

Excellent Analytical Text on The Media Standards Trust

from <http://pinkindustry.wordpress.com/media-standards-trust/>

Readers can see for themselves the elitest tangled web that seeks to take control of the media. Julia Middleton's Common Purpose is fully involved and Common Purpose provides the London office accommodation for the Media Standards Trust. Just what are these people creating? Elitest corporate and big bank controlled state propaganda?

The [home page](#) of the Media Standards Trust (MST) offers this self-description:

This is a public space — independent of government, commercial interests and the news media — where people can respond, react, review and reflect on the news.

The contention here is that there is much to suggest that MST is a small, private PR stunt with trustees who are a familiar part of the nexus of government, big business and the media, and who wish to formulate public opinion as a commodity. Deeper into their site the responding, reacting 'public' receives a slightly lecturing tone as the agenda begins to emerge. [We are told](#) the MST's purpose is to "ensure public trust in news is nurtured". Arguably this task would achieve its objective by including a certain skepticism towards 'the media' given that a great deal of what we have had passed down by those who dominate the field has (probably since the ancient Sumerians developed cuneiform writing) been part of the exercise of dominance of information channels and the influential position in political affairs that this affords. Beaverbrook, Murdoch, Axel Springer, Randolph Hearst, no doubt all payed lip-service to the idea of democracy, while simultaneously treating its people with utter anti-democratic contempt —according to MST it is to the golden era of the publishing tycoon that we hark back to as if it was to Athens and the golden era of Pericles:

We exist because we believe high standards of news and information are critical to the health of our democratic society. These standards are being challenged by the enormous, revolutionary changes in the way in which news and information are produced, funded, packaged, delivered and consumed. In many areas these changes are leading to; less accurate reporting, less substantial sourcing, an escalation in the use of 'manufactured news', an increase in self-censorship, a growth of subjective over objective reporting, and a reduction in sustained, in-depth reporting on the ground, particularly investigative reporting.

We are just waiting for the old W. C. Fields adage that ‘a rich man is just a poor man with money’, and by an odd co–incidence their ‘mission’ resembles Private Eye’s last ever St. Albion Parish News, based on Tony Blair’s farewell pop at the media:

Hey, don’t get me wrong! I’m not whingeing! No one could be more in favour of a free press and everyone’s right to speak their mind in any way they want! But frankly, wouldn’t the world be a better place if they were all closed down? Don’t misunderstand me! I’m not calling for censorship. Just for what I call ” Being Sensible–ship”. And that naturally involves applying a certain amount of long–overdue control and regulation over what people can write or say!”

There are several points here. It is interesting to compare this organisation to [Editorial Intelligence](#) who feel that journalism, public relations and business interests should merge; or the ‘think tank’ Polis based in the LSE, which itself is something of a spin–off of Editorial Intelligence, or the University of the Arts which focuses on journalism and society and involves similar people. Can we really believe that ‘standards’ have only just recently been challenged by ‘revolutionary changes’ (presumably new media) and that the era of Murdoch et al was a golden era of accurate, substantial, fearless, objective investigative reporting? Who would think this and are they deluding themselves and possibly us— the public?

Newspapers and the media generally have been controlled by elites, and serve the purposes of those elites. ‘Standards’ have declined because of the effects market–driven policies have had in determining lower and lower common denominators— people are sacked and the remainder told to ‘do more with less’. To negligently exclude this, as MST has, is another contributory factor in the decline in journalistic standards. A look at the MST trustees seems to suggest that, yet again, we are being asked to believe that the producers of bad standards in the media (which must also include a servile elitism) have got together with the people who are ubiquitous in the media (and this over–reliance on the same old faces must have contributed something to the situation) and the people who represent business interests (which tend to dominate ‘the media’ and which it is itself as part of big business) to lecture everyone else from a holier–than–thou position. Perhaps the great and the good are here are, yet again, exonerating themselves by blaming others for the system they have overseen and profited from.

The Bored members: ‘funded, packaged, delivered and consumed’

Who are they — affluent neo-Luddites blaming the messenger? With Google etc. making millions what happened to all that talk of the dotcom revolution? There is no particular attempt at modesty here, this is how the organisation describe themselves:

The Trust is governed by a board of trustees made up of leaders of integrity selected from civil society and the media, with representatives from civil society always in the majority. The trustees reflect our diverse contemporary society and have the necessary range of skills and knowledge to lead this initiative; as individuals, they command widespread public respect for their expertise and independence.

We shall have a look at the ‘leaders of integrity’:

“You’re Fired!”

* **Sir David Bell:** Chairman, Financial Times Group. If you regard the Financial Times as the epitome of integrity — look away now! That opening sentence did say: “independent of government, commercial interests and the news media” didn’t it yet? Immediately we are in this hallucinatory Alice-in-Wonderland world where the head of the news media for commercial interests should take pride of place. Bell is currently a Civil Service Commissioner ([somewhat dominated by business interests](#)) and also Non-Executive Chairman of a small PR company **The Windmill Partnership** which tries to sell Chai Patel’s re-hab clinic, the **Priory** (where most business deals are done these days). He is also a UK council member of **INSEAD**, which is a selective, private graduate business school (entirely connected to big business) currently ranked fourth in the world by Bell’s Financial Times. He is also Chairman of the Trust which over saw the **Millenium Bridge** which closed to the public after two days.

Bell is a non-Executive Director for **Vitec** plc whose subsidiary brand **Clear-Com®** provide the clever technology for Outside Broadcast Trucks. Their website notes of their surveillance equipment that: “Law enforcement groups have their own specialized version of the trucks”. Clear-Com showcase “a variety of real-world applications” including:

“Military, Aerospace and Government (MAG): How systems are used in target ranges, between military units, and at NASA testing and simulation environments. International customers include Boeing, Raytheon, the US Army, US Navy, police departments, mass transit authorities, and port authorities.”

