

FREE PRESS

CAMPAIGN FOR PRESS & BROADCASTING FREEDOM, incorporating the Campaign Against Racism in the Media.

National Council 1986-87

Chair — Loretta Loach
Vice-chairs — Mike Power & Lesley Wood
Secretary — Simon Collings
Treasurer — John Beck
Free Press Editor — Mike Jempson
Promotion — Ruthie Borthwick

(A membership secretary and assistant treasurer are still to be appointed).

Other NC members: Alex Addo, Mike Britton, Harold Brookstone, John Gray, Mark Hollingsworth, Ian Jamieson, Cherry Smyth, Mark Wadsworth, Caroline Williamson

Ruthie Borthwick (TGWU) & Cherry Smyth (WFTVN) were co-opted to fill vacancies.

Black Worker

The Campaign has now appointed a black worker to service and develop the work of the Black Group. Initially Perminder Dhillon-Kashyap will be working on a part-time basis for six months.

Perminder has been active in many grass-roots black campaigns. For the past year she has been working for the Asian Women's Resource Centre in Harlesden.

Apart from co-ordinating Black group activities in the campaign against media racism, she will be producing an educational pack on the issue.

Perminder can be contacted at the Campaign Office on 01 437 2795.

North West AGM

The North West CPBF is likely to get another year's grant from Greater Manchester Council, chairperson Doug Russell told the annual meeting.

It was thought that funding would vanish with the GMC but the CPBF could be one of the beneficiaries from money left over.

The grant will mean the Manchester office can be kept open and Nancy Jaeger will continue as full-time worker.

The speaker at the annual meeting was CPBF National Council member Mike Jemp-

son, who lives in Wapping. He spoke about the print unions' dispute with News International and the way it has affected his community.

Mike outlined the history of the dispute and described how police had mounted a massive military-style operation to get the Murdoch papers out. Police horses and riot squads had been brought in from the start and there had been an enormous backlash on the local community with people — including women with children — being unable to enter or leave Wapping unless they presented identification to the police.

The print unions had worked closely with community groups and Tower Hamlets Trades Council. Complaints from local people about the behaviour of some of the pickets were followed up by SOGAT officials who visited over 155 homes to put things right.

Some of the most vicious charges on the pickets by police in riot gear had taken place after the lorries had left the Wapping plant.

The North West CPBF's annual report showed that media training sessions throughout the year, had been very successful. Voluntary groups and local councillors who had taken part in the sessions now understood much more about the media and how they could use it.

A series of public meetings, including a showing of the banned "Real Lives" programme, which attracted 300 people and a very lively discussion, had also been very successful.

A request from the Labour Committee on Ireland to do a public meeting on Ireland and the media brought two hundred people along.

A Right of Reply meeting had not been so well attended but it had been held on one of the worst winter nights. A report in Manchester City Council's publication, "Manchester Magazine", had elicited several inquiries to the office.

The NW Women's Group report on sexism in the Manchester Evening News had prompted editor Michael Unger to write a two-page letter in his paper's defence. The group hopes to turn its attention to one of the national papers next.

Marjorie Hayward said the Liverpool group was also working well. It had two meetings planned, one on new technology, the other on racism.

Ian Fowler, chair of Manchester branch NUJ, said the CPBF had not had a lot of success with journalists, particularly those on the national scene, but Mike Jempson explained there was to be a national recruitment campaign to build up individual membership among media workers.

A new North West CPBF management committee was elected: Doug Russell, chairperson; Kath Grant, secretary; Ian Bradley, treasurer; plus Angela Pugh (Liverpool), Charles Tremayne, Edwina Rowling, Dorothy Byrne, Kerry Marcus. Jane Standley was co-opted as student co-ordinator.

NW CPBF can be contacted at 136 Corn Exchange Building, Hanging Ditch, Manchester M4 3BN. 061-832-6991

CAMPAIGN NEWS 8

PUBLICATIONS

New from the Campaign:

WOMEN IN FOCUS — guidelines for eliminating media sexism. By Julianne Dickey & CPBF London Women's Group £1.50.

RIGHT OF REPLY PACK — the complete practical guide to a central issue for all campaigners £2.95.

WAPPING LIES — 10 min video about the News International dispute. £10 VHS.

Send for these and our new mail order catalogue of books and videos. Cheques payable to CPBF, 9 Poland Street, London W1 3DG.

Send for these and our new mail order catalogue of books and videos. Cheques payable to CPBF, 9 Poland Street, London W1 3DG.

BACK COPIES OF FREE PRESS

A limited number of back copies are available, at 15p each, including all the special Supplements. Order yours though the office, quoting issue numbers and adding 20p for postage & packing.

Screened out

In the wake of the Gays & Broadcasting Report (FP 34) and Channel 4's tentative response, a 2-day conference has been organised by the CPBF for Lesbians and Gay men to discuss the various options for an effective campaign to influence C4.

'Screened Out' will take place on Sat 14 June (9.30-5) and Sun 15 June (10.30-1.30), at South Bank Polytechnic, Borough Road, London SE1.

On the Sunday reports back will be followed contributions from invited speakers about commissioning independent Lesbian & Gay productions, magazine programmes, and policies for ending heterosexism throughout C4's output.

On the Sunay reports back will be followed by strategy and policy making for the campaign.

Food will be available along with a creche. There is wheelchair access (including toilet) and billeting arrangements for participants from outside London. Pre-registration is essential — forms from CPBF office 01 437 2795.

FREE PRESS is edited for the National Council by **MIKE JEMPSON**

Contributions for FP36 should arrive at the Campaign Office, 9 Poland Street, London W1 3DG by July 1, preferably typed with double spacing.

FREE PRESS 30p

JOURNAL OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR PRESS AND BROADCASTING FREEDOM

No. 35

JUNE 1986

MEDIA MANIFESTO

At the first of its new-style meetings, the CPBF National Council set in motion plans to launch a popular Media Manifesto, putting press freedom firmly on the agenda for the coming General Election.

This summer sees the publication by Pluto Press of "Bending Reality", a major study of the issues raised by the Campaign over the last seven years. It rehearses the arguments for more accessible and accountable forms of media ownership, and analyses some of the pernicious effects of existing media bias.

Meanwhile a draft Manifesto listing Campaign priorities for change is to be distributed widely among trades union, special interest and community groups. Campaign members are asked to assist in gathering responses by arranging public meetings, and discussions among friends and local organisations.

The draft Manifesto will be directed more at the consumers than the producers of media output — concentrating on the rights to access, information, fair treatment and redress.

Issues raised by the Pluto book and the Manifesto, especially the legislative implications, will be debated at a Campaign Conference this autumn.

In the run up to the next election all the political parties will be invited to respond to our Media Manifesto and explain their policies on the media.

Today heads for the crunch

OWNING THE MEDIA

TEACHING THE MEDIA

What's the difference?

Murdoch's shock

Wapping plan

SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT 4-page Media Studies SUPPLEMENT INSIDE PLUS 2 page pull-out on media ownership

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Where did you obtain your copy of FREE PRESS?

ILLUSTRATION — CHARLES FRONT



Politics and the media — bias or blindness?

Achilles heels were on display at the "Politics and the Media" day in April, organised by Goldsmiths College, University of London.

BBC Director-General Alasdair Milne got rattled when he was accused of elitism. And "Red Ken" Livingstone relived the horrors of GLC media coverage with good humour, but showed little sympathy for Derek Hatton's similar treatment.



