THE VIEWER AND LISTENER

AUTUMN 1980 **Price 10p**

GRATEFUL THANKS

(By courtesy of Press Assn)

Mary Whitehouse, Dr. Robert Runcie, Andrew Barr and Geoffrey Wheeler.

The National VALA AWARD (1979) was presented by Dr. Robert Runcie, Archbishop of Canterbury to 'Songs of Praise' at a lunchtime reception held at All Soul's Church, Langham Place on 31st July.

For the Award's 8th year it was the turn of Religious Broadcasting and 'Songs of Praise' was chosen because National VALA believes that it "has a genuine spiritual dimension and speaks person to person of the reality of Christian experience."

"THIS FASCINATING MIX..."

SONGS OF PRAISE as you know has developed – and has not been afraid to develop – from being this popular hymn-singing programme to having something very special within it – something personal. And I think the real achievement of that has been helping people to speak quite simply about faith, about personal pilgrimage, unselfconsciously, often, about real heroism, not from positions of tremendous power like Archbishops preaching on state occasions, nor as part of some great campaign. But people speaking from experience and from experiences which are universal and which those who listen and view understand. I think that is something very special about this programme.

"And then there is this fascinating mix of music and personal witness – of programmes traditional, but from within its tradition prepared to take a few risks in order to show the freshness of it all. And it has led to a programme which does not have to pack its message into the capsules of ideas nor to straight-jacket its discussion of very deep issues into some debate but can actually get across truths deeper than words and touch people with them as well as touching people who are not easily drawn into religious programmes.

"All these seem to me to be part of the genius of this programme and the reason why people continue in increasing numbers to be drawn to it."

Dr. Robert Runcie.

Copies of the whole of the Archbishop's speech are available from Headquarters. 20p

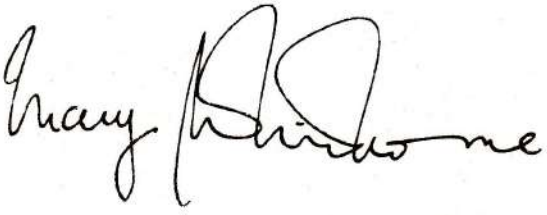
AND FROM THE HON. GEN. SECRETARY:

National Vala members will be anxious to know of the response received at Headquarters to the personal letter to members which took the place of the last two editions of The Viewer & Listener. Many people responded most generously to the appeal and we are most grateful for all the donations, large and small, which we received. As a result National VALA was able to launch its STOPORN NOW CAMPAIGN (see page 3) with considerable confidence.

It was decided, on the basis of past experience, that one of the best ways of both exposing and counteracting the Williams Report was to launch a Nationwide Petition. As the next issue of The Viewer & Listener was not due until the autumn, this was done initially via a letter to provincial and religious papers. The response has been most encouraging but now we hope for a far wider distribution as each National VALA member participates in this crucial, decisive campaign.

Perhaps we can encourage those of our members who were unable to contribute financially to this vitally important campaign earlier in the year by pointing out that it is a continuing effort which will need all the backing, enthusiasm and effort of which we're capable.

"May I take this opportunity to thank, also, all those members who so kindly wrote to congratulate me on the announcement in the Queen's Birthday Honours List that I was to be awarded the C.B.E. I was very touched by the many very generous things which were said but I would like everyone to know that I regard this Honour as belonging to us all and hope very much that you will all feel that you share in it."



THE VIEWER AND LISTENER

NATIONAL VALA

Ardleigh
Colchester Essex C07 7RH
Telephone: 0206 230123

An Addendum to the Parliament of England 1644

"GIVE ME THE LIBERTY TO KNOW, TO UTTER, TO ARGUE FREELY ACCORDING TO CONSCIENCE ABOVE ALL LIBERTIES . . . . . THAT WHICH IS IMPIOUS OR EVIL ABSOLUTELY, EITHER AGAINST FAITH OR MANNERS, NO LAW CAN POSSIBLY PERMIT THAT INTENDS NOT TO UNLAW ITSELF."

from John Milton's Areopagitica

Comment: One suspects that were John Milton alive today he would feel that the libertarian's constant reference to the first of these two interpretations of freedom and their total neglect of the second – amounts to a misuse of the very "Liberty of Unlicenced Printing" about which he was writing!

(By courtesy of the Guardian)

"Dr. John Court, the man who has scourgingly turned the techniques of sociology against the permissivist lobby, yesterday came to London to ask the Home Secretary to disregard the "dishonest" Williams report on pornography." *(The Guardian 2nd July).*

NO TIME TO WASTE!