And who knows who else, what with ‘end-user’ certificates being what they are. Clear-Com provides the technology for live audio communication

systems for broadcast, studio, public safety, military, government, air traffic control, business, and event professionals. This is a very entrepreneurial venture when it comes to facilitating war, media coverage of the war (and indeed the protest against it).

But it is not all surveillance, **Bexel** (a Vitec subsidiary) help media standards by facilitating some of the finest programmes on television — the ever increasing number of ‘reality shows’. Examples are Survivor, American Idol, Brat Camp, The Osbournes and The Apprentice.

As Pearson’s ‘Director for People’ with responsibility for the ‘recruitment, motivation, development and reward of employees across the Pearson Group’ old Alan Sugar’s catchphrase “you’re fired” must have a particular resonance with Bell. Pearson is involved in the production and distribution of television programmes through three subsidiary companies Thames Television, Grundy and ACI. It also has stakes in two satellite television channels UK Gold and UK Living, not the worst of channels (providing old BBC repeats) and had a 20% stake (and thus must take 20% of the blame) in Channel Five — the home of docu-scum, Trisha Goddard, Home and Away, The Terry and Gaby Show, BrainTeaser and who knows perhaps the latest show will be called ‘Phone-in Swindle’.

Another Vitec subsidiary, **Drake Electronics Ltd** is engaged in Defence Communications: Operations Centres, Air Defence Centres, Command Posts, Mobile/Tactical. Prime Contractors are: Alenia Marconi Systems, Raytheon, British Aerospace, IBM, Vickers and ‘Others’. According to their presentation material they operate in Isreal. They provide command & control for the US Department of Defense’s Global Hawk, that’s the Remotely Piloted Vehicle (RPV) in the picture. It spots the targets for the US military in Iraq and Afghanistan — aiding their renowned pin-point accuracy. Bell is Chair of the Trustees of the Europe branch of the Institute for War and Peace Reporting.

Bell is part of the ImagineNations™ Group headed by Jacob Schimmel, chairman of UKI Investments, the Schimmel family’s (one of the UK’s largest) private real estate companies with interests in real estate, financial services, technology, aviation, tourism and telecommunications. The family’s business interests are centered in the United Kingdom, France and Israel with growing involvement in Eastern Europe and the United States. Recently, Schimmel has been involved in the purchase of IDB Holding Corporation Ltd., one of the largest business enterprises in Israel.

‘Common as muck’

***Julia Middleton** is the CEO, of **Common Purpose**. If this organisation wanted openness one would expect it not to enquire about who has been requesting FOI information about the nature of Common Purpose (CP) and its quasi-masonic secret society of careerists. Leaving that aside [CP's website](#) claims that "More than 70 per cent of FTSE 100 companies have used Common Purpose for professional development." How is being funded by big business and the government being independent of the aforementioned? [1]

Middleton works for the **Office of the Deputy Prime Minister** and therefore cannot be argued to be independent of government unless the truth is distorted, as it is in the MST. Bell and Middleton seem to be the instigators of the MST. Robert Peston (below), now City editor of the Sunday Telegraph, wrote in the [New Statesman](#) that:

A debate on media standards —with two editors, another BBC executive, an investment banker, a Bank of England luminary, academics and a bishop, inter alia—was more practical than most. We'd been summoned to dinner at the offices of Pearson, owner of Penguin and the Financial Times, by Julia Middleton, the unrecognised toiler for the rehabilitation of the concerned, engaged citizen.

Middleton doesn't run things at Pearson, just yet, Peston seems to have been closer to things than the article revealed, Martin Moore (the director of the Media Standards Trust) stated that:

Sir David Bell, chairman of the Financial Times group, came up with the idea for the Media Standards Trust at a conference organised by Common Purpose in Leeds three years ago. Since then he and three others, Julia Middleton [...], Robert Peston (Business Editor, BBC News), and Sir Cyril Chantler [...], have worked to make it happen, establishing a board of trustees from the media and civil society, and searching for start-up funding from Trusts and Foundations. [2]

It should be noted then that not all of the people here necessarily go along with whatever Pearson and Middleton are up to — people offer their name to support boards without, at times, really knowing much of what is going on. But the fact that this organisation was put up by Pearson must make us suspicious of its intended aims.

Middleton formerly worked at **The Industrial Society** and with **Demos**. Her husband, Rupert Middleton went on a business course in USA where he spotted the Community Leadership Programmes and thought to emulate them. Middleton raised half a million in business sponsorship.

According to Charles Handy, in the shockingly hagiographic 'The New Alchemists,' Common Purpose has 120 paid staff with turnover of £3m. Middleton's father worked for Peat Marwick and she met Rupert, John Garnett, Julia Cleverdon at the Industrial Society.

CP's web PR and sponsor list is quite impressive: but what does it really mean? There are a growing number of rants about it online, some around Middleton's proximity to the Office of the Deputy PM and the political patronage thereof, others amass data to form a conspiracy: but there is growing evidence that the organisation is favoured by government in an untoward way: given free use of property and it seems to operate like a cult. But then you see her [moaning about the same subject](#) and seemingly taking everyone in. She was also associated with the **Arab Learning Initiative**, which describes its role as venture philanthropy, but strikes me as intelligence gathering.

Middleton is a well networked in the New Labour, Careerist, Atlanticist networks—Common Purpose had been around for sometime but gained a great deal of funding with the advent of New Labour and its service towards business elites. Initially money was put in by David Bell, then Chairman of the Financial Times and Demos' trustee, the late Anita Roddick.

