



IFJ
IFIP

MAKING NEWS FOR DEMOCRACY

Decent Work and Quality Journalism



BACKGROUND PAPERS

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Making Journalism Safe and Battling Impunity

In recent years the numbers of media staff killed, either in conflict zones or in areas of low intensity civil war have reached record levels. Last year was the worst, with 155 deaths. IFJ figures show that more than 1,500 media employees have been killed in the exercise of their work since 1990.

Many of these media victims died in targeted assassination, but in only a handful of cases has there been a successful judicial process of inquiry, prosecution and conviction. This crisis has prompted the IFJ to launch a major global effort to counter the growth of a culture of impunity in the killing of journalists.

Impunity occurs when there is the absence of political will to back the investigations into the killing of journalists; when there no adequate legal framework; when judges are weak or corrupt; when the police or investigating authorities are incompetent; when there are meagre resources assigned to those responsible for providing security and enforcing the law; and when official negligence and corruption is rife.

Much of the rising violence against media is due to the increasing capacity of journalists through satellite and other technology to get their messages and coverage of conflict in particular rapidly onto the international airwaves. As media have become more powerful, so the pressure on working journalists and other staff has increased.

Working with the International News Safety Institute (INSI), which launched in 2003, the IFJ has joined hands with leading media organisations—the BBC, Reuters, CNN and major regional newspaper groups among them—to push health and safety to the top of the industry agenda. Early in 2007, INSI launched a report of a global inquiry into media killings based upon a detailed analysis of IFJ figures recorded over the past ten years.¹

This report contains a number of important recommendations—not least being the need for journalists' unions and employers to work together to build a culture of safety in media.

This exercise in global social dialogue has had a practical dimension, with a philosophy based upon three key principles:

- **Provision of proactive and urgent support to journalists and media staff in conflict areas**, through rapid safety training interventions to improve the working conditions of local staff. This is fast becoming an essential process to promote and strengthen press freedom and professional journalism. The aim must be to allow the population in endangered areas their right to be informed and to exercise their right to express themselves freely—even in times of crisis.
- **Introducing safety issues into the mainstream of international media development strategies**. The IFJ and others have long argued that actions

¹ *Killing the Messenger*, INSI, March 2007 (www.newssafety.org)

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to improve quality in media, to strengthen professionalism in journalism, and to improve the standing of media in society requires support for media development, but that is only possible and sustainable if there is the creation of a safe and secure environment for the exercise of journalism.

- **Strengthening media professionalism** in societies where social dislocation, conflict or political transition undermine the roots of democracy. A reliable system is essential to a society making well-informed decisions. In a time of political transition and/or conflict, the pressures upon media and journalists become more intense. That is the time when traditional standards of professionalism require practical reinforcement and support.

Journalism safety work has dramatically increased in the past three years with IFJ safety offices at work in Algeria, Palestine, Colombia and the Philippines.

As practical actions have increased so has work to combat impunity, which has reached such levels that in some regions of the world there is a routine expectation of threats and violence whenever journalists try to do their job. In Latin America, for instance, as Anthony Lewis, the *New York Times* columnist, pointed out in the book *Impunity No More*, “in many countries when a person decides to become a journalist he or she knows they are under a sentence of death.”

In the last 14 years almost 300 journalists have been murdered in Latin America—that is, more than 20 each year. This cruel reality is currently most palpable in Colombia, where journalists find themselves caught in the crossfire between guerrillas, paramilitary forces and the Army. It is also a major concern in Mexico, Brazil, and Peru.

It is very rare for the guilty to be punished. Many governments will spend more time in excusing their incompetence than in conducting investigations. To justify foot-dragging, it is quite common for a smear campaign to be launched against the victim.

In great swathes of the world, across many countries, murder is a relatively cheap, safe and easy way to censor the press. A probing reporter is silenced and friends and colleagues terrorised. And it will only get worse as long as a culture of impunity protects the guilty. Failure by governments to punish the killers can only encourage others.

The recent global report by INSI, based on an analysis of IFJ figures reported in the last 10 years, reveals that in 94 per cent of cases those who murdered journalists did so with impunity. There is little sign of this appalling situation improving, despite appeals from the United Nations, UNESCO and press freedom groups.