So concerned was Dr. Court, Associate Professor of Psychology at Flinders University, Adelaide, at the recommendations of the Williams Committee Report that he broke his journey from Australia to Leipzig where he was presenting a paper to the 22nd International Congress of Psychology at Leipzig University to spend 4 days in London. Mary Whitehouse reports:

"Dr. Court's first engagement (1st July) was at L.B.C. where he was interviewed by Brian Hayes. He was then filmed crossing Fleet Street – several retakes because the traffic passed between him and the camera on the other side of the road! – to St. Brides where his main press conference was held at midday. After several taped interviews had been completed he and I were given a most enjoyable lunch by the CREDO team who then spent most of the afternoon interviewing him for a programme later this year.

From there to the House of Lords where, at the invitation of Lord Halsbury, Dr. Court spoke to a number of Peers and M.P.s under the title "Pornography, Harm and Williams" *(copies of this address can be obtained from National Vala Headquarters price 25p)* before dining in the Lords with Viscount and Lady Ingleby, for whose support for our work we are most grateful.

The following morning was spent at New Scotland Yard with senior officers keen to talk to Dr. Court and from whom he was very anxious to obtain an up to the minute assessment of the situation in Metropolitan London. We were then driven to the house in which Conan Doyle used to live and which is now a very attractive police sports centre where we were entertained to lunch by about forty police officers with Commander John Smith in the Chair. Earlier in the day ATV had rung from Birmingham to invite Dr. Court and myself to take part in their "Format Five" top current affairs programme to be recorded the following morning! This meant that plans for the next day had to be quickly re-adjusted. At 6 o'clock I left Dr. Court at the offices of The Times where he was to discuss the Williams Report with Professor Bernard Williams, this discussion lasting 1½ hours to be taped for future use.

This unique exchange was followed by what was without doubt the most important engagement of Dr. Court's very busy itinerary – an interview with the Home Secretary, Mr. William Whitelaw. Dr. Court was accompanied by Dr. Brian Mawhinney, M.P. for Peterborough. Mr. Whitelaw listened most attentively to what Dr. Court had to say and asked many question. He said afterwards that he had found the exchange most useful and was very grateful to Dr. Court.

The A.T.V. interview the following morning was very lively – rather too much so at times! – and one of its most interesting moments came when Professor Simpson, a member of the Williams Committee, admitted that he knew nothing of a very key document which had been submitted by Dr. Court to the Committee!

We arrived back in London in time for a series of interviews in the late afternoon and then for a meeting in the evening – the fact that this was an invited audience did not prevent members of the anti-censorship brigade trying to disrupt it. However that gave an opportunity to make the point that such people are not against trying to shout down those with whom they disagree! Dr. Court's new book "Pornography – A Christian Critique" was launched at this meeting by Peter Cousins of Paterhoster Puess, *(see enclosed leaflet.);*

Dr. Court spent the last morning in the office at Ardleigh but returned to London in time to do a recorded interview for the Terry Wogan show, and meet with some professional colleagues before leaving Heathrow.

We should all be immensely grateful for all that Dr. Court gave to Britain in those 4 days. He is, of course, an Englishman and cares very much indeed about what happens in this country. As he says, it will affect what happens all over the world, including Australia where he is now working."

STOPORN NOW CAMPAIGN

(NO to Williams)

The Williams Committee was set up by the Labour Government (1977) "to review the laws on obscenity, indecency and violence in publications, displays and entertainments, except in the field of broadcasting; to review film censorship; and to make recommendations".

THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS, FAR FROM CURTAILING THE DISTRIBUTION OF PORNOGRAPHY:

1. Would effectively make it legal by allowing it to be sold in "restricted" shops to people of over 17.

   (The Report argues that this is enough protection for children. BUT once sold, there is no way of stopping the circulation of pornographic magazines. They would find their way into schools, factories, youth clubs, public lavatories, litter bins, etc. Experience shows that 14/15 year olds get into X films without difficulty: so they would into "restricted" shops.)

2. Would allow every kind of sexual perversion, including bestiality, to be sold in such shops.

   (Would ban outright ONLY material judged by the courts to involve the sexual exploitations of those under 16 (and there is already legislation to cover this), or where actual physical harm was inflicted on the person photographed.)

3. Would turn Britain into a dumping ground for continental pornography by repealing legislation which now makes it an offence to send pornographic material through the post.

   (Professor Williams claimed on television that his recommendations would "clean up the corner shops" but what is generally regarded as indecent display would not be affected, only that which "deals with or relates to violence, cruelty or horror, or sexual, faecal or urinary functions or genital organs".)

4. Would make "simple nudity" legal, when displayed, and would do nothing about indecency in advertisements and on boardings.

5. Would make printed obscenity lawful, unless accompanied by pornographic photographs.

   (The effect of this upon education, broadcasting and upon newsagents and bookshops would be disastrous.)