Their list of corporate sponsors is impressive and they say they have offices in every UK city. Put politely CP tries to promote 'corporate community engagement', the synergy between big business and well... it's a bit like the asbestos factory owner's daughter handing out religious tracts to the workers coughing at the factory gates. Relationships between corporate CP funders such as BAe Systems, Royal Ordnance and GEC Marconi and, say, the work of CP trustee David Grayson of the National Disability Council are ignored however. The idea is to accentuate the positive. The real value of CP must be measured by its closeness to power—access to which is what is on offer. The board has only one member who is openly employed by government, Gillian Ashmore. [Her record speaks for itself:](#)

"Gillian Ashmore is currently on secondment from the Department of Transport to the British Railways Board working on railway privatisation. She joined the Civil Service in 1971 and has worked variously in the Departments of the Environment, Transport, Employment and Trade and Industry. On the Transport side, she has worked mainly in the public transport field. In the latter two Departments she was Deputy Director of the Enterprise and Deregulation Unit. Mrs. Ashmore has also been a non-executive director of P & O European Transport."

How is the Enterprise and Deregulation Unit doing these days, Incredibly with a business dominated line up the CP constitution has the cheek to say the organisation:

“is diverse and non-aligned. It draws on the widest possible variety of sectors, areas, and social groups and recognises only peer level and geographical boundaries as common factors to each group. It is always independent, always balanced and owes no historical or other allegiance to any other organisation. Common Purpose works for the benefit of society as a whole...”

What a pack of lies. CP creates the illusion that it is for ordinary people, but it is not only run by an elite, its projects cater exclusively for an elite: “the rising generation of decision makers” as they say in their web site. This also states that: “We are looking for applicants who are decision-makers in their city, towns or area”, and that “participants are over 30 and already hold a position of considerable responsibility”. They say their long-term aim is “educating the next generation of leaders in each city or town”. On this basis it is a fraudulent organisation and it must be said a bit creepy.

Funded by big business and public bodies (everyone from Arms companies, Banks to curiously the Scottish Arts Council—maybe through Ruth Wishart’s connection) they operate for their benefit while their constitution lies that they seek “the advancement of education for the public benefit... to educate men and women from a broad range of geographical, political, ethnic, institutional, social and economic backgrounds.”

With Trustees such as Gerry Robinson, the ex-Coca Cola salesman who is now chairman of the Arts Council of England and Janet Paraskeva, the director of the National Lotteries Charities Board (the ‘independent organisation’ which distributes National Lottery money supposedly to charities and community groups). CP has specialised in channeling money away from genuine charitable causes. Demos was also partially funded directly via the Arts Council/Lottery ‘New Opportunities Fund’.

The illusion of independence from funders and government was abandoned with CP’s biggest project, ‘Citizen’s Connection’. Tony Blair’s old flat mate Lord Falconer’s New Millennium Experience Company (NMEC) said that: “Camelot, NMEC and Common Purpose created...Citizens Connection.”

But the legal position of the Camelot Group plc is this: as the operator of

the UK National Lottery it is supposed to be “not responsible for the allocation of funds raised”. Except when it is. The NMEC was (is?) an extraordinary concoction. According to their press release the “NMEC is a non-Departmental Public Body and a company, independent from government with one shareholder, Lord Falconer”. This makes it an Anstalt, a financial vehicle more commonly associated with Swiss Bank accounts and money laundering. The ‘off-shore account’ was pioneered by the Mafia: their Lotteries (‘the numbers racket’) were deemed illegal because of the evidence that they preyed upon the poor— the National Lottery magically does the reverse.

NMEC is funded by the National Lottery via the Millennium Commission (who tried to be independent from government but were threatened with a judicial review). NMEC ran the Dome and a national programme of events across the UK. It is misleading to gather all this up as the problem with ‘the Dome’. For instance, Labour MP Robert Marshall-Andrews tabled a Commons question on numerous secret contracts worth some £450 million—awarded by the NMEC, “a company with no direct lines of information or accountability”. But with millions pouring down the drain (well, into a few people’s pockets) an attempted diamond heist and daily financial craziness at the Dome, no one really noticed anything unusual when Camelot, whoever runs Common Purpose and Lord Falconer gave £2 million to Common Purpose to run a web site which links to the governments’ sites, which is all Citizen’s Connection is.

People have to pay to join up for any CP programme, so who is this money going to? Just about all of CP projects are extensions of PR exercises run by big companies, such as the ‘Your Turn’ project, which was directly run by BT’s PR consultants, so effectively these are being underwritten. Yet — even while CP got millions for their web site—‘Your Turn’ was specifically given additional funding by the National Lottery Charities Board, which as we have seen with CP board member, Janet Paraskeva has a conflict of interest, which seems to be another word for common purpose: that and making money.

Tobacco connection?

***Sir Cyril Chantler** is Chairman of King’s Fund and Chairman of the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Trust and advisor to Mizuho Bank. Sir Cyril is also a Trustee of the Dunhill Medical Trust which just like fag packets now has a huge disclaimer on its site which reads:

“The Dunhill Medical Trust no longer has any connection with the tobacco industry.”

It all gets a bit confusing the [annual accounts for 2003–2004](#) say: “Funding from a Trust or foundation no longer having any connection with the tobacco industry even though it may bear a name that (for historical reasons) has tobacco industry associations.”