In Iraq, which has been the bloodiest killing ground for journalists in modern history, more than 190 journalists have died. Although courts in Spain and Britain have called for the arrest of United States troops alleged to be responsible for some of these deaths and although the Iraqi authorities have promised to clamp down on extremists—not one person has been held to account for a single death. Too often governments display a heartless and cruel indifference to the suffering endured by the victims and their families. There tends to be a few meaningless words of regret, a cursory inquiry and a shrug of indifference.”

There is one common thread that links the deaths of journalists in countries as diverse as Bangladesh, Belarus, Russia, Haiti, The Gambia, Mexico, Iraq,



Philippines, the Ukraine and many others and that is the shameful failure of government and the authorities to properly investigate and prosecute the killers.

Action Point: United Nations

International action to force governments to hunt down those responsible for killing of journalists will only happen if the issue is taken up by the United Nations and now, for the first time, that looks a possibility. On 23 December 2006 the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted a draft resolution, originally drafted by the IFJ, which puts impunity firmly on the agenda of the international community.

The proposal not only demands that governments start taking violence against media staff seriously, it also gives the UN Secretary General authority—for the first time—to make an annual report on governments that are renegeing on their responsibilities.

The Security Council was a considerable hurdle to jump. One of the permanent members (China) is no friend of independent journalism and another (the United States) is allergic to the International Criminal Court and is itself being called to account over impunity for the actions of its soldiers in Iraq. A third, Russia, is uncomfortable in the spotlight over unexplained killings of Russian journalists, not least the shocking murder of Anna Politkovskaya in October 2006.

Thanks to the commitment of the government of Greece (encouraged by the IFJ affiliates in Athens) who put the IFJ-sponsored resolution on the table, the support of governments in France, the United Kingdom, Denmark and Slovakia helped overcome the opposition of countries like the United States, China and Russia—all of them with a dubious record on investigating killings of journalists.

The proposal was adopted after two years of campaigning by the IFJ. The resolution gives momentum to the campaign to create a culture of safety in journalism and will mean that, for the first time, the UN Secretary General has a mandate to take action over governments in the spotlight of a number of on-going campaigns mounted by the IFJ.

Action Point: Iraq

In Iraq, for instance, the IFJ Executive Committee nominated April 8th, the anniversary of the attack by United States forces on Baghdad's Palestine Hotel, and the Baghdad offices of *Al-Jazeera*, as an annual day of protest at impunity over attacks on journalists and media staff in Iraq and around the world.

The United States itself stands accused of failing to meet its obligations to deliver justice and fair treatment to the victims of violence by its own soldiers. The attack on the Palestine Hotel led to the deaths of two journalists, Jose Cuoso of *Telecinco* in Spain, and Taras Protsyuk, a Ukrainian cameraman working for *Reuters*. On the same morning, United States forces attacked the offices of *Al-Jazeera* in Baghdad, killing the reporter Tareq Ayyoub.

Neither of these attacks has been independently investigated nor have the deaths been properly explained to the satisfaction of the victims' families, their friends and their colleagues. Altogether there are some 19 cases of journalists and media staff who have died since March 2003 at the hands of US soldiers.

The IFJ launched special support for Iraqi journalists with an appeal on June 15th—national Journalism Day in Iraq—for humanitarian aid to the Iraqi victims, who make up more than 130 of the 163 victims recorded by the IFJ up to the end of 2006. More than 30,000 Euro was collected for Iraqi colleagues.

Action Points: Russia and Ukraine

Outside the war zones, the campaign against impunity is being waged on the borders of Europe. On 12 December 2006 the IFJ organised in London a crisis meeting of representatives from all the world's major press freedom groups and media employers, plus journalists' unions from Russia, Germany, France, Italy, UK, Netherlands, Sweden, Finland and Denmark who agreed to launch an International Commission of Inquiry into the killings of journalists in Russia.

The action followed the assassination of investigative journalist Anna Politkovskaya in Moscow on October 7. This inquiry will be professionally driven and will be carried out in Russia by Russian journalists and experts who will report on their findings and recommendations to the International Commission.

The investigation will carry out a review of the killings of more than 200 journalists in Russia since 1993, including unexplained disappearances, which have caused concern to the international community of press freedom defenders, journalists and media organisations.²

There will be a specific and detailed examination of four sample cases during this period which expose failures, whether related to incompetence or negligence on the part of investigators and judicial authorities or caused by external interference, which have contributed to the failure to find and successfully prosecute those responsible for the killings of journalists or those who authorized such killings.

