

Accountable to who?

DEAR SIRs, Along with the latest issue of *Index on Censorship* I received a document, titled **Media Manifesto**, published by the 'Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom'. I cannot believe that *Index on Censorship* subscribes to the views of the CPBF. For the CPBF is obviously in favour of censorship of the media.

The CPBF demands that the media be held 'accountable to the public'. Unless they have invented some form of pure democracy, they are proposing that the press be held accountable to some public or quasi-public agency. Such accountability must mean the ultimate suppression of all views not approved by the representatives of the 'public'. At present, the leading representative of the public in England is Mrs Thatcher, twice elected to head the government. I have a high regard for that lady, but Heaven forbid that she ever get the power the CPBF seem to want her to have!

I have no doubt that the CPBF prefer some other means of choosing suitable representatives of the public to superintend the media. I am hard put to think of a democratic way of doing so that would reliably avoid putting that awesome power in the hands of the leading political party of the moment. The example of an independent judiciary does show that it is possible to create a public agency that is not controlled by the ruling political party, but that has been achieved only by making the judiciary unaccountable to anyone.

Happily, *Index on Censorship* is not held accountable to the public. It will be a sad day when and if it is.

Sincerely,
Herman G. Roseman, 580 Shore Acres Dr.
Mamaroneck, NY 10543, USA

Somali poet held without charge

The well-known Somali poet, Abdulle Rage Taraweh, has been in detention without charge or trial for the past four years. Reported to have been accused of expressing anti-government opinions in his poetry, he is being held under the Preventive Detention Law of 1979, which permits unlimited detention of suspected opponents of the government, in solitary confinement in the National Security Service regional prison in Mogadishu. Prison conditions in Somalia are known to be poor; there are reports that he has been tortured.

Abdulle Rage Taraweh was born in the Central Shebelle region of Somalia in 1933. At the time of his arrest in 1982 he was

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working at the Ministry of Information and National Guidance where he was responsible for drama, dance and music, as well as the recording of official poetry. The following is an extract from one of his poems:

**So long as you are living in luxury,
while we are sleeping on the ground;
and we are striking the drum for you out
of fear;
and you are living in peace, and we are in
trouble;**

**So long as personal interests take priority
over the needs of the people;
and we are forced to be refugees in
foreign countries
like escaped offenders —**

I am not going to compose a poem. ■

South Korean press instructions exposed — three arrested

Three South Korean journalists were arrested in mid-December on charges of violating the National Security Law for publishing in their magazine *Mal* ('Words') hundreds of directives issued by the Information Ministry to Korean newspapers, telling them how to report major news stories or to refrain from reporting on them. The magazine's special edition of 6 September 1986 entitled 'Conspiracy of Power and the Press' covered the government's daily guidelines to the press between 19 October 1985 and 8 August 1986. These guidelines include instructions to newspapers not to print public statements issued by the United States that were critical of the South Korean government's human rights record and to play up statements about American concerns for security issues. Newspaper editors were also 'advised' to refer to demonstrations by the opposition as 'pro-Communist' and 'violent'. The guidelines also instructed newspapers to give minimal coverage to comments by the opposition leaders Kim Dae-jung and Kim Young-sam.

The three journalists arrested were

Kim Tae-hong (44), Shin Hong-bom (45) and Kim Jee-eon (32), a reporter of the major Korean-language daily, *Hankuk Ilbo*. Kim Tae-hong, a freelance journalist, is the Secretary General of the Council for Democratic Press and former president of the Korean Journalists Association. He was detained between August 1980 and November 1981 and was adopted by Amnesty International as a 'prisoner of conscience'. Shin Hong-bom is a member of the Council for Democratic Press steering committee. The Council for Democratic Press was formed in December 1984 by hundreds of reporters and editors who were 'purged' in 1976 and 1980 for petitioning for press freedom. It operates without government approval. Their publication *Mal*, a bi-monthly magazine, was launched in the spring of 1985, and covers controversial issues normally not covered by the press.

The three face charges under the National Security Law, which provides for imprisonment of up to seven years for 'praising, encouraging or siding with' North Korea. ■

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Appeals for Jazz Section

Since the following petition was sent to Dr Husák of Czechoslovakia, there have been new developments in the Jazz Section case.

On 28 December, two of the detainees, Miloš Drda and Josef Skalník, were released from prison. No official explanation was given, but it was probably age (71) in Miloš Drda's case, and in Josef Skalník's case poor health.

On 30 December, the District Court in Prague 4 decided not to accept the indictment prepared by the District Prosecutor Dr Monsport, on the grounds of 'formal deficiencies' and the 'reservations' the court had as to the 'expert opinion' on which the indictment was based. At the same time, the court decided to release three more of the seven accused: Vlastimil Drda, Tomáš Křivánek and Čestmír Huňát. The prosecutor, however, contested both these decisions and the three men therefore remained in prison pending the ruling of a higher authority — the Prague Municipal Court. The court ordered their release at the end of January. The same court will rule if the indictment is to be accepted or not.

These developments can be taken with guarded optimism. The 'reservations' against the expert opinion are especially significant because, from the very beginning, the Czechoslovak authorities maintained they were dealing with 'economic crimes' and that no political considerations were involved. The whole

case should thus revolve exclusively around the 'expert opinions'.