The King’s fund aims to have an influence on government as ‘the think tank that does: it has extensive and thorough-going connections to government and big business.’ It includes Chief Executive Niall Dickson of the Cabinet Office Honours Committee (Health) and Senior Associate Chai Patel the Chief Executive of Priory Group and the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR). Big business is well represented with Sir Derek Wanless (NatWest Group’s Group Chief Executive from 1992–99) Julia Unwin OBE Foreign & Colonial Asset Management; Keith Palmer Non-Executive Vice Chairman of N M Rothschild & Sons Ltd; Anthony McGrath Robert Fleming (now owned by JP Morgan Chase); Julian Le Grand former senior policy adviser to the prime minister and an adviser to the World Bank, the World Health Organisation, the Treasury and the Department of Health; Tom Hughes-Hallett Chairman of Robert Fleming Securities and Director of Fleming Asset Management.

A Weary Pilgrim

***Sir Robert Worcester** was the founder of MORI the influential pollsters and part of the Pilgrims Society. He is a member and contributor to many voluntary organisations of an Atlanticist ideological nature and plays a leading role in a variety of Elite policy planning and networking groups. He is well known in British research and political circles and as a media commentator, especially about voting intentions in elections. As Chairman of the Atlanticist dining group the Pilgrims Society, he currently co-chairs the Jamestown 2007 Commemoration British Committee. He is a Governor of the English Speaking Union, a trustee of the Magna Carta Trust, and a Governor of the Ditchley Foundation. He was also a member of the Fulbright Commission. He is an advisor to the Institute for Business Ethics and Forum for the Future. He is on the board of the United Nations Association and of the [European Atlantic Group](#). His clubs are the Reform Club and the Beefsteak.

Judging a Book by its Cover

***Tim Waterstone**: Founder of Waterstones bookstores and Daisy & Tom children’s department stores. He gave more than £5,000 to the Labour Party in 1997 and £12,000 in May 2001. He was one of the 58 business leaders who wrote to the Times in May 2001 in support of the Labour Party.

A Load of Balls'

***Robert Peston** has been Business Editor for the BBC since 2006, he is the son of Labour Peer, the Baron Maurice Peston of Mile End (a former Scientific Officer for the Army Operational Research Group and the MOD) after Balliol College Oxford he became the City editor for the Independent on Sunday, and then moved to the Financial Times to become assistant editor. He was associate editor of the Spectator and assistant editor of the Sunday Telegraph. In an [interview in the Independent](#) Peston outlined what he felt the BBC's mission should be:

"Instead of just concentrating on the most obvious names, Peston, who is known for his fierce ambition, would like the BBC to test itself a little more by taking a closer look at those who pull the strings of business, the murky figures behind the private-equity and hedge funds. "I want to take the BBC into what I regard as more challenging areas. Hedge funds are having a profound impact on the way people save for their retirement and a profound impact on the way companies prepare for their future," he says, stressing the public-service value in simplifying the more arcane workings of the markets."

So an interview with the MST's funder Lord Stevenson is moments away. Peston is also an editorial director of online financial analysis service CSQuest.com, an offshoot of Collins Stewart plc the 'largest offshore stockbrokers' (which advises the private equity houses Peston makes great show of complaining about).

[Some reports](#) say that Peston has irritated bosses of the Corporation's 10 O'Clock News by sniping at the way they cover big stories in the Square Mile. He [offers helpful tips to investors](#) which say very little for financial reporting:

"Most of what you read in newspapers, magazines or on the internet — especially those dedicated to business and investment— has already been discounted by the stock market before you are ready to deal... Investment commentary in newspapers is particularly useless as a source of advice on how to make short term capital gains."

Yes, what is the point of buying the Financial Times and reading yesterday's prices? part of the standards the MST will be championing in their own style will be objectivity: for too long mainstream media reporters have been too close to politicians, mere mouth pieces. Peston is the author of *Brown's Britain: How Gordon Brown Runs The Show*, which was, according to [John Rentoul in the Independent](#), written with the co-

operation of Brown's right-hand person, Ed Balls. [Blogs](#), much despised by the MST, have awarded him a prize for the stupidest thing said by a BBC reporter, at least for a few hours:

"The thing about Gordon Brown is that he's somebody who hates waste of any sort. It's his good Presbyterian background."

He said this the day after the auditor general estimated that Brown's tax credits waste £1.2bn in fraud and error. Eagled-eyed viewers of John Ware's [Panorama programme](#) on Charlie Whelan and Ed Ball's spinning for the Treasury will have noticed Peston's name as the recipient of their spin, dutifully published in the Times. Peston also takes part in those cosy little 'non-political' chats in the **Smith Institute** such as the chutzpah laden 2005 [Towards a Progressive Consensus: Telling it like it could be: The moral force of progressive politics](#).

'Match me Sydney'

***William Davies** is studying for a PhD at Goldsmiths College. He is a Visiting Fellow at the Institute for Public Policy Research, a fellow of the BP/Morgan Stanley funded Young Foundation (Director Geoff Mulgan) and an editorial board member of New Labour rag Renewal. He has written for Prospect, The New Statesman, The Guardian, The Times, Public Policy Research, Open Democracy and the BBC. Davies was one of the organisers of the IPPR'S Oxford Media Convention.

"Yes, I could have been a judge but I never had the Latin"

***Roger Graef** (Films of Record).

'Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds'

*Baroness **Helena Kennedy** of The Shaws QC: described as 'the nation's favourite Portia' (by her website and not the public, who have never described her as such in any representative number and who might pick a different Shakespearian character).

From 1992 to 1997, she was chair of Charter 88, She is on the board of the Independent newspaper, been chair of the **British Council** since 1998, currently chair of the Human Genetics Commission, and the modestly titled "The Helena Kennedy Foundation". Formerly chancellor of Oxford Brookes University, she is now president of the School of Oriental and African Studies at London University, president of the National Children's Bureau, vice president of the Association of Women Barristers and the Haldane Society, a trustee of the Club of Three (a tri-lateral

network of countries comprising UK, France, Germany) the [KPMG Foundation](#), the World Future Council the Tablet Trust, a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, City and Guilds of London Institute, a member of the **Foreign Policy Centre's** advisory council, and those of the International Centre for Prison Studies, King's College London, World Bank Institute and was formerly a member of the Task Force on Terrorism, International Bar Association, 2001–2003.

