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## **Fighting off line editors I**

Supporting what Joyce Marlow writes in her article *Editors* I would say: fight line editing strenuously. The very name betrays it.

My published books comprise seven non-fiction and one (the latest) fiction. Line editing was attempted with only two of them, but I successfully fought it off. Now I insist on a clause in the publishing contract which excludes it.

The first publishers who expressed interest in my novel *Victorian Railway Days* (published March 1989) insisted that the typescript would need to be line edited. They demonstrated what this would entail by returning the first three pages with substantial alterations in pencil. The accompanying comments indicated that the 'line editor' was attempting to give the book a present-day style, having failed to grasp that it is presented as if written by a rustic, self-educated character of the mid-Victorian period.

With an earlier non-fiction book, published by Longman, the 'line editor' sent me copious emendations of the Introduction although she had not read one word of the text it introduced.