14 PAGE SPECIAL

People's Peacock p.3

Chernobyl p.4

KATH GRANT reports from Manchester on a CPBF symposium

Premature obituary for radical journalism

The Thatcher government's policies of prosecution and suppression have brought a growing timidity in the media, Ray Fitzwalter, editor of World in Action, told a North West CPBF meeting in April.

In the past 30 years, he said, there had never been a greater need for radical, enquiring journalism, than there is today.

About 150 people packed Manchester's Cornerhouse arts centre for the debate, on whether Manchester could still be a centre for radical journalism.

Shelley Rhode of Granada TV chaired the meeting, and among those taking part were Colin Adams, northern editor of the BBC, Harry Whewell, northern editor of the Guardian, and Marion Bowman, a London journalist, who is publicity officer for News on Sunday, the new radical paper to be based in Manchester.

Welcoming the advent of News on Sunday, Ray said only pockets of in-depth reporting and inspired writing now remained in Fleet Street. There had been a dramatic growth in broadcasting but it was a pity Channel 4 could not have been centred in Sheffield, Manchester or

Leeds instead of in the "winebar circuit of WI".

Although he praised BBC programmes such as Brass Tacks and File on 4, both based in Manchester, he spoke about the "degutting of the BBC".

"Real Lives", "Rough Justice", "Checkpoint", "Watchdog" now read like "a roll call of the dead". The one thing they had in common was investigative journalism and unconventional documentary production.

He attacked the government's influence on the BBC Board of Governors and said this showed up whenever a political or journalistic matter of substance arose.

"When the BBC removes and breaks its journalists because an embarrassed Lord Chief Justice wants his revenge, without even waiting for a court transcript to find out the facts; when rising and promising BBC executives are forced to apply, inevitably unsuccessfully, for their own jobs after



World in Action Editor Ray Fitzwalter makes his position clear, beside Marion Bowman of News on Sunday.

venturing measured criticism of institutional mistakes, it is the hallmark of timidity at the top," he said.

Marion Bowman, a former Manchester journalist, said that as the home of the Manchester Guardian, the city had once been a centre for radical print journalism. But, in recent years, this tradition had been kept alive by the alternative press and it was broadcasting which had been more radical.

News on Sunday, she said, would be "a lone voice in a predominantly right wing market". But she felt there was still a taste for radicalism amongst the reading public. When the Sunday Times was edited by Harold Evans it sold 200,000 more copies than under

Murdoch. And the New Statesman had sold more copies under the editorship of Bruce Page, a former Sunday Times Insight Team chief.

Marion pointed out that the only way to ensure the paper's long-term success was to be watertight in the planning. She urged people who had the money and who cared about radical journalism to buy shares in News on Sunday.

Bias cont. from p.1. Alasdair Milne had prepared a long, thoughtful and revealing justification of the BBC's notion of political balance, showing scant regard for the protestations of parliamentarians of left and right slag off the BBC.

Truly professional broadcasters are so acutely conscious of their power that they scrupulously eradicate their own views when making programmes. Bias is only the in the eyes and ears of the audience, apparently.

Challenged by CPBF's Mike Jempson on the BBC's equal opportunities policy, Milne responded with details of new recruitment schemes aimed at improving openings for women and ethnic minorities.

A man from BBC Appointments, planted in the audience, was quick to back him up with facts and figures. 40% of recent intake were women, 10% were black people, and 50% were not Oxbridge graduates. Last year, out of 54 trainees, half were women and eight were black.

Media hopefuls among the Goldsmiths' students took up the issue and the rest of the session was spent in condemnation of the BBC's white, male establishment profile.

Ken Livingstone bravely sat through Goldsmiths' analysis of GLC coverage by the Sun, Daily Mail and other right-wing rags. His response — the best way to present politics is direct to people through the TV set in their living room.

He admitted that the GLC had deliberately gone for mass audiences — through appearances on Wogan or the Jimmy Young Show rather than in depth interviews on Channel 4 News.

Some Derek Hatton supporters then asked Livingstone whether he sympathised with the Liverpool council deputy leader who is constantly pilloried by the press. He did not — and the afternoon session erupted in uproar, the issued of media coverage lost in a political debate.

SHORT SHRIFT FOR PAGE THREE



Clare Short MP

About eighty women turned up at the April meeting of the CPBF Women's Group to hear speakers from the Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre, Clare Short MP and Jean Seaton discuss the issue of rape reporting and media portrayal of women.

The Cambridge women brought along many examples of sensationalist and titillating rape reporting, including some where the victim was easily identifiable.

Despite NUJ guidelines on rape, some journalists persist in implying that the victims are partially to blame, through comment about their looks, clothing or sexual history.

Clare Short described the history of her Bill to outlaw Page 3-type pictures from the press. The idea arose spontaneously as she sat through the debate on the Churchill Bill, when Tory male after Tory male rose to decry the rise of sexual crime, attributing it to sex and violence on television.

Clare deplored their hypocrisy — they were clearly

unwilling to do anything about the question of degrading images of women.

Having mooted the idea, she received so much support from women that she decided to go ahead, and was inundated with letters of support after the appalling reception she was given by Tory males in the House.

Many women mentioned the role that pornography and Page 3-type pictures had played in sexual abuse they had suffered, and she realised the enormous strength of feeling that existed among women from all backgrounds.

Though her Bill failed on its second reading and she failed to get it through as an amendment to the Churchill Bill (in order to show up Tory hypocrisy, and to stimulate more

debate), the amount of support she has received has made her determined to carry on.

Jean Seaton thought Clare's bill had raised important issues and had widened the debate away from hard-core porn, but she had serious doubts about the philosophical and legal problems of securing any kind of feminist censorship.

It could feed into the current moral panic about images, and could easily be used against women — particularly against feminists, since feminism depends on our capacity to be offensive (to the status quo).

The mentality that has created present obscenity laws is the same mentality that creates pornography; we need whole new definitions of offensiveness.

The trouble with pleading intolerable anger to justify censorship is that the moral Right is also "intolerably angry" over such things as the portrayal of homosexuality.

Those present agreed that much more debate about the issue is needed, both on the left and in the women's movement. The Women's Group working party on censorship/legislation is devising a questionnaire to determine attitudes towards these matters; any help would be much appreciated.

We have decided to hold a mixed meeting on rape reporting, since change in the way this is done is so vitally needed.

For more information, please contact Julianne or Janet, at the CPBF Office, 01-437-2795.

Get your letters in before the summer holidays. Typed, with double spacing, if possible please — by July 1st.

Nuclear deviance

Suddenly, as a result of Russia's nuclear power plant accident, the government and media are able to produce a host of expert testimony on the consequences to Europe of this unfortunate event.

On the one hand we are told 'it is the worst yet!' Scandinavia will suffer in the years to come with cancers caused by the radioactive releases... but the UK is, so far, safe.

On the other, Britain's nuclear plants have an "absolutely superb safety record" according to Thatcher.

The Sizewell plant? Jam-packed full of double-checking safety features... no fear of melt-down or blow-up there.

It must be a difficult task condemning the Russians with this most presidential propaganda whilst not seeming to criticise at the same time our own commitments to nuclear fuels.

It also highlights the hypocrisy of our own industry-prepared to condemn the Russian 'secrecy' surrounding this accident (Radio 4, World at One 29/4/86) yet ignoring the recent Black Report scandal and the immediate denials and later retractions following the latest four accidents at Sellafield/Windscale.

Gary Bennett
Higher Brook Meadow,
Sidford,
Somerset.