This we are to take as independence from big business, the government and the media. Kennedy leads the classic double-standards life of an elitist insider. Asked to comment on David Blunkett's suggestion of partially secret, non-jury trials for UK terrorist suspects, Kennedy responded by branding the home secretary a "shameless authoritarian" who takes his "lessons in jurisprudence from Robert Mugabe". Such an outcast that he volunteered and was accepted onto her very own [Helena Kennedy Foundation](#), which also includes: Lord Bragg, Will Hutton, Joanna Lumley OBE, Baroness Neuberger, Trevor Phillips, Lord Puttnam and other showbiz worthies, including BSkyB's Gail Rebeck, a Trustee of the Institute for Public Policy Research from 1993 to 2003 and for three years a member of the Government's Creative Industries Task Force and Hutton's The Work Foundation.

Under its '[Power and Responsibility](#)' section the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust gave the Media Standards Trust £30,000; Rowntree also gave Kennedy's 'POWER Inquiry' £50,500 and her other organisation 'Justice' £31,000 for the second year running (she is surprisingly not on the British Institute of Human Rights — that has Cherie Blair — who got £35,000).

In her efforts to clean the Augean stables Kennedy is also, as mentioned, an adviser with the Foreign Policy Centre which recently appointed [Anthony Bailey](#) a donor to the Labour party (and member of the Labour Finance and Industry Group) who's money was at first considered tainted by his proximity to BAe's Al Yamamah intrigue and refused, but when times got hard all such snobbish standards were abandoned and the money became clean. Also on the FPC advisory board is little Lord Levy and MI6's Baroness Ramsay.

Carry on Screening

***John McCormick**: Pie-Finger's McCormick joined BBC Education in 1970 (political/business influence has now silenced much of the BBC's free online work) and was eventually elevated to the post of Controller of BBC Scotland from 1992–04 responsible for all BBC activities in Scotland, and

he got out when the going was good. Imagine being responsible for everything done by BBC Scotland and then banging on about standards in the media — but responsible here does not mean responsible; it is probably better translated as "part of a tiny elite paid more than the people who do the actual work". The creativity of BBC Scotland has been strangled by a leadership as subservient to London's dictates as would shame the worst colonial regime. Power to produce programmes was taken away from producers notably under John Birt. McCormick was also Secretary of the BBC in London between 1987 and 1992 responsible to the Chair and Director General for managing the business of —and the relationships between—the Board of Governors and the Board of Management; the BBC's overall accountability and the BBC's links with its sponsoring Government department.

He is now a government appointee the Scottish Qualifications Authority and so independent of the business world that he became a non-executive Director of the much-loved Lloyds TSB. Just so that we have more creativity and diversity in the arts he is Chair of the Edinburgh International Film Festival, a Governor of the RSAMD, and a Board member of the Glasgow School of Art. And is currently a member of the somewhat notorious Scottish Screen.

“It’s da Bishop!”

*The Right Reverend **Stephen Platten** (Bishop of Wakefield). If there has been any group which has tried to keep the lid on things as regards the media, the finger of guilt (and indeed utter hypocrisy) would eventually point to the Church. To argue that they have never had something to hide or given their blessing to humanities worse atrocities is to ignore history. Even on the level of [Ecclesiastical Patronage](#) we see that he is an appointee of Lord Charlie Falconer's recommendation to the Crown. The Bishop's connection with the Crown and the government are plain to see, but, with the eyes of faith we can just pretend, just like the Media Standards Trust. Bishop Steve has went on record as how happy he is with the whole system of the government appointing Bishops rather than the Church:

“A number of us have admired the way in which both the prime Minister's patronage, and that of the Lord Chancellor has been handled in recent years.”

And a number of us haven't. It's such a faithful echo of Christ denouncing the Sadducees and Pharisees, but Steve is more of a 'Media Bishop' who will trot out government propaganda, with the added incentive that in

regards to business it is open season on the competition. Type his name into Google and you'll get a stack of [press releases like this one](#):

The threat of terrorism has continued to dominate the media. The hiatus over transatlantic flights from Britain in this past summer points to the real and continuing threat of suicide bombing, fueled by extremism and dissatisfaction within some parts of the Muslim community.

I suppose we should be grateful that he put in that 'not all of them mind' qualification. When he was desperate to make money, Lenny Bruce once got into the religious business, and in "How to talk Dirty & Influence people" wrote:

"I would become a priest or rabbi or a monk or whatever the hell was necessary to perform miracles such as taking money from someone else's pocket and putting it into mine, still remaining within the confines of the law. I had no qualms about the sinful aspect of my aspiration because I felt — and still do feel— that so-called "men of God" are self-ordained. The "calling" they hear is just their own echo."

What with an easy ticket to the House of Lords at stake, one sees how easy it is to side with the elites. Jesus may have talked to Nicodemus, but he didn't join a think tank with him, and was silent in front of Herod. And that is the problem with elites such as this: imagine being that far gone even Jesus thinks its a waste of time talking to you.

Ground Zero

***Geraint Talfan-Davies:** Member of the Radio Authority, formerly Controller of BBC Wales, from 1990 to 2000. He is currently a non-executive director of Welsh Water company Glas Cymru Ltd, Chair of the Institute of Welsh Affairs, Chair of Welsh National Opera and Cardiff Bay Arts Trust, and a Governor of the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff. As chair of the Institute of Welsh Affairs (IWA) he is given the opportunity to sound off about various things. In a IWA essay [Ground Zero](#) — the 9/11 (bottom of the barrel) tag put on to spice up a dreary ramble about the Welsh Assembly — Talfan-Davies had this to say.

