

Dear Sirs,

The Liberal leader Clement Davies said during the war “The Press is the Raw Material of Democracy”. In other words the ordinary voter or citizen cannot hold a reasonable view or any view at all unless he is reliably informed. The key point here is that the information made available by the media needs to be as reliable as possible, that publishers should aim for balance and objectivity at all times. That is the ideal and we are a long way away from it..

We all know what happens when the state controls all the media. The same thing happens when large portions of the media are controlled by a small number of powerful individuals. They are powerful and exercise undue power because of their control of the press.

This means our democracy is profoundly compromised by the views of a handful of media magnates, who direct their outlets to promote news supportive of their own interests or those of their friends and allies. This can be done by telling wilful lies or just as effectively by being selective or biased in what they report. The issues they espouse can range from foreign affairs to their personal financial interests. Some media sources are clearly aiming to do a good job but, at the other end of the spectrum, others have an immensely harmful influence on our national life. Their influence is largely pernicious and needs to be regulated in a way it is not at present. Since it is apparent that voluntary regulation is having little real effect, I hope you will recommend to Parliament that they adopt Leveson’s alternative.

Yours sincerely,

Ray Wainwright