



From the Chairman

Sir Louis Blom-Cooper QC
1 Southgate Road
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29 November 2007

Dear Louis,

Thank you for sending me a copy of your Harry Street lecture.

It is a text full of interest. This does not stop me from disagreeing fundamentally with some of its judgements.

Where the Press Complaints Commission is concerned, you are well behind the times. We are today far more than a "body dedicated exclusively to adjudicating on individual complaints" as a cursory examination of our recent history would underline. We are, to use that ghastly word, "pro-active" across the board, as our investigations, guidances and "desist" notices show. As to "lacking public confidence", this year will see record numbers of people using our services and not just to complain. That is a vote of confidence, not the contrary, as recent Mori-Ipsos polling has also shown. It is also why we have extended our competence to on-line content.

As to your Royal Commission on Free Speech, I cannot think of anything worse. It would be yet another quango. Who would define the "performance indicators" and "workable standards"? I fear that your prescription, far from enhancing freedom of expression, would place it within a strait-jacket of the Great and Good, backed up by the power of the State. In my book, that is incompatible with a properly functioning democracy.

*Yours ever,
Christopher*

Sir Christopher Meyer

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