Join the picket

A non-stop day and night picket of the SA Embassy in Trafalgar Square, organised by the City of London Anti Apartheid Group, commenced on 19th April and is now in its 18th day and night. It will continue until Nelson Mandela is released.

Messages of enthusiastic support from



activists inside South Africa have been received. Yet you'd never know about it if you relied on the British media.

Richard Balfie MEP, recently returned from Southern Africa, said that the Non Stop Picket was welcomed inside the country as a breakthrough in solidarity in this country.

Over a hundred people a day visit the picket, sign the attendance register and stand bearing a placard in the name of a political prisoner in Southern Africa.

The picket masses at 6pm every day and over weekends. One Sunday the London School of Samba performed on the pavement to an audience of hundreds who danced and chanted.

The picket is growing steadily. More and more young people are becoming

involved in the stewarding and organisation of the campaign. Each evening a Paveement University is held at 8pm. City Group Singers perform regularly on the picket, teaching liberation songs and chants to the demonstrators.

However, police activity around the Embassy is increasing, with six arrests, numerous summonses for collecting, and a constant changing of the ground rules to try and demoralise the pickets. We have heard that there is intense pressure from the South African Embassy on the British Foreign Office to have the picket stopped. Despite this and a media embargo, we are determined to remain outside South Africa House and all police action will be contested in the Courts.

Sharon Atkin, prospective candidate for Nottingham East, is a regular visitor to the picket. "What I found inspiring on the picket is that most of the people there are the same age as those who are being detained, beaten and shot in the front line of the struggle in South Africa".

CPBF members are urged to join the picket. Do your bit to oppose apartheid and British collaboration with the apartheid regime.

Norma Kitson
City of London Anti Apartheid Group,
London WC1
Tel. 01 837 6050

FP34 was printed by April 6, but distribution problems beyond the Campaign's control meant that many members did not receive their copy until May. Our apologies for this delay.

A child's true story about the effect of Britain's Racist Immigration Laws

"ZEYNEP"

By Zeynep Hasbudak & Brian Simons

Published by All London Teachers Against Racism & Fascism, Room 216, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1 0AP. Fully illustrated £2.50

Agenda items

From where I stand the CPBF seems heavily weighted on the producer side, whereas it is the media consumer, the citizen voter, who is kept outside — the prime sufferer from the gross bias and distortion of what goes on in the world.

May one of them suggest that the CPBF could gain a lot of additional support from this constituency?

On the Media Manifesto, and in particular the right of reply. As an inveterate reader and writer of letters-to-the-Editor, I think there is an issue here overripe for public attention.

Thousands of readers every week are angered or disappointed at not seeing their letters in print. A newspaper will often even boast of how many hundreds of letters it receives daily, it suggests a serious waste of a democratic abuse that such a small proportion are published.

More particularly, I have noticed worse odds against publication if one criticises the paper's own policy or content. This is of course very wrong. I think the CPBF could find a powerful response from the public if it could convince them that it is tackling this basic, glaring problem effectively.

It might be worth challenging the very principle of absolute editorial control over at least the readers' letters pages. This would be fiercely resisted but there should be polemical mileage in the noise. I should love to see it.

I have sometimes wondered about having a counter-newspaper called 'Not Published', to print dozens of the letters that other Editors have refused. It might sting quite a bit at times.

Oliver Owen
Rochester Gardens
Hove, Sussex

An Ode for Wapping?

NEW FORM FOR SWEARING-IN CONSTABLES

'Dost thou accept the old creed of coercion
In England, as in Ireland, tried and true?
Dost thou regard all freedom
with aversion,
And hate her name?' 'I do.'

'Wilt thou respect, court, venerate the classes,
Whate'er they seek to compass — good or ill?
Wilt thou molest and vilify the masses
In word and deed?' 'I will.'

'Swear'st thou to wield thy truncheon for the Tory;
To smite and curse, and wound, and overbear?
Then seize and persecute with lying story
Some injured wretch?' 'I swear.'

Written by Henry Salt, after the Trafalgar Square riots of 1836

Which British Industry contributes more to GDP
— culture or cars?

Which country has more video recorders per head than any other?

In terms of employment, which is the largest manufacturing
sector in London?

Which organisation is the biggest sponsor of the arts in Britain?

Why are Saatchi & Saatchi so keen on satellite broadcasting?

What have Angela Carter, Aswad, Rankin Ann
and the Other America got in common?

For the answers to these and many other
burning questions about the cultural industries read...

'ALTERED IMAGES'

describing the ways in which GLEB has developed a strategy to
adapt the GLC's innovative arts policies to an industrial policy
— with case studies of key investments in London's
independent sectors of music, video and publishing.

Available from GLEB at £1 each.

'THE STATE OF THE ART OR THE ART OF THE STATE?'

providing a detailed analysis of London's cultural industries
and exploring the GLC's alternative strategies, for creating
new employment opportunities while increasing the choices
available to people in a multi-cultural community.

Available from GLEB at £2 each.

The Greater London Enterprise Board (GLEB) was set up by the GLC to
help to reverse London's industrial decline and its lengthening dole queues.
GLEB's handbooks explain its alternative strategies. A full list of those
currently available and soon forthcoming is included in the order coupon.
All cost £1 each, but no money should be sent at this stage.

We will invoice you on receipt of your order.

Please complete the order coupon, indicating the number of copies required,
and post to GLEB Publications, 63-67 Newington Causeway,
London SE1 6BJ.

I would like to order the following handbooks (at a cost of £1 per copy):

- ☐ **A strategy for co-operation**
Worker co-ops in London
- ☐ **Working together**
Trade unions and worker co-ops
- ☐ **Survival or Liquidation**
A guide for worker co-ops
- ☐ **Organising for equality**
Implementing an equal opportunities policy
- ☐ **Saving jobs... shaping the future**
An introduction to Enterprise Planning
- ☐ **Technology Networks**
Science and technology serving London's needs
- ☐ **Redressing the balance**
Backing black enterprise in London
- ☐ **Enterprising Women**
Working women in London

- ☐ **Printing Matters**
Towards a strategy for the London printing industry
- ☐ **Turning the tables**
Towards a strategy for the London furniture industry
- ☐ **Altered Images**
Towards a strategy for London's cultural industries

Name

Organisation

Address

Available at £2 per copy:

- ☐ **The State of the Art
or the Art of the State**
Strategies for the cultural industries
in London

Greater
London
Enterprise
Board

Campaign conference will ruffle
Peacock's feathers

NO to adverts — YES to public service broadcasting

Everyone can think of reasons why the BBC should be
reorganised. The *'Real Lives'* strike against censorship, the
row over Angie's suicide bid in *'Eastenders'*, the
pro-establishment news coverage — any CPBF member can
probably think of many other examples.

But is the reorganisation
proposed by the Government's
Peacock Committee on
Financing the BBC going to
make matters better, or worse?

That was the £13,000 question
set by the CPBF's Independent
Inquiry into public service
broadcasting. (£13,000 was the
grant to the Inquiry from the
GLC). The short answer is that
there is a lot more to public
service than the BBC, and that
the question cannot be reduced to
an arithmetic calculation of the
costs and benefits of the BBC
licence fee.

Professor Alan Peacock's
Committee has received many
arithmetical and econometric
submissions claiming that British
radio and television would be
improved by privatising the BBC,
or introducing advertising.

It has not considered the wider

By JANET WHYATT

questions of access and
accountability in TV and radio —
or if it has, it has done so in
secret. Whose public service is it
anyway?