"It is only in recent years that we have come to pride ourselves on a concentration of highly valued aviation related businesses — British Aerospace at Broughton, British Airways jumbo maintenance at Cardiff Wales Airport, and avionics at Llantrisant, the RAF at St. Athan, as well as GE at Nantgarw. The ultimate effect on these Welsh outposts of the massive setback for the world aviation industry is difficult to predict in the round. However, we have some reason to fear the process of re-

assessment. It is a dreadful addition to a roll-call of ill luck for the Welsh economy that is beginning to sound like a list of first world war battles — BSE, foot and mouth, Corus, New York.”

It doesn't really matter where it takes place (and note the crass reference to the Somme) but clearly on this analysis a war would be a real boost for Wales. [BBC reports](#) spoke of intentions to build the RQ-1 Predator spy plane in Parc Aberporth in Wales, wait till David Bell hears about that!

His first point here is this:

“So, our first contention is that public servants, as well as the public, must regain the capacity to be shocked.”

The second point is that the Welsh assembly should seek ‘transformative policy making,’ here one wonders if he reads over his work:

“To be realistic about this: one does not mean a kind of Khmer Rouge Year Zero approach to policy development. That too has its pitfalls...”

Yeah what do you do with all the skulls and the negative press coverage? There is a third, fourth and fifth point, but the only point he makes is a call “for the creation of an independent organisation on the lines of the Irish Economic and Social Research Institute.” One can see what he is getting at when he notes that the Irish institute was “Founded in 1960, with a grant from the Ford Foundation”. The IWA contains several members of the Welsh Development Agency (WDA). In the early 1990s a [House of Commons Select Committee Reports](#) by the Public Administration Select Committee and the Welsh Affairs Committee was highly critical of ‘financial and recruitment irregularities’ in the WDA and the monitoring role of the Welsh Office. A New Statesman of October, 1993 ‘The sleaze at the heart of Tory Britain,’ stated that: “The Welsh Development Agency hired a conman to work for it, who interviewed call girls in a hotel room and was recently jailed for two years.”

The Independent of August 11, 1992, also discussed the 11 invoices submitted by Shapes Model Agency, Rhodri Morgan, Labour MP for Cardiff West, said:

I'm told that one invoice covered the attendance by a young lady at the Celtic Bay Hotel in the city for two and a half hours on a Sunday afternoon for the purpose of being interviewed for a position as a model with the agency.

The Independent of August 15, 1993 extended this to mention that the

Welsh Development Agency Accounts of 1991–92 is:

“... a lively page–turner complete with model girls, private detectives, a conman, blustering public servants, flights on Concorde, pay-offs galore, and above all money, money, money. All of it taxpayers’, a lot of it heading in unorthodox directions [...] Barclays de Zoete Wedd was secretly hired in 1989 to advise on the possible privatisation of the WDA. Its charging agreement with the agency runs as follows: pounds per day Directors 1,920, Assistant directors 1,400, Senior managers 1,120, Managers 960, Executives 800.”

My Life!

*Baroness Rabbi **Julia Neuberger**: Chief executive of the King’s Fund (1997–2004), A Civil Service Commissioner (2001–2002) Harkness Fellow, Member of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (the Wicks Committee). Walter and Leslie Schwab, member, national committee of the **Social Democratic Party** (1982–88), member of the editorial Board of Political Quarterly. Neuberger holds Trusteeships of the **British Council**, Imperial War Museum and formerly Runnymede Trust amongst others. She is also a Vice President of the United Nations Association and has been a member of the General Medical Council and the Medical Research Council, Chair of the Commission on the Future of Volunteers. And here is a great mystery: if the MST have Baroness **Helena** why do they need the Baroness **Julia**?

Amelioration

***Amelia Fawcett**: The Guardian Media Group recently appointed Fawcett to the board as a non–executive director. She was also senior adviser to **Morgan Stanley** (she left in April and was previously the US investment bank’s vice–chairman of European operations), she is a member of the court of the **Bank of England**, deputy chairman of the National Portrait Gallery, a member of the council of the University of London, the chairman of the London International Festival of Theater and a director of the board of **Business in the Community**. In 2002 she was awarded a CBE in the new year’s honours list for services to the finance industry.

Fawcett joined Morgan Stanley in 1987 after gaining a law degree from the University of Virginia and is currently the chairman of a new capital markets company based in London, and a non–executive director of State Street Corporation in Boston.

Prior to joining Morgan Stanley, she (has US/UK citizenship) worked for the international US law firm of Sullivan & Cromwell, first in New York then in

Paris. That's the Dulles brother's firm, [generally regarded as indistinguishable from the CIA.](#)

"Allen Dulles, who ran the CIA in the 1950s, was a product of the New York law firm of Sullivan & Cromwell, which has always epitomised the Establishment," [...] "While he was in charge at the Agency, his business and legal confreres were used extensively to enable the CIA to achieve its secret purposes."