The members of the International Commission believe that the death of Politkovskaya has brought to a head growing international concern over the crisis of impunity in Russia that requires co-ordinated international action by media, journalists' groups and press freedom defenders.

There are also plans to publish a tribute book of the work of contemporary Russian journalists reflecting the independent spirit of Anna Politkovskaya which will be launched at the time of the conference in Moscow in May 2007.

² There have been more than 200 deaths of media staff in the period under examination. Many of these have been explained satisfactorily, but a significant number of killings and targeted assassinations have not been solved and those responsible have not been brought to justice.

At the same time, the IFJ is continuing its five-year campaign with other groups into the unsolved murder of investigative Gyorgy Gongadze in Ukraine. Gongadze was mutilated in a horrific killing though to have been instigated at the highest levels of government. The IFJ is still pressing for justice in this case.

Action Points: Colombia, Palestine and Philippines

The crisis of safety in certain critical areas has led the IFJ to strengthen its work in regions where the number of killings of journalists have been steadily increasing. The long-running conflicts in Palestine and Colombia have made it imperative that local journalists receive support and solidarity and the IFJ has established safety centres in both regions. Training has been organised and the IFJ is putting special efforts into creating strong and effective trade union representation for journalists.

At the same time the opening of an IFJ safety office in the Philippines for the NUJ Philippines with the support of the Norwegian Journalists' Union, has reflected concern over the rising death toll among journalists in a country that is second only to Iraq in the numbers of journalists' victims recorded over the past two years. Many of these deaths are a result of a lawless and unregulated culture of broadcasting in the radio sector where media people have become victims as political rivals try to settle scores using the airwaves, but the crisis of impunity—the failure to investigate, find killers and bring them justice—remains a primary concern.

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While politicians in most democracies insist they are committed to freedom of the press, journalists in all parts of the world are under pressure from governments and politicians seeking to muzzle press freedom in the name of a so-called “war on terror.”

Ethical Journalism to Combat Intolerance

These are difficult and challenging times for journalists and their unions. In addition to coverage of increasingly complex wars, civil conflicts, terrorism, foreign relations and economic developments, reporters and editors are faced with the daunting task of writing and commenting on social changes taking place across the globe.

Keeping track of the rapid transformation of once mainly homogenous societies into vibrant and colourful multi-ethnic and multi-religious communities is difficult—but also fascinating. A shifting social and cultural landscape often results in friction and strain as communities from different cultures and traditions adjust to living together. There is an increasingly diverse worldwide mix of people, races and faiths which has triggered a new political, economic and cultural dynamism across the globe.

But as societies change, intolerance is on the rise, with racism and xenophobia re-emerging as powerful perils and anti-foreigner political parties gaining in popularity. In Europe, for example, attacks on non-white minority groups are depressingly routine in many countries, leading to the growth of extremism among minority communities. The IFJ and its unions are closely involved in following the media's role in coping with these changes.

A range of recent controversies spotlight these trends. In particular was the publication in 2006 of cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed, racist attacks and violence in the streets of France and Britain, anger over the killing of film-maker Theo Van Gogh in the Netherlands and growing anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiment in many countries, compounded by opposition to future Turkish membership of the European Union.

In addition, while politicians in most democracies insist they are committed to freedom of the press, journalists in all parts of the world are under pressure from governments and politicians seeking to muzzle press freedom in the name of a so-called “war on terror.” The IFJ has published two reports on how this security agenda has been used to chip away at civil liberties and put journalism under pressure in more than 40 countries in recent years.

The anti-terror campaign has in fact become a useful smokescreen for many governments seeking to crack down on dissident groups and journalists who they accuse of voicing or publishing extremist views or representing terrorist organisations.

At the same time, extremists and fanatics in many countries are seeking to silence moderate opinion by attacking and issuing death threats against reporters. Such violence is especially rampant in developing nations—particularly Islamic countries—caught between the conflicting values of modernity and conservatism. In most Asian and Middle East states, the war for who speaks in the name of Islam—the moderates or the radicals—is a daily occurrence, often fought on the streets.