Certainly many women's
groups, black communities,
lesbians and gay men, trade
union activists, working class and
unemployed people do not feel
they are getting a fair deal out of
the BBC/IBA system.

Even Peacock's so-called public
conference at Westminster in
November 1985 turned out to be
nothing more than a sounding
board for advertising executives,
versus the 'great and the good' of
the broadcasting elite.

The CPBF and all the
broadcasting trades unions were

The conference takes place
on Saturday 28th June at
Kensington Town Hall,
London W8, and everyone
will have full speaking
rights.

refused speaking rights as were
consumer groups such as Voice of
the Listener. (see FP32).

In contrast the Campaign has
set up a genuinely open public
forum to discuss the future of TV
and radio. It will be a lively
debate, covering not just the
funding (by licence fee or
otherwise) of the BBC, but also
the new technologies of satellite
and cable TV, community radio
and independent video
production.

How should they be financed,
who should control access and
what about improving the
mainstream offerings of ITV and
Independent Radio while we are
at it?

A presentation of the
ownership and control of TV and
radio will set the scene. Then a
session called *'Do They mean Us?'*
will examine how the media
represent (or misrepresent)
regions, nations, gender and
sexuality.

Images of Libya, speakers from
black community groups and the
CPBF's Julianne Dickey, author
of *'Women in Focus'*, will
introduce the debate.

The aim is not to just whinge
about the media, but to propose
positive initiatives for fighting
bias, distortion and
under-representation.

Trades unions are crucial to
this struggle. Already hundreds
of BETA members face job cuts
because of the BBC's pre-Peacock

economies. Many more workers
will lose their jobs if the BBC goes
ahead with full privatisation.

The conference includes a
special workshop on the
relationship between trades
unions and the media, featuring
Rickie Tomlinson (one of the
Shrewsbury Two, now the actor
who plays Bobby Grant in
Channel 4's *'Brookside'*).

BETA's Laura Vincent will
explain the position of
broadcasting workers, and Betty
Heathfield from Women Against
Pit Closures gives her analysis of
TV and radio coverage during
and after the coal dispute.

Other workshops focus on
access television, community
radio, the economics of
broadcasting and censorship, both
moral and political.

Liz Curtis, author of *'Ireland:
the Propaganda War'* will
introduce a video of the *'Real
Lives'* strike, and *'Not in Front of
the Children?'* is the title of a
debate on TV sex and violence.

It will not be all work and talk.
Video and audio tapes displaying
the best of British TV and radio
(including new community radio
and independent productions) will
give conference-goers new hope
for the future as well as
ammunition for defending public
service broadcasting against the
privateers.

The conference has a creche
and is accessible to people with
disabilities. Guides and signers
are available on request.

For more details contact
Janet Whyatt. Tel 01 437 2795
(24 hours) or 01 437 0189.

Community Radio — bending ears

Worried BBC and commercial radio
chiefs clashed with frustrated commu-
nity radio enthusiasts at a debate chaired
by *Broadcast* magazine's Nick Higham,
staged by the National Sound Archive in
London.

The grey-suited men from established
radio fear that community radio will take
away their listeners.

For David Maker of Red Rose Radio, it
represents unfair competition — freedom to
make money without the high overheads of
IBA payments and regulations.

BBC manager Owen Bentley believes many
CR stations will want to use BBC news and
night-time programmes as a sustaining
service.

All the activists are frustrated by the long
delay in the Home Office announcement of 21
experimental licences for community radio
stations. Bevan Jones, a member of the
Home Office Advisory Panel, fielded the flak.

A young executive from one of the
Aylesbury bids claimed his station would
support local dramatists and offer a service to
the large disabled community based on Stoke
Mandeville hospital.

'Well that will give you three and a half
hours of broadcasting a week,' commented
Nick Higham, 'What are you going to do for
the other 81½ hours?'

The answer sounded depressingly familiar

— pop music, traffic information and
phone-ins.

Fresh ideas came from Spectrum Radio's
Jewish User Group — but their represen-
tative admitted 'That's just my opinion. The
committee does not agree.' And the Crystal
Radio approach of holistic radio — fusing
body, mind and soul for the whole commu-
nity sounded a truly novel note.

The only self-confessed 'concerned lis-
tener' in the room said he did not believe
neighbourhood stations would offer any-
thing worth hearing. He could not imagine
how anyone could find a community of
interest that would appeal to more than a
handful of listeners in Ealing, north London.

Bevan Jones retorted that there was a
thriving Welsh community in Ealing (Neil
Kinnock's London home) and that CR could
offer the same wide range of services as a
community centre — at considerably lower
cost.

URGENT APPEAL FROM THE NATIONAL UNION OF MINeworkERS TO MINERS' SUPPORT GROUPS THROUGHOUT THE U.K.

There are 502 NUM members still locked out, victimised by the National Coal
Board because they fought to save their pits, jobs and communities.
They still need the magnificent help given by the many miners' support groups
throughout the United Kingdom both during and since the end of the 1984/85
strike.

For further information about what you can do to help, please contact:

NATIONAL UNION OF MINeworkERS
St. James House
Vicar Lane
Sheffield
S1 2EX
Tel: Sheffield (0742) 700388

Campaign merger planned

The Television Users Group, set up origin-
ally to campaign for greater diversity in
programming, access and accountability on
Channel 4, is to ballot its members on a mer-
ger with the CPBF.

The CPBF National Council agreed in
principle to the merger at its May meeting,
given the similarity in aims between the two
organisations.

TUG has about 150 individual and cor-
porate members, including regional groups
in Southampton, Swansea and Plymouth.
Their knowledge and expertise will stren-
gthen the Campaign's work in the TV area.

A representative of the Society for Educa-
tion in Film and Television, the charitable
body that has serviced TUG in the past, is to
become opted onto the CPBF National Council.

The merger should have a minimal impact
on the Campaign's finances.

STEPHEN BROWN, International Officer of CND, writes in a personal capacity about the nuclear tragedy that tested the media's integrity.

CHERNOBYL: the disinformation syndrome

The nuclear reactor disaster at Chernobyl took British newspapers unawares, like European governments, and, indeed, the Soviet leadership itself. The catastrophe became known through reports of radioactivity in the atmosphere over Sweden, and, in the absence of hard information the British press took the path of speculation and 'expert' comment.

For the first week of the catastrophe papers, the papers emphasised the huge scale of the disaster, often quoting as fact unsubstantiated rumours of "More than 2000 dead" or "10,000 doomed" (Daily Express 30 April) and US intelligence reports — withdrawn within 24 hours — of "a meltdown of a second reactor... confirmed by United States satellite pictures" (The Star 1 May).

The "Reds" were "rapped over silence" (Daily Express 30 April) while fact-out was fortunately confined to Scandinavia and Eastern Europe, and "Britain 'not at risk'" (Daily Telegraph 29 April).

However there was a British angle to the story, with an "Airlift Doomwatch" of "panic stricken students" from Kiev (Mirror 1 May) back home to Britain.

If the first week of the incident was an opportunity for Red bashing, by the second the coverage had rebounded on British nuclear policy.

If such a disaster could happen in the Soviet Union, why not in Britain? In fact it almost did at Windscale in 1957 and the Guardian reminded its readers that at the time the Daily Mail reported "Atomic Britain is safe — very top boffins line up to say so" (2 May).

This time The Mail on Sunday rapped the Brits. "Let's be frank Minister, you're talking hokey," it commented after reporting "Our disaster plans are kept secret, too." (4 May).

