

Dr Goebbels Could Not Better Have Described the Technique of Propaganda

Statement made by James Goldsmith to The Press

TODAY, IN THE High Court, Private Eye has been forced to admit that it pursued 'relentlessly and continuously' a campaign of vilification, Private Eye admits that 'typical' of this campaign is a libel which is 'wholly untrue' and 'a complete fabrication', The payment by Private Eye of £85,010 testifies to the gravity of this 'typical' libel.

It is time to face some facts:

1. In a recent biography of Private Eye written by a Private Eye journalist ('The Private Eye Story' by Patrick Marnham), the author writes (Pages 218 and 219):

'Ingrams (the current Editor of Private Eye) has said that checking many stories is a waste of time, since they are simply denied and that is the end of the matter. Instead, he relies on "the ring of truth", does the story have it or not when rapped lightly and placed next to his ear.'

Mr Marnham then explained some of the journalistic methods of Private Eye (Page 131):

'... the journalist decides what the story is and then "shepherds the facts" or such of them as are convenient, carefully towards the story. In Cockburn's words: "All stories are written backwards - they are supposed to begin with the facts and develop from there, but in reality they begin with a journalist's point of view ... from which the facts are subsequently organised ...'

Goebbels could not better have described the technique of propaganda.

Mr Claud Cockburn, a prominent member of the Communist Party, was editor of Private Eye. Mr Richard Ingrams wrote approvingly of Claud Cockburn (December 1981) as follows:

'An inspired journalist ... he was mainly responsible for introducing straight reportage into the pages of the Eye.'
'More than anyone else he was responsible for turning the Eye towards "factual" as opposed to satirical journalism - though his attitude to "facts" was original and right. ...'

2. Another key member of the Private Eye group of journalists, Mr Paul Foot, is a leading member and propagandist of the Trotskyist organisation, the Socialist Workers' party. Their manifesto states inter alia:

- 'Revolution not reform. There is no parliamentary road'

- 'To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the

working class have to organise into a Revolutionary Socialist party'

- 'The present system ... has to be overthrown'

- 'The working class needs ... a workers state based upon councils of workers delegates and a workers' militia', etc., etc.

3. Mr Michael Gillard, the editor of the Business Section of Private Eye also works for the World in Action programme of Granada Television and for The Observer newspaper.

In his recent autobiography 'Within Whicker's World', Alan Whicker, the well known T. V. personality, describes the World in Action programme (Page 309) as 'in fact the most ... politically-slanted of all television series. World in Action is usually a sort of Marxist party political ...'

4. Mr Gillard has also used the columns of The Observer to parallel and amplify the campaigns to which Private Eye has been forced to admit today.

5. Mr Gillard was described by me as a blackmailer. I had stated that he used blackmail during his investigative work on behalf of Private Eye. Mr Gillard sued me for libel and slander. After hearing the evidence, the Jury unanimously concluded that I was justified in describing Mr Gillard as a blackmailer. The Jury's decision was unanimously upheld by the Court of Appeal and by the House of Lords.

6. Patrick Marnham, the author of 'The Private Eye Story' admits that other journalists who work officially for major National newspapers, also write secretly for Private Eye. On page 151 and 152 of his book, he informs his readers that some of these journalists formally denied working for Private Eye, thereby purposely lying about their covert activities.

This has been one of the major strengths of the Private Eye Group and the principal reason why it matters. This group has been able to run campaigns of disinformation using a number of newspapers and T. V. stations and written by apparently independent journalists. Of course, the reality was that the journalists were working together in a co-ordinated way. Thus, a misleading impression was created that the campaigns represented the views of a broad section of public opinion and thereby acquired credibility. The Private Eye Group of journalists is not homogeneous.

As is to be expected it also includes and makes use of a few token and useful fools.

7. On the opening page of 'The Private Eye Story' the following quotation is cited:

'Men are seldom so serious as when they are making jokes .. !'

Private Eye can be very funny but this is a poor excuse for misrepresenting the truth over and over again. The sooner this group of journalists is recognised for the evil element that it is, the better our society will be. It is for the press to cleanse itself.