Fawcett (one of the twenty most powerful women in the City according to the Evening Standard and now with the Bank of England), stated that:

["Morgan Stanley asked me to set up a government coverage function to monitor UK and EU governmental initiatives, support the privatisation effort and look for business opportunities with government."](#)

This can be compared to how, According to Christopher Simpson in 'The Splendid Blond Beast' (p49) Dulles worked (in this instance trading with the Nazis):

"In most instances, his legal work for investors consisted of complex three- and four-sided financial projects whose success depended on Dulles's skills as a negotiator and his contacts inside U.S. and foreign governments. Typically, private banks and brokerage houses sought out leading German or other foreign companies, banks, and local governments with offers to loan U.S. dollars for the construction of new factories, municipal electrification, or similar projects. If the foreign party was interested, it would issue millions of dollars worth of bonds and sell them to Dulles's clients for somewhat less than the market price—at a wholesale rate, so to speak. The clients would then turn around and sell the bonds to other U.S. banks and individual investors at "retail" rates, usually paying Dulles and Sullivan & Cromwell two or three percentage points of the overall value of the bond offering for their services. The foreign borrowers included not only dozens of companies but also governments as varied as Argentina, Czechoslovakia, and Denmark. However, Dulles clearly emphasized projects for Germany, for the military junta in Poland, and for Mussolini's fascist state in Italy. U.S. State Department documents [...] provide some indication of the nature and scope of the business in which Dulles played a personal role as a fixer, advisor, or middleman..."

So a private bank or brokerage house looks for foreign companies, local government etc. makes loans offers for 'projects' and the bond issues are sold at a discount (via lawyers and their clients) of less than market value,

who then sell them to others at retail price. Although obviously the process of 'securitization' became a little more creative than strictly necessary.

At the time of the New Labour administration in 1997 making such inroads into the corridors of power necessitated joining a paid up lobby front: the Community Action Network. Operating within an organisation called the [Mezzanine](#), CAN was right next door to [ERA](#) run by [Dennis Stevenson](#) who funds the MST from the shadows as it were.

Off the record

***Albert Scardino** (journalist, editor): Scardino's Guardian pays its editor Alan Rushbridger (who regards such matters as off the record) half a million pounds. Even Piers Morgan has noticed the discrepancy in that:

PM: That means that you earned £520,000 last year alone. That's more than the editor of The Sun by a long way.

AR: I'll talk to you off the record about this, but not on the record.

PM: Why? In The Guardian, you never stop banging on about fat cats. Do you think that your readers would be pleased to hear that you earned £520,000 last year [i.e., well over \$1 million]? Are you worth it?

AR: That's for others to say.

PM: Wouldn't it be more Guardian-like, more socialist, to take a bit less and spread the pot around a bit? We have this quaint idea that you guys are into that "all men are equal" nonsense, but you're not really, are you? You seem a lot more "equal" than others on your paper.

AR: Er... [silence].

The public are generally sickened by the 'salaries' of celebrity columnists, never mind the meaningless ghost written waffle itself. Does Scardino feel that this is the forum to do something about this.

Who are you looking at?

***Sir Philip Otton** (retired judge) has been a Surveillance Commissioner since 2001, they are the people who authorise and conduct covert surveillance operations and use covert human intelligence sources (as informants and undercover officers are now known). Appointed by the Prime Minister, Commissioners hold, or have held, high judicial office: their chief responsibilities is to scrutinise all notifications, renewals and

cancellations of authorisations of property interference and intrusive surveillance. Except in relation to the Interception of Communications and the Intelligence Services. In fact the phrase “except the intelligence services” is something of a mantra of their reports. Formerly a non-executive with Equitable Life Assurance.

Otten was a dinner guest at No. 10 in June 1998.

Communication Breakdown

* **Martin Moore** is Director of the Media Standards Trust. He has been working in news and media for over a decade, for the BBC, Channel 4, NTL, IPC Media, Trinity Mirror and others. He holds a doctorate from the LSE where he was teaching and researching until summer 2006. In his blog Moore recently moaned that the Conservative Party appointed Andy Coulson, ex-editor of the News of the World, as their new Director of Communication, on a salary reported to be over £400,000 a year.

After writing a book on spin he finds it “astonishing” that the appointment sends out message to the public that “shows that the Conservatives want their very own Alastair Campbell —their own tabloid editor who knows how to charm, manipulate, cajole, square and bully the media.” He observes that Michael Howard rounded on Campbell on Newsnight, saying that in the last 10 years “the tone and standards of public life in this country have deteriorated radically” and that Campbell bears “a heavy share of the responsibility for that.” And he links to YouTube, should you want to see Howard’s hypocrisy all over again and again. And there we have it. The MST want to use all this technology which in the hands of others outside their tiny clique produces tomfoolery: but their very touch redeems it—no wonder there are so many servants of god on board. A Wikipedia style directory of journalists and their career history, is also being proposed under the shocking name ‘Journa-list’.

Moore is so incensed by Tory and Labour mendacity that according to the [Press Gazette](#):

Moore said the Trust would assist both parties: “On the one hand you have the public which is feeling quite confused and bewildered particularly as information accumulates. It becomes more and more difficult to distinguish between what’s accurate, what the source of information are, if they have conflicts of interest and if they even have registered those.”

What is objectivity in the media? If the mainstream media (as represented above) decides (as it demonstrably has) that its predominant mission is to serve the corporate bottom line, then it must plummet into the depths of

diminishing credibility. The underlying assumption in almost all mainstream critical reporting is that the basic political system and its values are unquestionable. Why? Because the comparatively small group of 'professional journalists' are drawn from the same ranks of exclusively educated/indoctrinated social and political neo-liberals who have a symbiotic relationship — rather neatly described in the case of Campbell and Coulson.

The notion of "independence" or "neutrality" of the mainstream as represented in MST should also be questioned. These forms of media, when coupled with organisations such as Common Purpose, have a vested interest in the maintenance of the status quo in terms of governmentality. The mainstream such as the Guardian or the Financial Times is not as independent as Moore's mythologising would have us believe. As has no doubt been pointed out elsewhere: the news media are the agencies of someone else's power. Media are dependent on government regulation for their existence. Owners of media are partisan participants in society and its institutions, including the government. "Balance" in terms of fairness and objectivity have long been euphemisms that disguise bias in news content. Structure is another: objective journalism can be rejected precisely because of the 'professional standards intended to prevent bias.

