

Dear PRP,

Re: Public Consultation on Press Regulation, 'the current situation'.

I would endorse the reminder from Hacked Off as to Lord Justice Leveson's considered recommendation, in lack of credible press co-operation, essentially for an interim statutory nudge from Parliament towards greater protection of plural freedom and personal conscience amongst journalists and editors and press-owners.

Whether or not there is to be a Leveson Part-2, in the service of criminal or civil law or 'truth and reconciliation', our priority must be credible arrangements for the future, the possibility of victim-complaint and the possibility of proportionate discipline in proven offence. Perhaps there is a political trade-off here to be essayed.

The Government should not need our reminders, but none should be allowed to forget that the Leveson Inquiry was established, with Parliamentary approval, to assess and to advise remedy - new measures being widely envisaged necessary - to address shortcomings perceived as severe and recurrent in the culture, practices and ethics of the press.

Regard was to be had for the balance of fault between failures of design in the regulatory-framework and failures of enforcement for its relevant policies, and it was perhaps merely unfortunate that focus was directed to be narrow, on failings peculiar to the press, its associates and its regulation, rather than on corrupting pressures that might bear more generally in society, not just on those who happen to be members of the press, or associates in policing and politics.

Due regard was also expected for balance - in the public interest - between measures of regulation and desires of guarantee for press freedom, and it is more than unfortunate that this expectation also was compromised, fatally, by failure at the very start - by Parliament and Lord Justice Leveson and professional-philosopher witnesses - to provide a suitably-robust coherent definition of the public interest.

The outcome was thus of valiant effort to achieve the impossible, recommendations - though workable with infinite goodwill - stymied by the need of improbable success, in unequal struggle, on the part of politicians and other press-dependents, against the prevalent ideological will amongst press-proprietors, in unholy alliance with those citing, not implausibly, their 'democratic fears' of corruption, perhaps 'made only worse' by its reach within any regulator independent of 'the devils we know'.

So compromised now are all parties, including Lord Justice Leveson and sadly even those brave souls who spoke-up against injustice and who - with such as HACKED-OFF and IMPRESS - have given their all toward the establishment of independent oversight (for hopefully principled self-regulation), none having dared to identify conflict of material interest as the driver of our corruption on-going, we must look now to the courage of the Press Regulation Panel, for truth at last to be spoken, not just unto power but vitally to us all.

Mere speech, even with courage, and directly to power, might not make the world right, but to have it known by all - with ears to hear - that the public interest is served only when all in the public are free, eventually will enable even the highest 'quislings for Money' to register, and heed, the warnings and demands and opportunity costs from denial of freedom (with universal security) to express our best selves, to follow conscience, no longer to be troubled or compelled by corrupting possibilities of personal income-advantage.

Perhaps the PRP will find overwhelming need to take refuge from duty to the public interest, interpreting its task and acting only as thought expected by those in-charge (and higher), those whose business it is 'to matter', not to disturb those the rest of us as we sleep-walk to our collective doom (casualties regretted, but soon forgotten; wishes for the future the best, but up to the young any change of course).

What need is there, it may be asked, to risk an opinion on democracy, to share observations on costs - past and present and future - from democratic deficit? Surely these matters are already very well understood, at the top and throughout society?

And if not understood except by the clever (all, or most of whom, reluctantly or not, corrupt), why gamble on the awakening of comprehension within a 99% so dull or supine?

A nod and a wink might serve as well to salve conscience, even a half-lifted eyebrow, risking not even a textual subtlety such as could bring reproach, advancement impaired or precluded, for self and family, perhaps old-school and other friends.

What fate can await us, our 'can-do' extending to neglect of shareable Reason and Care?

The universe, do we think, might not notice?

Excusing us the test of fitness?

Unable to claim real equal-partner democracy, even for ourselves, and unable to give example to the world, what chance peace and prosperity, in one-world even of our survival?

Ever more rigid tectonic plates - oligarchies, kleptocracies, theocracies, sham democratic or not - are suffering each other to bear ever greater impacts, inviting eco-catastrophe and social catastrophe and morel implosion, our end not with a bang or a whimper but with cries of terror and horror.

Will the press give us fair warning?

And responsible coverage?

Your call.

Sincerely.

Robert Reynolds