Meanwhile the radioactive cloud descended over Britain defying 'British experts' who had said it would take "many months" for the radioactive particles to fall here with "hardly the slightest danger to health" (Daily Telegraph 29 April).

The fight against torture: What you can do

In countries where torture of prisoners is common, the worst treatment usually happens very soon after arrest.

When news of arrests for political reasons has been verified by Amnesty International, a worldwide appeal gets under way — thousands of volunteers send telegrams and letters, appealing for the latest victim.

It doesn't matter what country. Amnesty International is impartial. The work is for human rights, not politics. (Last year urgent appeals were sent on behalf of over 1,700 prisoners in 68 countries.)

It works. A former torturer from Central America told a reporter last year: "If there's a lot of pressure — like from Amnesty International... we might pass them to a judge. But if there's no pressure, they're dead."

You can apply the pressure which can save a life. If you're ready to help, cut out the reply form and join Amnesty's lifeline today.

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The Times headlined "Britain 'off guard'" (6 May) after confusion and contradictory advice from government departments which had a week to prepare for such an eventuality. No doubt if it had been the Soviet Union, The Times would have "quickly dismissed" the original complacent reassurance as being "for domestic consumption", as they labelled Soviet denials of a "second meltdown".

The media coverage of the Chernobyl incident gives the impression of point scoring off the Soviet Union, a willingness to believe any rumour and to take any US claim at face value.

Of course, the Soviet Union may be partly responsible by not providing better information sooner, but as the small matter, by comparison, of radioactivity over Britain demonstrates, governments can be taken 'off guard'.

Rather than questioning why nuclear power should be shrouded in secrecy in Britain as well as in the Soviet Union, most papers seemed to believe that the problem lay in the secrecy inherent in a communist regime.

No reports pointed out that if a fire at a nuclear reactor could have such devastating effects the result of nuclear explosions would be far worse.

No newspaper pointed out that for years the nuclear powers carried out atmospheric tests of great magnitude in the Pacific with scant regard for the Pacific peoples.

The activities of anti-nuclear and environmentalist groups went almost totally unreported, even in the Guardian, despite its reputation of being sympathetic to such movements.

Only the US Time magazine and some of the weeklies reported a demonstration by CND, Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, outside the UKAEA, BNFL and the Soviet Embassy.

Instead the Daily Express headlined "Not a peep from the CND" and a letter claiming "not a whisper of protest" from CND because it was a "Soviet power station that spreads the poison."

Was this media silence accidental? When some normality finally returns to Chernobyl will we remember a "Soviet accident" or will it be the "nuclear accident" which stays in the memory.

The archive television film of Cumbrian milk being poured away after the Windscale fire of 1957 will not disappear easily.

* The Guardian reported (May 20) that US nuclear scientists have revised their earlier criticism of safety standards at the Chernobyl plant. The report indicated that in certain aspects precautions were better than those to be found in some Western nuclear power stations. These startling revelations did not make headline news.

The Maltese connection

On the Sunday after the US bombed Libya, early BBC Radio News bulletins announced that "Libya's closest ally" had called for a special session of the UN Security Council to debate the international crisis.

They were referring to Malta. Malta is non-aligned.

Its deep, protected natural harbours and its location make it an ideal military base. But after gaining its independence, Malta incurred the wrath of the West by renouncing all military contracts and shutting down British and NATO installations.

Malta's relationship with Qaddafi's regime has had its ups and downs. They could only be termed "close" in geographical terms, or in terms of the Western opprobrium their very different styles have earned them. The BBC was implying something else.

Sloppy journalism perhaps? Or just vindictive CIA propaganda...

Newsnight in Black & White

Earlier this year BBC 2's Newsnight covered yet another "statement to the nation" by S. Africa's President Botha about "concessions" on apartheid.

They treated him and his henchmen as brave statesmen fighting to end to apartheid. In fact the world could see that the white regime was running scared.

The same edition of Newsnight told of the humiliating flight of President Duvalier of Haiti. The infamous "Papa Doc" was treated as a lumbering fool whose time had come.

A comparison of his corrupt, repressive regime with Botha's, or an indication that Western powers supported both, might have been in order.

But the stories were kept separate, revealing the racism common to so much international coverage. Black villains are treated one way, white tyrants another. The BBC knows best.

A hearing is imminent for the libel case brought by the Freedom Association against former CPBF Secretary John Jennings over an article published in FREE PRESS 3 years ago. The Campaign wishes him every success.

Daily Mail NGA officer MIKE POWER finds the latest study of media treatment of the unions wanting.

COMMUNICATION GAP

This book is one man's effort to except himself from what he knows to be perfectly valid criticism of media bias against trade unions during industrial disputes.

Of his 215 pages 173 are devoted to the coal dispute of 1984/5. That's fair enough except that the book is entitled *Strikes and the Media* and subtitled *Communication and Conflict*, which might lead one to expect a broader canvas.

Even so he fails to deal with the media. He looks at union, government and management communication with the miners, and gives no assessment of how the strike was reported or any comment on how television news covered "picket-line violence" or Fleet Street editorial policies.

However as labour correspondent for BBC Radio News Nick Jones works hard to show how fair the coverage given by radio had been.

He produces in full (p.202) a broadcast interview that I gave to him on Radio 4's *Today* programme.

Jones attended the launch reception for the CPBF booklet *Media Hits the Pits* and challenged me to give examples of biased radio treatment, which he claimed did not appear in the booklet.

I referred him to an edition of *The World This Weekend* on Radio 4 and said why I felt it had been unfair to the NUM compared to the NCB. That part of the interview was not broadcast and neither was it reproduced in the book.

PREVIEW

Peacock leaks look wet

If the leaks from the Government-appointed Committee on Financing the BBC are to be believed, Peacock has chickened out of wholesale privatisation of the BBC.

Press reports claim the six-person team chaired by Professor Alan Peacock will not recommend introducing advertising on BBC television. Instead it will urge the government to link the BBC licence fee (currently £58.00 a year) to the rise in the cost of living. And move to 'subscription' or 'pay as you view' TV.

The rise in the cost of broadcasting has been far higher than general inflation in recent years. With new technology, daytime television, a televised World Service and more BBC local radio stations in the pipeline that trend looks set to continue. An index-linked licence fee may not provide the Corporation with enough funds. And how many people will want to start paying-as-they-view for each programme, after receiving the BBC's vast range of programmes for one payment.

Nick Jones told me later that it was not form at the BBC for a programme such as *Today* to contain criticism of its weekend sister programme. So its heads I win — tails you lose.

It is useless to write abstractly about communication while ignoring news values. We have ample evidence to show that unions begin with a disadvantage, being considered as purveyors of conflict, and dissenting from the assumed peaceful and largely harmonious state of society. No amount of staff or expertise in union head offices will of itself solve that problem.

NALGO has a press and publicity staff of more than 40 and a network of regional publicity officers. However it is unusual to see anything worthwhile about social workers or local authority managers unless the union buys the space. The tactic of space buying has been increasingly used by unions who know that they cannot expect fair coverage.

In that case the whole question of journalist training ethics and codes of conduct need to be considered. But not for Nick Jones. For him it is the victim who is to blame.

Unions must improve their PR and rely less on individual union leaders egomania. Thanks for nothing Nick!

Strikes and the Media

By Nicholas Jones, published by Basil Blackwell £14.95

Channel 4 meanwhile would be removed from the control of the IBA and sold to a commercial company.