6. Would take from local authorities the right to control what is to be shown in local cinemas.

   (The Report suggests the present personnel of the British Board of film censors should be part of the Film Examining Board. BUT these Censors are already giving A and U certificates to films which contain scenes of gross violence, and rape.)

7. Would allow pornographic and other obscene films on separate cinema screens. BUT these screens would be part of a multi-screen complex, assisting under-age admissions.

8. The Report argues that there is no connection between pornography and serious sex crime. It attempts dishonestly to discredit the researches of those whose work demonstrates that as and when pornography becomes freely available in any society then the serious sex crime figures rocket.

HINTS ON HOW TO ORGANISE A SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN

1. Write to your local paper using extracts from the information provided here and inviting readers to write to you for information and petition forms etc.
2. Form working party. Organise door to door collection of signatures.
3. Contact local branch of women's and men's organisations, youth clubs etc.
4. Approach local Church leaders and request not only that petitions be made available in Churches but also that Church members collect signatures.
5. Local shops, libraries, Doctors' surgeries, etc.. make excellent collecting units.
6. **A copy of the address "PORNOGRAPHY, HARM AND WILLIAMS" given by Dr. John Court to a meeting of M.P.s and Peers (July 1st) is available from headquarters (priced 25p). It is essential that every M.P. receives one. PLEASE SEND FOR A COPY TO SEND TO YOUR M.P.**

Please keep your local paper informed of your activities. VERY IMPORTANT: in order to ensure that effective action is taken in Parliament please write to your M.P. and tell him/her how many signatures and refusals you obtained for the petition. (But do not send completed petition forms with your letter. These should be sent to headquarters). If you do not know the name of your M.P. simply write to the M.P. for your town. Any reply received would be of great interest to us.

Petition forms and copies of the above information are available from: STOPORN NOW CAMPAIGN, National Viewers' and Listeners' Association, Ardleigh, Colchester, Essex CO7 7RH, Telephone (0202) 230123 (Please send S.A.E.).

THIS CAMPAIGN WILL RUN ON THROUGH THE AUTUMN INTO THE WINTER AND PLENTY OF NOTICE WILL BE GIVEN OF THE CLOSING DATE.

You want to be informed and effective? Then read: "POINT BY POINT" – National VALA's reply to the Home Office questionnaire on the Williams Report (contains powerful anecdotal evidence). Price 25p inc. postage.
"PORNOGRAPHY – A MATTER OF TASTE?" price 20p (inc postage).
"WHATEVER HAPPENED TO SEX?" by Mary Whitehouse price £1.50 (inc. postage). All available from National VALA.

THE RETIRING CHAIRMAN OF THE BBC TALKS TO VIVIAN WHITE ON GRANADA TV'S 'PUBLIC OFFICE'

WHITE: Apart from the relationship with politicians and with Parliament, you have a relationship over matters of moral judgment in programmes – matters of taste, matters of what sexual or violent scenes should or should not be shown, and there's a very powerful pressure group, or what I understand to be a powerful pressure group – the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association. One of the reasons I understand it is powerful is that, very early on in your Chairmanship, you saw Mary Whitehouse who is its Chairman. Why did you see her and what is the relationship between you and that particular pressure group and, for that matter, pressure groups like it?

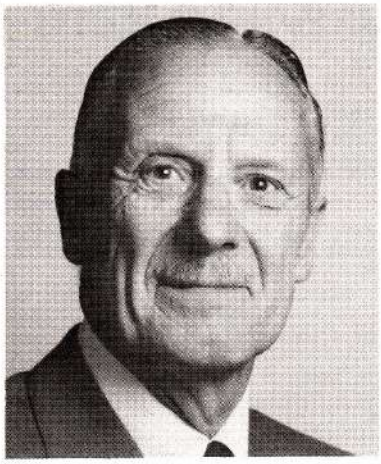
SIR MICHAEL SWANN: Well, I've met Mary Whitehouse quite often actually. I don't think she ever came to this office and we didn't, as it were, have a solemn talk. But I meet Mary Whitehouse from time to time at meetings and conferences and so on, and she undoubtedly speaks for a significant number of people and there was a time when she was always after the BBC – a good deal less nowadays than she used to be.

WHITE: Why?

SIR MICHAEL SWANN: To some extent, I suppose she has crystallised a public view. But I think I would say that the entire attitude of society to sex and violence has altered somewhat and there has, without any doubt, I think, been something of a rightward shift. If that's the right word to use, in public attitudes to sex and violence. You know, the late Seventies are not like the late Sixties and I think Mrs. Whitehouse, as it were, symbolised that and may indeed have, to some extent speeded it up.

The Listeners 29/5/80

FOOTNOTE: Sir Michael's memory misleads him! He did officially receive Robert Standring, N.VALA's chairman, and M.W. at Broadcasting House for a "solemn talk" on 9th January 1974!