The challenges to journalistic liberty are being faced with even more intensity by reporters in the Arab and Muslim world where media is under even greater pressure from governments and extremist groups. The publication of the caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed in some Arab and Asian papers, for instance, led to the arrest of the papers' editors. Some were prosecuted, fined and, in a few cases, sent to jail.

This process has added to existing tensions and generated a new mood of intolerance in many countries where democratic pluralism has not fully matured. At the same time, as economic forces drive millions across borders in search of decent work and prosperity, social realities reveal an atmosphere of increasing uncertainty about the value of multiculturalism and tolerance.

The role of media—to reflect the opinions of all and to provide the raw material of information for societies made up of a mosaic of languages, religion and cultures with different historical perspectives—has never been more difficult, or dangerous.

The killing in January 2007 of Hrant Dink, an outspoken Turkish-Armenian journalist, is a sad example of a prevailing culture of intolerance in Turkey and many other parts of the world where reporters are silenced for challenging established opinions.

It is not all bad news, though. Increasingly, many in Europe and elsewhere continue to view cultural and ethnic diversity as a source of celebration and pride as well as an important economic resource. Previously indifferent governments are gradually paying attention to promoting minority rights, fighting discrimination and combating prejudice.

In Europe, for example, there is talk of affirmative action to help young North Africans find employment and the region's once-shy minority groups are increasingly self-confident and assertive as they emerge from years of self-imposed silence and exclusion to take their rightful place in society.

Elsewhere, including in Islamic countries, once-silent civil society groups are also making their voices heard with confidence. Demands for reform, access to education and the rights of minorities and women are on the rise in many nations. Under pressure to change, governments are gradually opening up political systems, introducing democracy and recognizing the legitimate rights of women and minority groups.

In the face of these developments the IFJ has begun to promote dialogues in defence of ethical and quality journalism. With the Federation of Arab Journalists, the IFJ is encouraging a debate about contrasting approaches to free expression between journalists' unions from different cultural traditions. With media organisations and international organisations, the IFJ is seeking to develop a unified industry voice to counter intrusive actions by governments and others designed to interfere in the work of journalists.

This has not proved easy given that most newspapers, broadcasters and other media outlets, however, have failed to take up the challenge of portraying the global social revolution. Instead of provoking debate by raising awareness, helping fight prejudice and engendering inter-community understanding, a large percentage of the mainstream media has helped to stoke the fires of intolerance and racism.

Many media outlets remain wedded to old-fashioned stereotypes of "immigrants and foreigners" who are often viewed as exotic outsiders who bring alien ideas and customs into host communities. This prejudice runs counter to the positive evidence, in Europe, for instance, that more, not less, migration of people from neighbouring countries is needed in order to make up for labour shortages and

maintain standards of living in a region where populations are ageing and the birth rate is static.

The problem is that too few journalists try to reflect the positive aspects of a changing racial, ethnic and cultural landscape. Many media, unfortunately, have taken the easy but grimmer route of promoting, rather than countering, bias and prejudice. As a result, a diet of inaccurate, inflammatory and biased articles—giving prominence to those who engage in hate speech and populist, anti-foreigner rhetoric—is exacerbating racism and bolstering intolerance.

In Europe, media—including broadcasters and Internet-based information outlets—have been especially unable or unwilling to provide a true image of Europe's 20 million strong Muslim minority. But alarmist and almost-hysterical coverage of minorities is not exclusive to Europe, however. Papers across the globe are guilty of providing a simplistic, one-sided view of “the other.”

In responding to these challenges, the IFJ and its unions have been united in dismissing curbs on press freedoms and remain adamant that there must be no new rules, codes or regulations. Politicians and governments must not meddle in media affairs.

Nevertheless, in a world racked by conflicts—both inside societies and between countries—the need for informed and professional journalism has never been greater. Writing about more complex, diverse societies requires sensitive, careful handling. Care must be taken to avoid incitement to hatred and a perpetuation of bias.

Good journalistic conduct requires, for instance, that government policies are challenged and politicians taken to task when they propagate intolerance, xenophobia and racist views. Widespread negative assumptions about immigrants need to be questioned and tested. Both sides of the story have to be reflected. The background to race riots for instance—feelings of frustration engendered by rising unemployment and racist recruitment policies of some employers—must be explained. The actions of one extremist or an entire group should not lead to the demonisation of entire communities.