If the future for TV looks uncertain, radio is plunged into still deeper crisis. Leaks from the Peacock team tell of a split between hard-line monetarists on the committee (Peacock himself and Sam Brittan, brother of former Trade and Industry Secretary) and Professor Alastair Hetherington, the token liberal.

The majority want to sell Radio 1 and Radio 2 to commercial operators. Hetherington opposes any break-up of the BBC — though he is prepared to accept advertising on Radios 1 and 2 to subsidise the licence fee.

The future of radio will be considered separately when the Government publishes a Green Paper to look at the whole spectrum including Independent Radio and the new Community Radio stations.

The Peacock report will be officially published in the first week of July — a few days after the CPBF Broadcasting Conference at Kensington Town Hall in London on June 28th.

Janet Whyatt

Shafted!

Power for the people. That was the aim — physical and political — of nationalisation in the coalfields. Power for workers in a difficult, dangerous job. And fuel to power a nation re-building after the ravages of war.

In 1947 when the National Coal Board was launched, people believed this source of fuel would last forever, with production guaranteed by public ownership. Britain is "An island built on coal".

The title of this film rings as hollow in 1986 as a child's cry down a disused mineshaft.

Coalminers have been defeated in their strike against pit closures. The early archive footage of management and workers celebrating nationalisation together have a special poignancy.

At one pit in County Durham, miners and bosses ceremonially buried a hatchet. Nationalisation meant an end to the tyranny of Victorian coalowners.

Set in the North East of England and told in the words of bosses as well as miners and their families, this film must rank as a definitive history of the coal industry.

It does not flinch from exposing the tensions still smouldering after the 1984-5 strike.

Skilfully edited, with archive and contemporary material intercut in a moving pageant, 'An Island Built on Coal' brings labour history to life.

An Island Built On Coal. Produced by Trade Films. Available on VHS from the Northern Film and Television Archive, 36 Bottle Bank, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE8 2AR. Tel 091 477 3601.

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= Teaching the Media =

By Granville Williams

Media Studies has "a vitally important democratic role to play within society... (one) which is honourably subversive of established authority." Strong stuff, and sentiments members of the CPBF would certainly endorse.

Len Masterman's *Teaching the Media* has a clear conviction and purpose. It eschews a careful objective balanced tone and from the first paragraph argues unequivocally for the importance of the study of the media across the curriculum in schools.

The first chapter "Why?" offers seven reasons for media education to be given the most urgent priority:

- The saturation of contemporary society by the media
- Their influence as consciousness industries
- The growth in the management and manufacture of information
- The penetration of the media into our central democratic processes
- The importance of visual communication and information in all areas
- The importance of educating students to meet the demands of the future
- The fast growing moves to privatise information, both nationally and internationally

Media Studies teachers are seen almost as shock troops sorting out to capture the high ground of the curriculum "... if we are convinced of the importance and necessity of media education then we shall need to be not simply teachers of, but advocates for our subject, advancing its cause whenever we can..."

And clearly there's an army on the march, winning new recruits and hearts and minds too. In the February issue of SEFT's Initiatives, edited by the North West group, Media Education Initiative, has two pages covered with classified ads, contact addresses in the regions, a conference diary and publications.

Philip Hayward has produced a booklet for the British Film Institute on 16+ syllabuses in Film, Television and Media Studies which reveals a very wide range of approaches to, and the potential for innovation in, teaching them.

In pre-vocational courses such as CPVE and TVEL, Media Studies has become almost a standard inclusion.

Teaching the Media will be an essential training manual for the new forces. At a very basic practical level the annotated bibliography and appendices on resources for media education are comprehensive and invaluable.

Debunking debate

In the 1930's concern about the "debilitating effects" of the mass media were expressed in the US and here, significantly, in books like *Culture and Environment* by FR Leavis and Denys Thompson, which, Masterman argues, is one of the influential texts sending teachers into long wearing wars of attrition in the classroom.

"Cheap emotional responses" to the media were castigated by Leavis and Thompson; resistance and inoculation to such pernicious influences would come from "an education in taste."

The crucial influence of Leavis and others, and the stress on critical discrimination based on literary values remains strong, says Masterman.

Another wave of ideas developed around Richard Hoggart's *Uses of Literacy*, an NUT conference on Popular Culture and Personal Responsibility in 1960 (subsequently published in Penguin with an introduction by Denys Thompson as *Discrimination and Popular Culture*).

Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel produced *The Popular Arts* in 1964. Their basic standpoint was that discrimination should be exercised not against mass media products but between them, since many are worthy of consideration as art.

Masterman dismisses both discriminatory approaches (a "middle class, defensive and deeply paternalistic movement" and one which has done "very little theoretical work to establish widely agreed criteria for evaluating the media").

He moves on to summarise current debates and approaches to Media Studies. These chapters represent an important attempt to make accessible to teachers in schools and colleges a wide range of developments by media theorists associated with the BFI, Screen, and Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, and to link them to classroom practice.

We need to increase in students an understanding of the media, Masterman argues. This means understanding how and in whose interests they work, how they are organised, how they produce meaning and represent reality and how audiences respond.

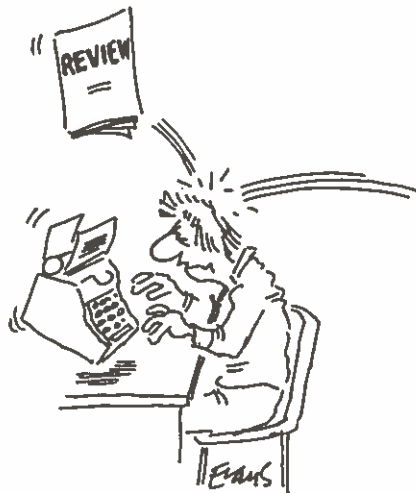
Such an approach doesn't impose minority or elitist views on students, but rather the 'value' of a particular media product is established through a process of enquiry which distin-

The Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, set up with media union support in 1979, can provide speakers on all aspects of the media.

The Campaign has published books, pamphlets and videos on a wide range of media issues.

A special Institutional Membership category (£15 p.a.) entitles educational bodies to free copies of new CPBF publications, and 10 copies of each edition of FREE PRESS.

If you would like to join, or book speakers and publications, please contact the Campaign Office, 9 Poland St, London W1 3DG. Tel: 01-437 2795.



guishes "the creative from the meretricious, the worthwhile from the third rate in the media."

Media Studies, like the media themselves, is a site of conflict: the essential nature of the subject makes it critical, evaluative and expressive. *Teaching the Media* represents an important statement, summarising past battles and indicating the terrain of future ones. *Teaching the Media* by Len Masterman Comedia/MK Media Press £6.95

No Supplement is planned for the Summer issue of FREE PRESS

The October Supplement will look at communications technology.

Education for Life

A group of young education workers in East London has begun to produce teaching packs on anti-racism, anti-sexism, peace and development studies.

They have just published a very neat Information Pack focussing on racism through the experience of Anne Frank. It complements an Exhibition on Anne Frank's life which traces the rise of nazism throughout Europe and deals with neo-nazi and other racist groups operating in contemporary Britain.

The pack is a novel way of concentrating attention on the horrors of racism, and also represents the potential of community-based projects as sources of inspiration for teachers.

Tower Hamlets Education for Life grew out of community initiatives, and the pack was produced by local arts projects and co-operatives. The Exhibition was prepared in conjunction with the Anne Frank Foundation and is available, along with the pack, from Tower Hamlets Arts Project, c/o 178 Whitechapel Road, London E1.