Funders

This is what the Trust says on its website:

To preserve our independence, we will seek funding from a wide variety of sources, none of which will be allowed to contribute more than 20% of the total running costs.

We are very grateful for the continuing support of the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, and the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust.

We have also received funding from the Scott Trust, Christopher Stone, Sir David Bell, Sir Cyril Chantler, Amelia Fawcett, Sir Robert Worcester, Albert Scardino, Dennis Stevenson, the Samuel Storey Charitable Trust and Willie Nagel.

We receive support in kind (office space and IT support) from Common Purpose.

From its inception it can be seen as a Common Purpose spin-off, encouraged by Stevenson. If you should chose to offer your money to this group of millionaires you will do it through the Charities Aid Foundation — another part of the clique.

Activities?

What do they intend to actually do? The Media Standards Trust insists it “doesn’t” (should that not be rendered as does not) “just want to talk about news standards” (so obviously they do most of the time) they ‘want to take action.’ After lengthy negotiations what have these leaders have come up with?

“We have so far come up with four ideas”

These are: (1) “a proposal for a website containing basic information about journalists in the UK” (2) “an annual award” (3) “web based support and advice for journalists” and (4) “basic ‘how-to’ advice about citizen journalism.” As of June 1 2007 these ideas have elicited “0 Comments” in the web page.

The Trust argues that “standards are being challenged by the enormous, revolutionary changes in the way in which news and information are produced, funded, packaged, delivered and consumed.” And there is a conservatism about their reaction which bemoans that “standards are under threat as never before;” but yet a flaccid liberalism which simply reproduces much of the same dross (links to The Sun). They say “We will work on behalf of the public and the public interest to find ways to preserve and foster high standards” but the public wouldn’t fund this, and the tone is one of remote insiders.

Why, if the MST really want to represent the people are they swallowing up so much funds? They are already funded by multi-millionaires (most of them are wealthy individuals) so why should we believe that their funders, such as political lobbyist, Lord Stevenson, who [has gone on record](#) as eagerly trying to dissuade ordinary people from the political process, now funds an small elite all-too-busy group to supposedly do the opposite — where can we read some clear honest analysis of what Common Purpose are up to in Pearson’s office? This group may have noticed that the times they are a-changin’ but unlike Dylan they seem to crave the past, this is a profoundly conservative lament that the old world is rapidly changing and, for many, hopefully, along with it the power of elites. To argue that just about everyone else is to blame for adverse conditions in the media — except for those in charge of it — and that only they can play with web sites and blogs and produce high standards is as incongruous as their habit of swallow up charitable funds they do not legitimately require in comparison to many other groups. All is not as it seems to them.

What the changes could do is turn upside down the old relationship

between the brokers of information and their audiences. But Rupert Murdoch in 2006 noted how “[power is moving away from the old elite](#)” towards the consumers and, having bought one of the most successful social networking websites, MySpace, pledged to put it at the heart of his operations. What is odd about the MST line-up is that it does not contain anyone with any real experience of the new technologies.

Further Reading

Streisand B. and Newman R. J. (2005) [The New Media Elites](#). This states:

The shifting tectonic plates have left executives of the old media—who a few decades ago controlled the news agenda from offices just blocks apart in midtown Manhattan—playing catch-up at a time when their stock values pale in comparison with those of the new kids on the block. “When the bubble burst and the stock prices on all these new media companies tanked, [they] breathed a collective sigh of relief that they could go back to normal,” says Esther Dyson, editor at CNET Networks, which publishes Release 1.0. “But they were totally mistaken, and now they’re finally waking up to what they’re losing.”

Osborne G. (2007) [Politics and Media in the Internet Age](#). George Osborne MP quotes as many references to new media as possible.

Notes

1. Government’s consultation paper ‘[Constitutional reform: reform of the office of Lord Chancellor](#)’ See the Background Information section for the PDF. Phariseism, Sadduceeism, though distinguished by differences, were radically one. The religionists, the philosophers, the politicians, were all members of one great party, which was inveterately hostile to Christ.² On Common Purpose see [Common Purpose Sponsors](#).³ Moore, M. (2006) [In news we trust](#), *British Journalism Review*, 17; 45. This is a somewhat quizzical piece that contextualises the Trust’s origins as to “ensure trust in news is nurtured, no matter how that news is delivered” (p.45). There is no real critique of the “old media elites” (and surely Pearson, the trusts benefactor, come into the frame here) other than they are clinging to power by various stunts and ruses (which might include funding a trust?); no real critique of PR’s influence other than it is ‘helpfully put together’ (p.47), similarly the ‘manufactured news’ they seek to oppose is “not always a bad thing” under the supposition that medical news is neutral (Botox?). With a board as absurdly religious as the Trust’s, self censorship is blamed on (tacitly of course) Muslims (ignoring the shameless widespread tactics of the Israeli state’s propaganda networks). We also have the pot calling the kettle black with his biased comparison of Nick

Cohen and Michael Moore. The essay fails to acknowledge certain key aspects here. If people are really are enabling themselves with new technologies — why do we need this coffin full of old timers? What are the chances of hearing anything new from people who have extensively had their say, control and clogg up the media and are mostly too busy to really devote any time to investigation. This suggests that the use of such 'big names' is a mere ploy (not the first time for Middleton) to swallow up funding that could have gone to more deserving organisations (which Moore cites) which are more genuinely orientated towards the public interest. This group is part of an elite — “sought or unsought influence” is suggestive of how power elites work according to C. Wright Mills, whose work is also pertinent because it conveys the key understanding that exploitation and elitism are intimately related.⁴ New chair appointed to SQA [Scottish Executive News Releases](#), 26/08/2004.