Many of these norms were included in the declaration of principles on the conduct of journalists adopted by the IFJ. That declaration states clearly that a *“journalist shall be aware of the danger of discrimination being furthered by the media and shall do the utmost to avoid facilitating such discrimination based on race, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinions and national or social origins.”*

Those principles need to be given more substance and potency in these difficult and fearful times by

- Debating “self-regulation” to ensure it is viewed as another manifestation of sound editorial judgment rather than self-censorship;
- Ways of encouraging journalists to be better informed to avoid manipulation by extremists or unscrupulous politicians;
- Ensuring impartiality and application of core principles of ethical journalism when covering highly-charged issues of crime, immigration, community relations, immigration, religious belief and terrorism at a time of high public anxiety;
- Practical actions to be taken to improve quality media and eliminate prejudice within the industry, including through the recruitment of minorities in the newsroom;

- Discussion of these complex issues with other civil society groups and policy-makers without compromising editorial independence;

In support of these objectives the IFJ has launched a new global campaign to raise awareness and promote dialogue—the **Ethical Journalism Initiative**.

Given the challenges facing journalists in all parts of the world, the time is ripe for this new global campaign bringing together journalists as well as publishers, broadcasters and editors to strengthen press freedom reinforce quality journalism and consolidate editorial independence.

The Ethical Journalism Initiative will strengthen democratic values through dialogue and raise awareness of the role informed journalism plays in creating understanding where there is division, whether defined by language, culture, ethnicity or religious belief.

It will highlight three ethical principles in the practice of good journalism: the respect for truth, editorial independence and the need to minimize harm.

The initiative will focus on promoting a global inter-media dialogue as an essential and valuable element in any strategy to avoid cultural misunderstandings, peace-building and development. (A start has been made in the IFJ's involvement in the Global Inter-Media Dialogue, launched by the governments of Indonesia and Norway in 2006.)

The message of the campaign is that governments must not meddle in journalistic affairs. They can, however, create an enabling environment for media freedom by removing obstacles to press freedom and improving the status of people in journalism.

To ensure success, work will have to centre on identifying the roots of division, potential for conflict and information deficits which contribute to misunderstandings between groups in society.

In addition, the initiative will have to establish structures for dialogue between media representatives, governments and civil society members to overcome these shortcomings.

Most importantly, the focus will be on implementing practical actions to improve the performance of media through improved training, recruitment and newsroom practice.

Dialogue and practical joint initiatives involving journalists from different communities are at the heart of the campaign.

Through partnerships with existing structures the campaign will monitor violations of ethical standards as established by the journalists' codes of conduct, develop a campaign web-site for collecting this information and focus on how to do avoid violations and how to improve the quality of reporting.

The current debate often suffers from lack of insight and rigorous intellectual argument. To raise the level of the debate and to put quality and



thoughtful editorial decisions on the top of the campaign's agenda it is proposed to create on the campaign web site a thinkers' library for journalists.

The initiative is a powerful reminder to journalists that their key task is to provide accurate information, objectively, rapidly and independently to a public seeking to understand the complexities and challenges of today's world.



I am
journalist

MAKING NEWS FOR DEMOCRACY

Organising for Decent Work in Journalism

Journalists' unions in the IFJ are facing historical challenges. Converging technologies, new employment relationships, the merging of public and private information space and a rapidly-expanding global media system mean that media workers and journalists in particular are being forced to rethink their strategies for organising.

- How do we *recruit and organise* the new media labour force, which is increasingly mobile, multi-skilled and forced to operate in precarious working conditions?
- How do we restore some *order* to the broken landscape of industrial relations as hostile employers expand their horizons beyond national borders?
- How can unions *supply the services* journalists need to survive in an increasingly difficult employment market?

These are key questions for journalists' unions and others in the face of globalisation which is changing the face of work and with it the practice of industrial relations.

The hard-faced image of the global media industry—anti-union, cheapskate employment practices, irresponsible exercise of corporate power—is not far from the truth for millions of media workers and the evolution of a new and challenging landscape for industrial relations is urgently needed for journalism.



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Globalisation: how workers are losing out

Nearly 200 million people are unemployed—more than ever before. Half the world's workers live on less than US\$2 a day. In addition more than 400 million new jobs will be required over the next decade to keep pace with the growing labour force, mostly in the developing countries, according to Director-General of the International Labour Organization Juan Somavia.