JOHN WILSON

A note from National VALA's newly appointed BRANCH DEVELOPMENT OFFICER:

"For a number of years it has been my constant concern as Chairman of the Lothian Region Community Standards Association, to help to maintain Christian moral and ethical standards here in Scotland.

In my new sphere, I should hope to encourage the many members of National VALA who do such a grand job in their own areas by (a) bringing home to others whose membership is merely nominal, who accept the privilege of membership, but do little else, the necessity of commitment and involvement. WE ARE NOT PLAYING GAMES! (b) assisting in every possible way, the formation of new branches of VALA in those areas in the U.K. which are not now adequately represented.

My office already has a sizeable map of Britain, and by the use of coloured pins, I am able to see the varied pattern of VALA's impact. I have already written to the existing Branch Secretaries and their replies are interesting and informative – all of them very enthusiastic. Some have suggested that I meet their members in the Autumn, when they hope to arrange a 'get together'. I certainly look forward to this, for it makes a lot of difference to have met one's colleagues. From information gleaned from the correspondence, I am even now in a position to pass on ideas which I would hope will bear fruit.

I would be most happy to hear from all those who are interested to start or to join a Branch or Action Group. Please write to me at: 18 Corstorphine Bank Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 8RX

John R. Wilson

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MARIA KERIGAN

Mrs. Maria Kerigan, Essex Branch Secretary, is now National VALA's (Speakers' Secretary. She is herself a busy speaker for National VALA.

"Wherever I go" she says "people tell me that I have opened their eyes to the moral dangers confronting our youngsters. They also admit that they had previously had a completely mistaken idea of Mary Whitehouse! There is a vast fund of goodwill towards us which only waits to be informed and directed."

The qualities needed for a successful speaker are directness, sincerity and a knowledge of the aims and work of National VALA and there is plenty of literature available at Headquarters to help you with this.

If you feel you can help promote National VALA in this way by undertaking speaking engagements – often to quite small groups of people so experience in public oratory is not required – please contact Maria at **54 Lower Park Road, LOUGHTON, Essex. Tel: 01 508 0191.**

ANNUAL CONVENTION

Every year the verdict seems to be the same – "the best ever!" And certainly that is a very fair assessment of the 1980 Convention. The inspiring and challenging speech by James Anderton, Chief Constable of Greater Manchester, was given massive publicity in the national and provincial press.

It was particularly encouraging to see so many members from so far afield. **If you were unable to attend and would like to hear the speeches in full, cassette tapes are available of Mr. Anderton, Mary Whitehouse and the afternoon session price £1.50 each or £4.00 for the set of three. Mrs. Whitehouse's address is also available in printed form price 25p. All from National VALA Headquarters.**

"£34 FOR THIS!"

FROM THE EDITORIAL "STAGE & TELEVISION TODAY" 20/3/80:

Mary Whitehouse got a lot of publicity last week for an NVALA report about a monitoring project carried out in January by six student teachers and six graduate students at Oxford.

We have both criticised and agreed with Mrs. Whitehouse and have listened to criticisms of her ("she has nothing to contribute") by some of our most respected senior practitioners. But make no mistake, she strikes a chord in the British consciousness of what is "right".

Fleet Street may have its shortcomings but its instincts about the public and Mrs. Whitehouse is accurate. Violence, the use of "bad" language, and the depiction of things of a sexual nature are the object of Mary Whitehouse's crusade they are central to the argument about the impact of television.

Television is not, and as far as we are concerned should never be, a licence to "publish and be damned".

(Copies of the report "£34 FOR THIS!" are available from HQ price 30p.

Extract from a Letter

Extract from a letter to Lady Plowden, Chairman, I.B.A. (dated 19th February, 1980)

"I attended the I.B.A. meeting at the Market Hall, Redhill, Surrey, on January 20th and found it most interesting. A wide range of topics was raised by the audience, and were discussed by the panel – with one notable exception. No less than three speakers, at different stages of the evening, protested at the amount of violence in programmes; at the explicit sex; and at the bad language. They felt the entertainment value of the programmes was being spoiled by these features; and two felt that such examples were likely to have a deleterious effect on the young. The Annan Report, of course, noted many such complaints; and one would have hoped that standards would have improved by now, as a result.

I find it a matter of serious concern that the panel did not see fit to discuss these points of view at all, although others were fully dealt with. Furthermore, although I was unfortunately prevented from seeing the television programme of the meeting the following Sunday, I gather from a letter in our local paper that these comments were censored."

Name and Address supplied

Comments on the I.B.A. Franchise meetings in various parts of the country show that they were felt to be loaded and rather a waste of time. ED: