

# HEADLINES THAT LIE

Headlines in newspapers have long been used by unscrupulous journalists or editors to mislead the unwary reader. Most readers assume that a headline correctly reflects the contents of the article. How, upon reading the article the reader will learn to his shock that the contents say one thing while the headline indicate something different. A recent example will illustrate the point we are making. *The Weekly Mail* of 25 June 1990 contained an article the headline of which read:

## "IRAN BLAMES AMERICA FOR THE QUAKE"

The average reader who is fed with some of the extreme positions held by Iran, upon glancing at the headline, would say: "It's those crazy Iranians again. How can they possibly blame America for the earthquake which, after all is a natural phenomenon." The reader will pass on and in days to come will tell others about those "crazy Iranians". But if the reader pauses and reads the article in full, he will learn that the Iranians blame the Americans *not* for the quake but: "... **partly for the death of tens of thousands of people**" in the earthquake. The accusations against America is that it plundered the wealth of Iran. Part of that wealth, say the Iranians, could have been used to construct anti-seismic buildings. Perhaps *The Weekly Mail* would care to explain the misleading headline.

The Iranian newspaper *Jomhuri Islam* claims that people under the rubble chant "death to America" and pray to God to cut off the hands of America (punishment for thieves).

We cannot vouch for the accuracy of the last bit, but we certainly admire the uncompromising anti-imperialist sentiment expressed.