Addressing the 2006 ILO conference in Geneva, he admitted that globalisation was not delivering enough decent jobs. He said: “We see again and again how the dignity of work has been devalued. Economic optimism for some is matched with profound social pessimism for many. We must put in place policies that replace jobless growth with quality, ‘job-rich’ growth.”

In the wider economy, more than a quarter of global economic activity is controlled by just 200 companies and multinational corporations responsible for more than two thirds of all international flows of trade and investment. In media, around 10 mega-corporations dominate the global information economy.

The corporate agenda is supposed to lead to more jobs and higher living standards, but all the evidence suggests that there is an increasing division between rich and poor, within and among nations, and that globalisation is increasing wealth and power for an elite within society at the expense of working people.³

Unions need to increase the leverage of national unions through new forms of international co-operation that will encourage genuine international solidarity action on organising, and defence of workers rights, particularly global labour standards that protect—the right to join a union, the right to strike and the right to bargain collectively.

International Union Co-operation

Although the economy is increasingly global there is no legal framework for regulating bargaining or social dialogue between unions and employers at global level. Nevertheless, millions of workers are already covered by a range of agreements, declarations, industry coalitions and sectoral initiatives that constitute first, tentative steps towards a new international industrial relations landscape, but none of them are journalists.

The crucial links in creating a global chain of command for workers' rights are the Global Union Federations which unify trade unions by sector globally, thus creating new opportunities to build solidarity. The IFJ is one of the ten industry-based Global Unions that in January 2007 came together to form the International Global Union Council.

A prime concern of this new body is to try to restore balance in relations between employers and employed—whether staff or freelance. There must be checks and balances on those who wield power. There must be a voice for everyone, not just the rich, the privileged and the powerful.

³ Papers from the ITUC and Global Union Federations provide much specific detail on these developments. See www.global-unions.org.



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New Forms of Social Dialogue

Many individual companies and unions are increasingly aware that new ways need to be developed to promote meaningful social dialogue in order to deal with the practical problems of enforcing basic rights of workers, but there is no really effective process in place covering the media sector.

In Europe, the last ten years have seen the consolidation of European Works Councils, a legally-based formal structure for social dialogue between trans-national companies and their workers. These councils, on which both management and workforce representatives sit together, operate according to European Union law and have been promoted by the European trades union movement.

The EFJ in cooperation with its national member unions has played a role in creating European Works Councils at company level with Reuters, Compagnie Luxembourgeoise Television (CLT), the Norwegian company ORKLA and tried, with less success, with the German conglomerate WAZ. These have provided some information, but little meaningful consultation with the workforce.

The IFJ's regional group, the EFJ, takes part in another form of social dialogue—covering broadcasting in Europe—but after four years, this structure has proved all but useless in seriously advancing the process of meaningful transnational relations between employers and journalists' unions.

More value may be attached to the negotiation of Framework Agreements—formal accords between international companies and Global Union Federations—which recognise new social realities in the workplace and which are the next significant steps along the road to a new landscape for international industrial relations. More than 80 such agreements have already been negotiated by Global Union Federations.

The IFJ Executive Committee agreed at its meeting in Brussels in 2006 to promote such agreements. Building on the experience of the EFJ, and other Global Unions, the IFJ intends to identify suitable employers and begin to establish the social dialogue and partnership that can help restore a sense of values and fairness into the employment relationships in newsroom and media houses.

It will be a vital step in helping unions to rebuild confidence in collective action to defend journalists' rights.

The Organising Challenge

That is not easy at a time when union membership is falling. Deregulation of employment law, increased anti-unionism and more “flexible” work are hitting recruitment and have led to some misconceptions about the decline of unionism. One of them is that today young people are “anti-union.”

In fact, in countries where union density is high, often in the public sector, unions have made a successful appeal to many young people. But the public sector employs relatively few young people. This suggests that attitudes about unions have more to do with the workplaces where young people work than attitudes based on age. In journalism, most unions still report that youngsters coming into the profession have less problem about joining—providing the union is available and ready to recruit them.

Our problem is not so much that unions don't appeal to young people, but that our unions are sometimes not well organised in the workplaces where young people are employed. Nevertheless, there is also a failure of unions to communicate effectively about the advantages of union membership.

