survey, had the union 'suppressed' its findings?

The truth is that Nalگو published MORI's 88-page report at a press conference on Thursday, February 16. A Press release was sent out on January 30, with no fewer than three going to *Diverse* Productions.

In the *Right to Reply* programme Clarke was able to add to his original charges under conditions in which Gill, a lay union official who lives and works in Carlisle and cannot be expected to keep tabs on every aspect of Nalگو's work in London, was unable to answer all of them. And Gill was better briefed than many potential victims of the Clarke style of rhetoric.

An opportunity for victims of dishonest or inaccurate reporting to take issue with the perpetrators, even if the discussion takes place on the culprit's home ground — an imposing one to outsiders — may be welcome. But it is not the right of reply, and when we still have so far to go in the campaign for the real thing it is worth insisting that Channel Four's *Right to Reply* as shown on June 14 is a misnomer.

The protests at the way this particular programme was handled led Gus MacDonald to announce in the following weeks' *Right to Reply* that there would be no repeat of the Clarke style of confrontation with critics. In future, he said, those with genuine grievances would have the last word.