

The Brexit campaign represents a historic low point for British journalism in several respects. The national newspapers spoke almost with one voice and placed untested assertion and opinion ahead of fact to a degree rarely if ever seen before, while the broadcast media, showing a greater determination to reflect opinion than to seek truth, failed to offer a corrective. To characterise this as evidence of the emergence of a post-truth culture, however, is wrong. A chain of weaknesses in the journalistic culture is being exploited, to powerful effect – and there is no better proof of the weakness than the failure of journalism, after the event, to question itself about its role.

Brian Cathcart is professor of journalism at Kingston University London and a founder and former director of *Hacked Off*, the campaign for a better press. He was a journalist at Reuters, the *New Statesman* and the *Independent* papers (where he became deputy editor of the *Independent on Sunday*) and as a freelance he has investigated, among others, the cases of Stephen Lawrence, Barry George (wrongly convicted of murdering Jill Dando) and the deaths of young recruits at Deepcut Barracks. He served as specialist adviser to the House of Commons Select Committee on the Media when it investigated phone hacking in 2008-10, and his latest book is *'The News From Waterloo: the race to tell Britain of Wellington's victory'*.