The first organising challenge, therefore, is to recruit young people and others who are not receiving the union message. Research shows that if you do not join a union when you start work, you are less likely to join in a later job, even in a union workplace. It's best, therefore, to get the union habit when starting work.



Our problems are rooted in the decline of unionised workplaces in media, the increasing number of freelance and casual workers and the failure to organise in many new workplaces, particularly in covering work such as web-design and new media services.

Journalists unions need to work harder in developing new ways of spreading the union message. An EFJ seminar organised in Vilnius in December 2006 revealed vast differences between unions in their approach—some best practice as illustrated by experiences in the UK, Denmark, and Finland may well provide important models that others can follow.

An important factor in helping spread the union message is the growth of the partnership approach to industrial relations. There needs to be high trust industrial relations based on the recognition that employees and their employer have both much in common despite inevitable differences. Resolving these differences through consultation and negotiation can, and should, deliver gains for both sides.

Improving and strengthening workplace relationships do make companies more successful. Unions do not hold companies back. The historic agreement reached at *The Guardian* in the UK, for instance, brought hundreds of online workers into the union collective bargaining fold, and has not impeded the growth of Britain's second largest internet news service (the first is the BBC).

Delivering Services and a New Unionism?

Among the services unions can help deliver in building partnership are the **skills and training** required to help journalists do their work more effectively and professionally. This is already happening in many places and is perhaps the biggest and least recognised development in modern trade unionism. In Europe, many unions are either providing skills training for their members or are involved in delivering training in partnership with employers and education providers of all sorts. Union projects have opened up new learning opportunities at every level of journalism.

Unions also need to refocus on the importance of **gender rights**. The journalism schools of the world are at bursting point with thousands of people—most of them young women. IFJ unions need to bring gender rights into the heart of the bargaining and organising process. Many unions over the past 20 years are guilty of complacency in taking up the gender challenge. It should be self evident that unless unions put women's rights at work (and in the union) back on the agenda a growing section of the new media workforce will see little point in joining the union.

Unions still retain a clear sense of purpose. They remain ready to take on bad employers, fight exploitation and press for social justice. But we do this in a real world where we know our members want, and need, to work for successful organisations in a prosperous and productive economy. A fresh approach to organising needs to look not just at marketing the values of unionism, but to look at radical changes needed to make unions relevant to groups who hesitate to join—migrants, young people, casual and atypical workers.

Providing services that matter is the key to organising and success. Sometimes that may mean not putting the focus on traditional union activities—such as recognition and collective bargaining.

In particular, there is an urgent need for the trade union movement to take new directions in its vision of organising the millions of freelance workers who increasingly form the core of the media labour force.

In the United States a new organisation, The Freelancers Union, was created in 2003 to do just that. It brings together tens of thousands of freelancers — journalists, web designers, video editors, writers, dancers and graphic artists — into a group that does not bargain with employers, but which provides low-cost welfare benefits denied by new employment relations.



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But this is not a traditional union with a capacity to negotiate and bargain on wages and conditions. Instead it provides effective networking and self-help. It is a forceful advocacy group for freelancers and independent contractors, the most mobile members of an increasingly mobile workforce in media. It is not unionism as we know it, but it does bring people together to solve problems, particularly when there is a lack of job protection and a social safety net.

In just three years, 40,000 freelancers from the New York area have signed up. And there are plans to expand the organisation across America in pursuit of hundreds of thousands of other workers among the 20 million freelancers and independent contractors in the United States who will be ready to join.

Membership in the Freelancers Union is free—it's the sale of services and benefits that provides a modest commission by which the union finances its work. It is a model that suits current economic conditions and may give important indicators about how journalists' unions can reshape their approach to become more attractive to freelancers and still fight for bargaining rights and trade union values.

Traditional unions can carry out similar advocacy work to get changes in labour law and regulation to end the tyranny of freelance workers being considered as independent contractors, which in many countries means they are excluded from social benefits or are denied the right to organise and to determine minimum fees. Trade unions can take steps to provide their members, particularly young people, women and freelance journalists, with an efficient and effective service.

Many IFJ unions are already strengthening their communications work, to counter the pervasive and intimidating force of employer power. They are making themselves attractive and relevant to the expanding media workforce through effective campaigning, whether over employment rights, poverty wages, workplace discrimination or professional standards. They are sending out a simple, but essential message—unions are alive and well and the world of journalism needs them more than ever.

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