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SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

Media Studies in Higher Education

GOING UP

By Antony Easthope

Marx writes that 'the thought of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living'. Nowhere is this more true today than in Britain. This is an old, old country and it is very hard to introduce any changes.

The development of media studies in academic life in the past fifteen years has however been one such change. It has come about not in the traditional academic institutions, the universities, but in the 'public sector', in the Colleges of Education and Polytechnics. There are now dozens of courses on 'communications', 'media studies', 'cultural studies', film and television, 'popular culture'.

University English departments, the obvious sponsors for such courses have been reluctant to give up time to the study of the world in which people live their daily lives. The Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies is an important exception.

During the late 60s the influence of Raymond Williams was everywhere. His books, *Culture and Society* (1958) and *The Long Revolution* (1960), together with Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* (1958), encouraged the setting up of courses with a strongly Marxist basis (followed by the usual academic complaints about lack of 'objectivity').

The difference between 'high culture' and 'popular culture' was seen as the expression of social classes and their interests. This led to seeing the media — newspapers, film, television — in terms of the issue of 'false consciousness': did popular culture express working class interests or was it a form which mediated those interests, adapted them to suit the ruling class?

The obvious disadvantage of this view was that it assumed an elitist contempt for 'the masses' who were supposedly conned by the products of commercialism ('Literature' was somehow supposed to be above such betrayals).

Media studies then went through the same crisis as British Marxism elsewhere, the Marxism so vigorously promoted by the New Left Review in the early 70s.

The crisis, apparent in the late 70s, could be put like this: how does an artistic work — film, television programme, novel etc — reflect class interest? The problem is that while you can see the historical meaning of a work with hindsight, it's hard to foresee it. Granted the wide diversity of cultural forms and different works, how can they all be said to express the same form of conflicting class interests?

This led to a move away from the idea that a work (or, as it came to be called 'a text') reflected historical forces that caused it, and towards an emphasis on the effects and meanings it produced.

Instead of regarding an issue of THE SUN as reflecting the class interest that went into it (as though it were all written by Rupert Murdoch), you could regard it as asserting ideas and attitudes both in what it said and how it said it.

— SHIFT —

The shift is illustrated very well in the books of Terry Eagleton, Britain's most important Marxist literary critic.

In *CRITICISM AND IDEOLOGY* (1976) he took a traditional Marxist view that literature was an expression of ideologies and class. But in *LITERARY THEORY* (1983) his position had changed. Now it was the way that literature was read, in the present, which made literature and criticism political; criticism either confirmed dominant values or challenged them in the present.

The shift went along with the renewed vitality of the women's movement and recognition of the importance of gender in the media. Quite simply, gender could not be understood on the traditional model of class conflict — other issues were involved.

In the past few years some new questions about the media have come to be asked.

A good example comes from Laura Mulvey's 1975 essay on images of men and women in photography and the cinema. Mulvey showed that the way women were

seen by the camera was as through a male eye. Whereas men were photographed as passive objects.

Check the 30 odd photographs in any issue of THE SUN. Invariably the men are actively looking away from the camera at what interests them or returning a hard controlling gaze at the camera. Women are photographed smiling back submissively with what Mulvey calls 'the look of being looked at'.

Two random examples show the kind of development that has taken place.

The Open University introduced a course on 'Popular Culture' in 1981. Although this has a firm sociological and historical basis, it also provides a much deeper and closer analysis of cultural forms. It challenges the dominance of realism as a form in television, photography, film and pulp fiction.

It even has a section on 'Pleasure', something that would have scandalised the older, more puritan view that the masses were being conned (of course experts in media studies weren't).

A course called "Culture, Society and Text" taught as part of English studies at Manchester Polytechnic examines a variety of texts with a variety of analytic tools, drawn from linguistics and psychoanalysis as well as theories of ideology.

Instead of the earlier concern with social forces and the possible causes of media forms there is now much greater interest in meanings and effects. Media studies have developed a much more detailed and specific method for analysing and challenging the products of popular culture.



DIRECTORY OF WOMEN WORKING IN FILM, TELEVISION AND VIDEO

As part of their work promoting the implementation of equal opportunities employment policies and practices in all sectors of the film, TV and video industries, the Women's Film Television and Video Network published a directory of women working in these media in 1984. They are currently compiling a second edition, due to be published this summer. The aim of the project is not only to help women find work, but also to increase awareness of the number of skilled women in these industries.

THE WOMEN'S FILM TELEVISION AND VIDEO NETWORK

If you would like an entry in the directory, please send an s.a.e. for our questionnaire to:
WFTVN
79 Wardour Street
London W1V 3PH

Sean Cubitt, National Organiser of the Society for Education in Film and Television, looks at the external resources that can be used to extend the reach of media education.

MAKING DEALS

The media are all around us. Whirring storms of electrons, air shuddering with sound, posters and print passim.

Yet despite their ubiquity, mass media seem distant from us, and even more so from our students because of the scale of their operations perhaps, or the strangeness of the technologies.

Most areas of the UK are now within striking distance of a film or video workshop. The uses of these resources in the 'independent' (grant-aided) sector are threefold.

First, teachers can gain a sense of their own abilities with the video technology they use in their classroom.

Secondly, students can go on from school with a sense that there are ways of taking over the means of (low-band) production. And for all parties there is the possibility of developing links.

Far too many media teachers are in the uncomfortable position of feeling isolated, especially in areas where there are no teachers associations. What better way to strike up new alliances than with the film and video workshops involved in building an alternative culture in this benighted country.

The same goes for print media: involvement with local alternative presses, or even with national ones like *Free Press*, can provide a sense of what it takes to keep a media product on the fiscal straight and narrow, and how to keep it interesting and alive.

The newest development in this area is the growth of media centres. The first of these was Bristol's Watershed, combining art exhibition space, cinemas and workshops with an interesting and varied education programme.

Manchester's Cornerhouse is on a similar model, as are the Midland Group in Nottingham, the Triangle in Birmingham and others dotted about the country.

The latest trend is away from 'building-led' developments, towards links between existing groups in an area — for example Nottingham itself, South Wales and Tyne and Wear, where existing buildings and groups are joining together for joint planning, purchasing etc., often with a direct pitch towards education.

SEFT hopes to be holding an event on media centres soon in the north east of England,

comparing different regional variants and looking for the best possible links with teachers.

A salient feature of the media centres is that they are better equipped: broadcast quality studios in Gateshead, 35mm film projection and Dolby sound in some regional film theatres. That and the pursuit of strongly local programming and production, against the grain of everyday mass media, with their national perspectives and prejudices.

Still in the grant-aided end of things, there are also national organisations which can be of great value to teachers: the Independent Film and Video Makers Association and Womens Film Television and Video Network and the Association of Black Workshops are trade bodies for the grant-aided sectors. The Community Radio Association is another vital tool in developing local media.

For teachers, self-help groups, the major organisations are the Society for Education in Film and Television, which coordinates a large number of regional and sector-based groups; The Association for Media Education in Scotland (AMES), which also publishes the very useful *Media Education Journal*, and the Irish Film Institute Education Dept.

The British Film Institute Education Department also provides a wealth of publications and services for teachers.

Links through to the major broadcasters can be somewhat more problematic, though there are currently secondments to Central Television and to *EastEnders*.

A useful basic guide to the film and television industry is available in the BFI Yearbook, with addresses for most people active in the area. You will also find addresses for trade associations and trade unions operating in the field. Although the print unions, especially NGA and SOGAT, are in difficult positions at present, they and the broadcasting unions are usually very helpful in searching



out information and helping to clarify difficult areas like equal opportunities and the structures of media institutions.

