


THE VIEWER AND LISTENER

AUTUMN 1979

Price 10p

Survival in the 80's?

Survival in the 80s?



...only if we defend the family
Come, hear – and question
Mrs MARY WHITEHOUSE
Britain's family champion

For the first time since the very early days of what was then known as the 'Clean Up TV Campaign' Mary Whitehouse will be speaking at a series of major meetings organised by National VALA between October 1979 and May 1980.

Details of meetings this year appear alongside.

We are very grateful to those who have already sent donations to help offset the very high cost of this project. Needless to say further contributions would be very much appreciated.

From 'Persuasion at Work'

Most of the commentary about the harmful impact of television and most of the efforts to improve matters have responded to the symptoms rather than the disease. To be sure, it would be a step in the right direction to have a decrease in the violent and sleazy programmes that are broadcast, but a civilized society is neither built nor sustained by a cultural avoidance of the worst in human nature. A worthy and productive society is characterized by the prevalence of high-minded, responsible citizens. A public respect for the principles of honor and virtue and thrift and useful accomplishment can only be perpetuated with continuous and effective reaffirmation in literature and drama and education and religion, and by the examples of parents and fellow employees as well as public figures.

Persuasion At Work February 1979
Rockford College Institute, Illinois.

WHEN AND WHERE

FELIXSTOWE:	19th October	Spa Pavilion. 7.30 p.m.
CAMBRIDGE:	30th October	Lady Mitchel Hall, Sidgwick Avenue. 8.00 p.m.
CARMARTHEN:	6th November	St. Peter's Civic Hall. 2.30 p.m.
CARDIFF:	7th November	Assembly Room, The City Hall. 7.30 p.m.
EAST LONDON:	17th November	Civic Theatre, Poplar. 7.00 p.m.
PLYMOUTH:	20th November	Guildhall, City Centre. 7.30 p.m.
EXETER:	22nd November	St. Georges Hall, Fore Street. 7.30 p.m.
GLOUCESTER:	6th December	Ribston Hall School, Stroud Road. 7.30 p.m.

PLEASE MAKE A NOTE OF THE DATE!

NATIONAL VALA CONVENTION

Midland Hotel, Birmingham,
17th May 1980. 10.45 am – 4.00 pm.

SPEAKERS: C. JAMES ANDERTON O.P.M., F.B.I.M.
Chief Constable of Greater Manchester

KENNETH ROBINSON
Writer and Broadcaster

MARY WHITEHOUSE
Hon. Gen. Sec. NVALA.

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THE VIEWER AND LISTENER

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A NEW DIMENSION OF HORROR

A new phenomenon is appearing on our TV screens. The occult and a multitude of paranormal activities are increasingly occupying the minds of TV producers. One is driven to suspect that this is due, at least in part, to the need they obviously feel to find a substitute for the TV violence which is now largely accepted as anti-social.

It would appear that violence to the mind and the spirit is to replace violence to the body. Alongside this editorial we reprint a letter sent to the Chairman of the Governors of the BBC. It tells its own story. An earlier episode of 'THE OMEGA FACTOR' included ouija board activity, hypnotism, the calling up of evil spirits, the use of drugs, the sight of someone apparently burning alive and the apparent violation of a Church with witchcraft and murder.

In a letter to Mary Whitehouse, Mr. Patrick Ramsey, Controller of BBC Scotland which produced the programme, says this: 'I believe - as I imagine you do - that dabbling in the occult can be a dangerous occupation for some people; there are powers which are best left at rest.' Then why not leave them? It is, in our view, extraordinarily naive to act on the assumption that such programmes will have no effect whatever apart from their "entertainment" value. We believe this series - the first major one based on the paranormal - to be both unhealthy and dangerous.

By one of those strange coincidences which occur in a vast organisation like the BBC, 'Woman's Hour' (24th July) interviewed Dr. David Waxman, President of the Medical and Dental Hypnotherapists, about the dangers of people being involved with inexpert hypnotic practices. He said that this could do "great damage" to anyone "suffering from some kind of nervous illness." Have we now to wait upon a series of such incidents? To launch into years of plausible justification - as has been the case of the screening of physical violence on television - before the "powers that be" take the matter seriously?

To a less extent ITV is moving in the same field. For instance, in **SAPPHIRE & STEEL** (9th August 7.00 p.m.), three characters hold a seance to create a "self induced hypnotic state." The episode deals with malevolent psychical investigation and a character describes the "whole atmosphere" as being "charged with hatred and resentment." Sapphire is "possessed", her body shudders violently and she emits shouts of pain and anguish. Another disturbing feature in the series was the linking of children's nursery rhymes with the occult. There is a very real possibility that little children, many of whom are likely to be watching at such an early hour, may, in future, subconsciously connect the two in their childish imaginings.

