

THE FREE PRESS?

A MONTHLY JOURNAL AND TEACHING TOOL EXPOSING PROPAGANDA IN THE MASS MEDIA

A news resource which is not:

Owned by **billionaires**
Beholden to **advertisers**
Staffed by **the elite**

Unlike other journals we declare our interests:

No **profit motive**
No **cronyism**
An interest in exposing **media bias** by applying the **propaganda model**

What is the propaganda model?

The vast majority of “headline news” providers in the UK are profit-driven corporations, affiliated to even larger corporations, who make most of their money from selling advertising space to other businesses.

The propaganda model predicts that such media will generate a view of the world that is overwhelmingly favourable to the interests of big business and marginalises, ignores or attacks opposing views.

A wealth of evidence supports the model. Head to www.the-free-press.co.uk for an overview.

Wondering why you’ve never heard of the propaganda model?

Perhaps you’ve been getting your news from...the news.



The Campaign Against Corbyn Continues!

(and Laura Kuenssberg is involved...)

Our January edition documented the incredible campaign to delegitimise Jeremy Corbyn, a long time anti-racist campaigner, by associating him with anti-Semitism. Blairites and the corporate media transparently had a political motive for doing so: Corbyn’s elevation within Labour marginalised “New Labour” figures and his left-wing policies posed a threat to the advertisers and owners of the corporate press.

The campaign ultimately succeeded - Corbyn was replaced as Labour leader by Keir Starmer in the spring – but has not ended.

Indeed, it arguably reached its absurdist peak this month when Corbyn was suspended from the party for stating the truth: the anti-Semitism problem in Labour was overstated by his political enemies.

We take a look at the latest round of breath-taking double standards applied to Corbyn, without challenge, in the echo chamber of the corporate media.

1. Demanding an impartial complaints process...until the party leadership must “intervene” to remove Corbyn

The EHRC report on anti-Semitism in Labour was the trigger for November’s Orwellian events. The report was universally considered “damning” by the press and used as yet another stick to beat Corbyn with.

This despite the fact that, as Richard Sanders and Peter Osborne of Middle East Eye report, “in many of the examples it cites it is clear (Corbyn’s) office was interfering, not to prevent investigations for antisemitism, but to speed them up”.

One of the recommendations of the EHRC report was that Labour set up an independent committee to stop this kind of interference.

On the same day Keir Starmer stated that Labour would adhere to the report recommendations he suspended Corbyn for his reaction - “precisely the political interference condemned by the EHRC” Jewish Voice for Labour observed.

Corporate journalists weren’t only blind to such hypocrisy, they applauded it: Laura Kuenssberg implied

on BBC news that Starmer “had no choice” but to deny Corbyn the party whip.

2. Corbyn correctly suspended for stating the plain truth...say people who apparently stand for freedom of speech and the pursuit of truth

Journalists like Kuenssberg make lofty claims about what they stand for. Robert Peston, ITV’s political editor, has described journalism as “weighing the evidence and saying on the balance of probabilities ... this is the truth.” Kuenssberg has said that she would “die in a ditch for the impartiality of the BBC”.

Strange, then, that neither Kuenssberg, Peston or, so far as we can tell, any corporate journalist queried the fact that Corbyn was suspended from the Labour Party for stating that “the scale of the (AS) problem was dramatically overstated for political reasons.”

There are, after all, objective ways to test whether Corbyn’s claim is correct. An academic study by Glasgow University professor Greg Philo found that “on average the public believes that 34% of Labour members have been reported for anti-Semitism” when the true figure was less than 0.1%.

The public thought the problem was 340 times worse than it was but there were NO political or media overstatements?

Even Angela Raynor, Keir Starmer’s deputy, admitted that what Corbyn said “might be true”.

So there we have it: the corporate press, passionate defenders of free speech and the truth, not in the least concerned about a former party leader being suspended for making a truthful statement...

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How does the propaganda model work in practice?

Critics of the propaganda model claim that it is a “conspiracy theory.”

This, perhaps purposefully, misses the point of the propaganda model.

A conspiracy will not happen of its own accord. People must gather in rooms and have meetings to instigate a conspiracy.

The beauty of modern media propaganda is that it simply **follows from the institutional structure of large media companies.**

Consider someone at the bottom of this structure: a young journalist at Rupert Murdoch’s Sun newspaper: **Will this journalist have to be told, in a conspiratorial manner, not to pursue stories about unrest in the News International boardroom and corporate malpractice by one of the paper’s leading advertisers?**

Not likely. Do **you** try to earn job security by going against the values of the institution that employs you?

Of course, like us, journalists are unlikely to reflect on the institutional parameters that confine them. Far easier to subconsciously adopt these values and *believe* that you believe them.

If 90-95% of mainstream journalism positions are filled by people who share the same framework of values, know which stories to pursue and which to ignore, what can be said and can’t be said, that makes for a robust propaganda system.

You will, of course, have a hard time convincing journalists that this is what they’re doing. Then again, as Upton Sinclair famously said:

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3. Corbyn’s mild attempts to clamp down on internal dissent show his “intolerance”...say people who applaud and encourage Starmer’s draconian clamp down on left-wingers

Compare and contrast these headlines:

“Jeremy Corbyn’s Intolerance Makes Him Unfit to Lead” – Rachel Sylvester, **The Times**, July 2018

“Keir Starmer Should Finish the Purge of Corbynism” - Rachel Sylvester, **The Times**, July 2020

This pattern recurs again and again in corporate media coverage. The same commentators who were furious when Corbyn threatened to push back against Blairites who undermined him (so extravagantly they may have lost him the 2017 election, according to the Labour Leaks report) now cheerlead as Starmer goes out of his way to clamp down on the left.

Starmer has gone so far as to ban Labour branches from even discussing Jeremy Corbyn. That’s repression, that’s Stalinistic, but have you read about it in the media?

If Jeremy Corbyn tried to ban discussion of Tony Blair you’d have read about it on the front pages.

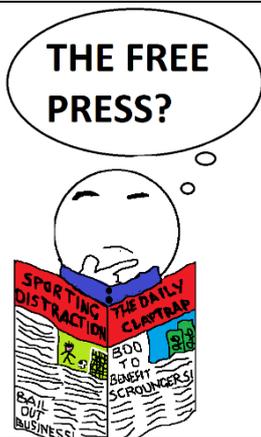
4. The voice of significant Jewish groups and individuals must be heard...unless they’re supporting rather than criticising Corbyn

Blairites and the press have been desperate for the public to hear the “voice of the Jewish community” on anti-Semitism.

Strangely, they seem to consider this a unified voice.

“I know that this has been another painful day for the Jewish community” Keir Starmer said when he took the decision to deny Jeremy Corbyn the whip.

Barnaby Raine, a young Jewish academic, highlighted that a tweet from The Board of Deputies of British Jews - “The Jewish community does not accept this pathetic non-apology from Jeremy Corbyn” - also implied that the Jewish community is an entity that speaks with a single voice.



“It’s difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon him not understanding it.”

As ever, the corporate media, have colluded in this. Jewish groups critical of Corbyn are given vastly more airtime and column inches than sources like Raine, Noam Chomsky, Norman Finkelstein and Jewish Voice for Labour who speak in his defence.

The late David Graeber, a celebrated Jewish anthropologist and writer, detailed on Twitter how “in Aug 2019 I tried repeatedly to get a piece in the Guardian suggesting anti-Corbyn saboteurs in the LP [Labour Party] were fanning the flames & doing so was itself #antisemitism. Editor told me explicitly I would NOT be allowed to criticise Corbyn’s critics motives”.

No wonder Andrew Feinstein, a former MP in Nelson Mandela’s ANC party, has spoken of people who have “given themselves the right to decide who is and who is not “the right kind of Jew.””

These people could also be referred to as “corporate journalists”.

Conclusion

Double standards are a key indicator of media bias. If press outlets can be shown to systematically apply different standards to one politician or group than they do to another then it indicates that the media are not “free” or “balanced”.

Corbyn’s case is worth revisiting as it is perhaps the most blatant example of double standards, applied across the whole corporate media, to a figure who poses a challenge to the corporate/establishment consensus.

Do we have a corporate press or a free press? Jeremy Corbyn is the litmus test - and there’s acid all over the papers.

HOMEWORK!

Type “Jeremy Corbyn Apartheid” into a search engine and read about his anti-racist activism in the 1980s

Type “Margaret Hodge Apartheid” into a search engine and read about her relationship with South Africa in the 1980s.

Type “Hodge Corbyn Anti-Semitism” into a search engine and read some mainstream media articles. You’ll find plenty – Hodge has been Corbyn’s fiercest critic and a go-to source for the media

Are you happy with the picture these articles provide? Does it seem to you a fair picture, taking into account Hodge’s past profiteering from racism and Corbyn’s committed resistance?

You may wish to widen the picture even more and consider that Hodge is a multi-millionaire and disagrees with Corbyn on many policy issues. Is this relevant? Did any of the Corbyn-Hodge-Anti-Semitism articles provide any of this context? If not, how do you feel about that? Let us know at thefreepress@yahoo.com !

* Visit www.the-free-press.co.uk an online version of the main article (fully linked to sources) and more information on the media and propaganda