Bearing in mind the overall situation in Czechoslovakia, however, the case of the Jazz Section will no doubt be resolved on political, rather than legal grounds. The second thoughts the Czechoslovak authorities appear to be having about the Jazz Section are not the result of legal considerations but rather of the international outcry (the appeal by British musicians is one example), of the Helsinki follow-up conference taking place in Vienna, and — last but not least — of the spectacular signs of a new policy towards some dissidents in the USSR.

We the undersigned are concerned to hear of the arrest of Karel Srp, Josef Skalnik, Tomáš Křivánek, Vlastimil Kouřil, Čestmír Huňát, Milos Drda and Vlastimil Drda, the leading officers of the Jazz Section of the Musicians' Union of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, and the charges still standing against Vlastimil Marek.

As musicians, we value the contribution made by the Jazz Section to the musical life of Czechoslovakia and to the musical culture of Europe. The Jazz Section has also supported in a remarkable way our sister arts, and conveyed through its work an inspiring vision of the place of culture in modern society. Music is the most international of the arts, and jazz in particular expresses people's ability to communicate at a popular level across cultural and political boundaries. By embodying these values so vividly in its activities, the Jazz Section has made a real contribution to world peace and international understanding.

In the spirit of the long-standing friendship that exists between the people of Britain and Czechoslovakia, we appeal to you to intervene on behalf of our colleagues and to uphold the principles of justice. The Jazz Section is a member of the International Federation of Jazz Musicians and we trust that, as a section of the Musicians' Union, it will soon be restored to its full and rightful basis of legality. In making this appeal we affirm our commitment to the Helsinki Accord which our respective governments signed in good faith in 1974, and which is still binding on all of us.

Joan Armatrading
Derek Bailey
Tom Bailey
Simon Bainbridge
David Bedford
George Benjamin
Sir Lennox Berkeley
Michael Berkeley
Harrison Birtwistle
John Carewe
Ian Carr
Kyung Wha Chung

Jon Hiseman
Robin Holloway
Elton John
Nigel Kennedy
Geoffrey King
Mark Knopfler
Oliver Knussen
Professor Kenneth
Leighton
Paul McCartney
Jane Manning
Anthony Milner



Vladimír Kouřil (left) and Karel Srp, the chairman of the Jazz Section, are both still in jail.

Tony Coe
Phil Collins
David Cox
Lyell Creswell
Alannah Currie
Peter Maxwell Davies
Carl Davis
Sir Colin Davis
David Drew
Michael Garrick
Bob Geldof
Professor Alexander
Goehr
Berthold Goldschmidt
Jill Gomez
Sir Charles Groves
Barry Guy
Professor Jonathan
Harvey

Stephen Montague
Peter Nelson
Nigel Osborne
Simon Rattle
Don Rendell
Elise Ross
Daryl Runswick
Ronnie Scott
Robert Simpson
Sting
Barbara Thompson
Sir Michael Tippett
Pete Townshend
Stan Tracey
Penelope Walmsley-
Clarke
Andrew Lloyd Webber
Gillian Whitehead
Hugh Wood

Similar appeals have come from the following prominent European writers: Jean Anouilh, Beryl Bainbridge, William Boyd, Malcolm Bradbury, Pierre Daix, René de Obaldia, Marguerite Duras, John Fowles, William Golding, Juan Goytisolo, Seamus Heaney, Ted Hughes, Danilo Kis, David Lodge, Iris Murdoch, Robert Sabatier, Alan Sillitoe, Tom Stoppard, John Wain, Arnold Wesker & Kingsley Amis. ■

President's cronies to buy up the paper they banned?

As reported in *Index* 1/1987 (p5), the printing licence of *Sinar Harapan* ('Ray of Hope') was revoked by the Indonesian authorities on 9 October for 'speculative reporting'. New evidence has now come to light suggesting that the real reason behind the closure of Indonesia's second most important daily was not what it seemed. In any event, *Sinar Harapan's* front page story on 8 October, about

government readiness to revise the controversial import tariff system (this was the offending feature), turned out to be true.

According to Michael Byrnes, Jakarta-based correspondent of the *Australian Financial Review*, the banning of *Sinar Harapan* was ordered by President Suharto himself so that his family and business associates could take over the newspaper and all its extensive printing facilities. Sudwikatmono, President Suharto's stepbrother, and Bambang Rahamadi, son-in-law of Indonesia's powerful State Secretary Sudharmono, and other close family and associates have made an offer to buy off the paper. Sources in Jakarta say that as *Sinar Harapan's* publication licence is permanently revoked, there is no alternative for P. T. Sinar Kasir, the publishing group, but to sell the paper. Since its enforced closure, *Sinar Harapan*, which is keeping its staff of 1,500 on half pay, is understood to have been losing around 50 million rupiah (US\$30,500) a day.

According to the *Far Eastern Economic Review* (4 December 1986) if the deal went through, a new company would be set up under the name '*Suara Harapan*' ('The Voice of Hope'), closely identifying it with *Sinar Harapan*. Cynics in Jakarta, however, say that the new title should be *Sirna Harapan*, which means 'Hope Extinguished'.

As a footnote to *Sinar Harapan* or *Sirna Harapan*, Michael Byrnes, who broke the story of President Suharto's family's takeover in his newspaper on 12 November, was expelled from Jakarta on 23 November. He was the last Australian journalist accredited to Indonesia. ■

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