Increasing and serious concern exists amongst the clergy and some psychiatrists about the dangers of dabbling in the occult. Let's hope that Broadcasting Authorities get the message.

Letter to Sir Michael Swann

Chairman of the Board of Governors of the BBC, from Mary Whitehouse

We are concerned at the increasing preoccupation of broadcasters with the paranormal and the occult. This trend has been highlighted, as far as the BBC is concerned, by the series **THE OMEGA FACTOR** which has just been concluded (16th August).

I am writing now to ask whether you, as Chairman of the Corporation, will ensure that the BBC seeks and takes expert psychiatric and theological advice as to the wisdom of involving viewers in such practices before any more such programmes are made, or this tendency develops further in any type of programme.

The whole of the series **THE OMEGA FACTOR**, transmitted during **FAMILY VIEWING TIME** on BBC1, has been based upon the use of mind control by British Government and scientific research bodies for unspecified purposes.

In one episode alone (25th July) an apparently happily married young woman is seen suffering from hallucinations which make her pick up a breadknife and murder her husband (viewers were treated to a close-up of her demented face). Also in the programme as a result of disorientated minds:

- an attempt at suffocation by gas;
- the smashing of a bottle over someone's head;
- a man went berserk;
- a flick knife threat was controlled by hypnosis;
- later hysterical vicious screaming led to the killing of a girl with the flick knife;
- a demonstration of how hallucination and delirium leading to murder can be caused by plant poison;
- constant use of disorientated shots and themes.

We were particularly concerned at the episode (18th July) in which a young schoolboy was shown to be possessed of supernatural powers. The boy simulated with greatly contorted features and intense concentration very considerable mind control and projection, demonstrating, amongst other evil things, his power to kill. The involvement of a young person in drama dealing with the supernatural is, in our view, at best dubious, at worst dangerous.

We would appreciate your assurance as requested and would be interested in your comments.

Blasphemy - Law Commission

The determination of the appeal in *R v Lemon* (the Gay News blasphemy case) by a majority of three to two in the House of Lords has raised again in the public mind the whole question of the place of blasphemy in the law today, the need for such an offence and the requirements of it.

The Law Commission is now working on a consultative document on the subject for publication later in the year, on which it will be seeking views from as wide a spectrum of opinion as possible. This, and the ensuing consultation will be preliminary steps in the preparation of a report with firm recommendations.

We thought that our members would like the opportunity to express their views on this matter. National VALA believes it to be very important that the Blasphemy Law is maintained.

Please send your comments to: J. C. R. Fieldsend, Secretary, Law Commission, Conquest House, 37/38 John Street, Theobald's Road, London, WC1.

THANKS for your many and helpful letters. We feel sure you will understand that the pressure on time and the increasing cost of postage makes it impossible to answer them all.

But please keep writing. Your letters about the programme **MURDER AT THE WEDDING (ITV)** for instance, were immensely helpful.

THIRD TIME LUCKY?

An Indecent Displays Bill, following the presentation of 1½ million signatures on the Nationwide Petition for Public Decency, was introduced by Sir Robert Carr, then Home Secretary, but was lost when the Heath Government fell.

Early this year the Conservative M.P. Mr. Hugh Rossi introduced a similar Bill. It's 2nd Reading passed with no dissenting votes, but that Bill, too, was lost when the last Government fell in March.

Now Dr. Brian Mawhinney's Bill – very similar in content – will have its 2nd Reading on December 7th and stands a very good chance of becoming law.

We hope that all our members will write personally to their M.P.s asking them to be sure to be present to vote in its favour. It would also be very helpful if such requests could reach M.P.s from Churches, organisations and groups of all kinds. We suggest that your local paper be kept fully in touch with your activities and that the correspondence columns of local and national papers make excellent forums for stating your convictions in this matter.

WE HAVE ONE GREAT RESERVATION ABOUT THE BILL. IT DOES NOT COVER BROADCASTING.