A variety of schemes, competitions and events are operated locally and nationally by commercial companies sponsoring student publications, films and videos: details can be found in *Initiatives*, along with listings of conferences and events of special interest to teachers.

Along with most of our colleagues, SEFT is deeply committed to local organisation and local initiatives, especially in these confused days following abolition of the Metropolitan authorities.

SEFT also coordinates the Women's Media Education Network, which publishes an occasional newsletter and a new series of working papers, and organises women-only events for teachers.

Without the space to go into detail on various pioneering schemes — TVS link-up with Southampton University for example — or the potential of Educational TV set ups in many regional centres, or links with local radio and press, even with building societies, it's clear that media education is at last becoming a movement, one that can only thrive on links with industry and trades unions.

Teachers and educators working in the media field are contributing enormously towards the building of an open, democratic media culture: we look forward to CPBF's involvement in the area.

Videotapes of all six *OPEN THE BOX* programmes are available from the British Film Institute Film & Video Library, 81 Dean Street, London W1V 6AA (01-437 4355) and from Guild Learning, Guild House, Peterborough PE2 9PZ (0733-315315). If you want to think further about the ideas in the programmes and discuss them in groups or on courses, the free booklet on *OPEN THE BOX* will be helpful. Containing notes on each of the six programmes and information for further reading, the booklet is available from Channel 4 and will also accompany the videos. For copies of this booklet please send a large SAE to Open The Box, PO Box 4000 at London W3 6XJ, or Glasgow G12 9JQ, or Belfast BT2 7FE.

Resources guide

• For details of film & video hardware & training centres, see *Independent Video* No. 63 (50p from The Media Centre, South Hill Park, Bracknell, Berks).

• Current film & video courses are listed in *Directions* quarterly, from BFI Funding & Development, 127 Charing Cross Road, London W1.

• Regular updating on resources appear in *Initiatives* (£2 pa from SEFT), and for Scotland in *Media Education Journal* (from AMES).

• Lists of mainstream broadcasting contacts from Information Office, Independent Broadcasting Authority, 70 Brompton Road, London SW3; and in the BBC Handbook from HMSO.

• For valuable practical information & advice see *Get It On — Radio & Television* by Jane Drinkwater, Pluto Press £3.95 (covers London region but has broader applications).

• The CPBF Mail Order Catalogue contains a wide range of helpful educational books, pamphlets & videos at reduced prices — details from Campaign Office

Useful address:

Independent Film & Video Makers Association, & Women's Film, Television & Video Network, 79 Wardour Street, London W1.
Association of Black Workshops c/o Ray Beatty, 13 Midland Road, St Philips, Bristol BS2 0JT.

Local Radio Project, 12 Praed Mews, London W2.

Community Radio Project, 25 Wilkin Street, London NW5.

Northern Film & TV Archive, 36 Bottle Bank, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, NE8 2AR.

Society for Education in Film & Television (SEFT), 28 Old Compton Street, London W1.

Association for Media Education in Scotland (AMES), c/o Brian MacLean, Cathkin High School, Whitlawburn, Cambuslang, Glasgow.

Irish Film Institute Education Dept., 65, Harcourt Street, Dublin 2, Eire.

British Film Institute Education Dept., 81 Dean Street, London W1.

Women media teachers get organised

By Netia Mayman

The last twelve months have seen the development of a women's network within media education which has already looked at some of the specific issues facing women who wish to teach about media.

First and foremost is the sense of isolation many women feel in their efforts to bring a feminist address of gender representation into their teaching and in their struggles to create a space where the voices of their girl students could be heard, and for those students to feel that their readings of media products were valid.

The isolation was felt particularly by women working in institutions without an anti-sexist policy, often within Tory authorities. A classic case was reported by one teacher who has to run the gamut of a series of soft porn posters in order to speak to the media resource officer at her college.

Even those working in well-developed media-studies departments in 'progressive' schools and colleges in 'right-on' authorities where 'anti-sexism' is part of the institutional vocabulary, have often found male colleagues less than supportive.

The most common problem seems to be the one where issues of gender representation are tidied away into an optional part of a course. Gender representation becomes something that may be taught by those who happen to be particularly interested in it (i.e. women), rather than being viewed as something which structures all media products and informs the way in which they are read.

There are difficulties too in finding material which not only provides oppositional alternative representatives of women but which is

also relatively accessible and populist.

Then there is the question of "boy's toys". Why do so many of us regard media technology as male, feeling alternately threatened and then angry at our own lack of confidence?

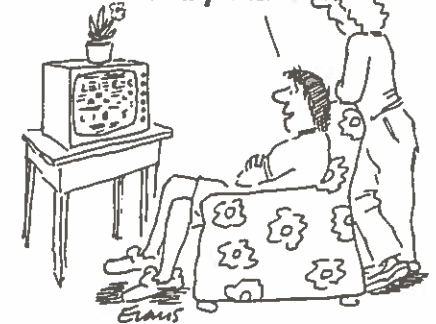
There are a growing number of women who have developed enormous expertise and experience in practical video work and it is now a question of tapping resources of such women, perhaps through greater links with the independent sector, as well as by drawing on what has been developed by teachers.

Women are tired of being patronised by male technicians and of prising boys away from equipment in order to give girls a chance to use it. Accordingly arrangements are underway to organise a women-only video day-school in Brighton.

Links have also been made with women in the media industries through the *Womens Film and TV Networks* (WFTN).

Further details of all of these activities from SEFT, 29 Old Compton Street, London W1 5PL.

Strange how media studies are usually about women and not by them!



Why are you watching that rubbish?

Granville Williams reviews *OPEN THE BOX* By Jane Root, Comedia £4-95

A suitably double-layered title takes us back to the enormously popular quiz show in which Michael Miles hectored participants to "take the money or open the box".

The audience was out there urging the contestants on. The title also suggests something of popular everyday television: game shows, soap, advertisements and sport.

Jane Root's lively and combative style makes the book very readable. At the same time she effectively introduces a range of recent academic work on everyday television to support her arguments.

"Television Zombies", demolishes some of the contradictory views of left and right on the power of television over audiences: "Apparently, at the same time as television makes us incapable of doing anything at all, it is also able to force us to do a whole series of things."

The book's important contribution, in "Part of the Furniture", is to relate debates about popular television to people's domestic,

social life, as one of a set of practices rooted in the flux of people's lives. "It is only scientists studying effects and professional reviewers who watch television in a darkened room, insulated from the rest of the world," she says.

"Television Prejudices", takes us right to the heart of a dimem-ma for Media educationalists (especially those who absorbed cultural debates in the later 1950's on "American style commercialisation").

EastEnders, Brookside, Miami Vice, Dallas or The Price is Right are enormously popular but epithets such as "mindless", "inane", "pap", and "bilge" are thrown at them. Counterposed to such programmes are those seen as "good documentary" — Bleak House, Jewel in the Crown, The Ascent of Man, and so on.

Jane Root argues for a form of television criticism which doesn't fall into anti-Americanism, a disdain for 'feminised' genres such as soap, or praise only for certain clearly authored forms associated with writers like Trevor Griffiths or Dennis Potter.

Open the Box contains new insights and information which gave me a deeper understanding of the processes going on in watching television. It is extensively illustrated and deserves to be widely read.

Six Open the Box programmes on C4, should provide lively material for schools and colleges.



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