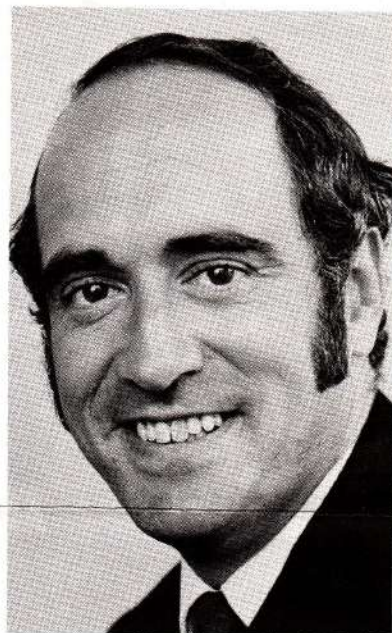
It is, in our view, totally absurd and quite indefensible that broadcasting should remain above the law in this regard. Not least because it is also excluded from the terms of reference of the Williams Committee currently studying the Obscenity Laws.

Please raise this matter with your M.P. also.

We are informed by Mr. T. J. Taylor, Assistant Director of Public Prosecutions that his office is no longer dealing directly with obscene publications and that the public should directly inform the local police concerned. This would appear to be a change of tactics and, one can only hope, one which will bring more effective action.

We find that there is a good deal of confusion in people's minds as to what action to take when they see indecent material on display. We would therefore make the following suggestions:—

1. Either go or write to your local Police Station giving the name and address of the firm which is displaying the offending publication and the name of the magazine or record concerned. Ask for forfeiture proceedings and for the police to raid the local wholesaler supplying the newsagent.



Dr Brian Mawhinney, MP

2. When such material is on display at Railway Stations write to Sir Peter Parker, Chairman of the Railways Board, 222 Marylebone Road, London NW1. If on underground stations write to: The Chairman, London Transport Board, St. James Park Underground Station. If at airports to: Mr. N. J. Payne, Chairman, British Airport Authority, 2 Buckingham Gate, London SW1.

David Dimbleby Interviews Mary Whitehouse

Letter to Alastair Milne, Head of BBC Television, from Mrs. Mary Whitehouse.

"I would like you to know how very much my husband, my family and the many of my colleagues who have already expressed their feelings, appreciated the 'Person to Person' interview last week which featured me.

"I thought that David Dimbleby, John Percival and Roy Chapman, in their varying roles, brought great integrity to the production of the programme and I am sensitive to the generosity which enabled me to explain my motivations and speak of those concerns which are so important to me.

"I am sending a copy of this letter to Sir Michael Swann in the hope that he will bring it to the attention of the Board of Governors."

EXTRACT FROM "PERSON TO PERSON" — BBC1 5th JULY 1979

M.W. "VALA is really about encouraging everybody, wherever they stand on the spectrum, actually whether they agree or disagree with us, to take the responsibility of communicating directly with the Broadcasting Authorities. Now that is what the work is all about – that people should make their voice heard and the Broadcasting Authorities, who have responsibility, what? – not to offend against good taste and decency etc., how are they to know, when and if they do, unless there is a continuing vocal exchange of opinions? So this is very important to us and if someone rings, as they do, writes as they do... we say "would you consider writing directly?" –

"Oh, I don't know who to write to" – then we say "Here's the address, this is the person to write to..."

D.D. "Giving them what, the writer of the programme or producer or someone?"

M.W. "We cannot always immediately give them the producer. What we have to do quickly is give the BBC, either London or Regional, various ITV Companies and so on, and suggest that they write directly. People are very frightened of doing this actually. If they do not get a reasoned and courteous response, then we suggest to them that they write to the Director General or Head of Television or possibly write to their M.P. We find that if someone writes to their M.P. then the M.P. writes to the Broadcasting Authority and they respond very, very quickly to M.P.s. They don't ignore M.P.s!"

D.D. "Do you think that you are now a voice that is in some ways feared by the BBC? That they are nervous of your comments on their programmes and the kinds of things you say? Do they listen and respect you in that way?"

M.W. "I would be very sorry, David, if anybody was afraid of us. Not only because I think it would be a bad thing anyway, but because it would mean that they were not accepting their responsibility actually to take into account what people do say, not only us but everyone. Why should a Broadcasting Authority be afraid of what anybody says? A public Corporation run on public money? It shows a subjectivity which is not healthy. On the matter

(Continued on page 4)

A series of public meetings is being held by the IBA during 1979 in order that, in the words of the Annan Report the "wishes, views and complaints" of the public can be heard in relation to the performance of the various ITV companies. The IBA have announced the meetings listed below and, we understand, more will follow.

PLEASE ATTEND THE ONE IN YOUR AREA IF POSSIBLE!

Wednesday	3 October	7.30 p.m.	Ballroom, County Rooms, Hotel Street, Leicester.
Thursday	4 October	7.30 p.m.	Alderman Peel School, Wells.
Friday	5 October	7.30 p.m.	The Corn Exchange, Kings Lynn.
Monday	8 October	7.30 p.m.	Assembly Room, Town Hall, Hereford.
Tuesday	9 October	7.00 p.m.	City Hall, Boscawen Street, Truro.
Thursday	11 October	7.00 p.m.	St. John's Hall, Market Jew Street, Penzance.
Monday	15 October	7.30 p.m.	Assembly Room, Guildhall, High Street, Worcester.
Monday	22 October	7.30 p.m.	Oval Hall, Victoria Leisure Centre, Nottingham.

IBA MEETINGS

Tuesday	23 October	7.00 p.m.	Beau Sejour, St. Peter Port, Guernsey.
Wednesday	24 October	7.00 p.m.	St. Helier Town Hall, York Street, St. Helier, Jersey.
Friday	2 November		Bournemouth
Thursday	15 November	7.00 p.m.	Penrice School, Charlestown Road, St. Austell.
Thursday	22 November	7.00 p.m.	Guild Hall, Cambridge.
Tuesday	27 November	7.30 p.m.	Town Hall, Kilmarnock.
Wednesday	28 November	7.00 p.m.	Lower Guildhall, Armada Way, Plymouth.
Thursday	29 November	7.30 p.m.	Town Hall, Hamilton.
Friday	30 November		Brighton.

PERSON TO PERSON

(Continued from page 3)

of respect, if you mean the sort of fear in terms of an honest respect, then I think people do respect what we say."

D.D. (smiling) "But don't you think that

they may open their newspapers and say "Oh, lor, Mrs. Whitehouse is at it again! What are we going to say this time?"

M.W. (laughing) "You may know better than I do. I don't think so. By the time they get their newspapers they have had the letter anyway and they know all about it for the most part. If people are going to be in public life — and I'm in public life — why should they expect a comfortable life? They are going to have access to our homes, be part of the intimacy of our family circle, then if they intrude in a way which is crude and course and offensive then they must expect it and be glad of it, I would have thought really."

THE CROSSROADS SCHEME



The Crossroads Care Attendant Scheme Trust — a pilot scheme financed by ATV, has deliberately limited its task to helping those who looked after the physically handicapped in their own homes.

During the two years of the pilot scheme, 3,000 visits were made (some additional care attendants were recruited) and 28 families were helped. At present, 40—60 visits are made each week. But the timetables and the numbers of hours put in will often change, as the scheme remains flexible.

The Crossroads Care Attendant Scheme Trust is now acting as a nucleus for a national network of similar schemes including, hopefully, the mentally as well as the physically handicapped.

This compassionate and highly imaginative initiative by ATV surely merits everyone's commendation.

Published by National Viewers' and Listeners' Association, Ardleigh, Colchester, Essex. Printed by CPC Ltd., Christchurch, Dorset.

LETTER TO N. VALA

"In my work as a clinical psychologist I sometimes treat people with obesity problems. One technique that I use is to have the patient deposit money with me on the understanding that he will lose this money to a named organisation if he fails to get his weight down to an agreed target by a stipulated time. To increase the patient's motivation to get his weight down to the agreed target, and not forfeit money, he is asked to name an organisation for which has little sympathy. One of my patients named your own organisation in this context and having failed to reach a weight target, he has agreed to forfeit £7 to you. The money is enclosed and I should be grateful if you would send me a receipt."

Name and address supplied.

BOOK LIST

NEW AND RECENT ADDITIONS (Post free)

NATIONAL VALA SUBMISSION ON BLASPHEMY LAW	50p
"THERE CAN BE NO DEFENCE..." — Violence on Television	25p
MONITORING RADIO AND TELEVISION — Guidance Notes	25p

BOOKS

"WHATEVER HAPPENED TO SEX?" by MARY WHITEHOUSE (p & p 15p)	£1.25p
"MARY WHITEHOUSE" by Max Caulfield (reduced from £4.50)	£1.00p

REPORTS (Post free)

CONVENTION 1979 Address by Mary Whitehouse	25p
"Law — and Disorder" — National VALA Report	50p
"What Price Annan!" — National VALA Report	60p
"Children's Viewing Habits" — National VALA Report	50p
"MPs' Response to Questionnaire" — National VALA Report	20p
"CHILDREN AND TELEVISION" — PYE Research Report (p & p 20p)	£2.00p
"Television Violence and the Adolescent Boy" — Dr. William Belson at the British Association 1977	50p

LEAFLETS (please send stamps)

CENSORSHIP — article first published in "Cosmopolitan"	1p
Current Communist Goals	1p
Parents' Sex Education Charter	1p
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Pointers on Children's Viewing	1p

FREE (please send stamps)

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