

Centre for Mass Communication Research

ANNUAL REPORT 1972/73

In last year's Report it was suggested that because of the new developments in communication technology and structures and the promised official review of broadcasting for the whole country, our work on The Future of Broadcasting could be the most important we had yet undertaken. The fact that the review has been postponed in no way changes this, for the delay means that there is a better chance that the results from our research will inform high level decision-making on media policy. We were encouraged towards the end of the year by an approach from Sir John Eden, Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, who expressed a keen interest in our work and particularly in our Community/Television study in Swindon. This study of the development of local cable television had been made possible by a grant from B.M.I. and Thorn Television Rentals, and by the enthusiastic co-operation of Swindon Viewpoint (the television company) and the Borough of Swindon Community Development Office. Other projects within the overall Future of Broadcasting programme (including a survey of communication needs and uses, and a content analysis of television programmes over a period of time) were completed, and reports were presented to the Broadcasting Commission of the General Synod of the Church of England which had supported this work from the outset. The work still goes on, but further major developments await additional financial support.

During the year, work continued on the following projects:

International Television News Study in Ireland, Nigeria and Sweden;
Television in Irish Society; The Media and Industrial Relations;
The Media and Political Socialization; Film Censorship; and
Adolescent Culture and the Mass Media. Books and articles were also published which stemmed from projects which had been completed in earlier years, particularly Mass Media and Race Relations, Mass Media and the Secondary School, and Violence. Exploratory work was also carried out in several other areas.

The international nature of the Centre's work was emphasized more than ever during the year. In September, at its General Assembly in Buenos Aires, Professor J. D. Halloran was elected President of the International Association for Mass Communication Research. In January, the

headquarters of the Association was moved to Leicester and, in May, Professor J. D. Halloran presided over the first meeting of the new executive in Leisig.

Unesco, which earlier had sponsored an International Seminar in Leicester on Broadcaster/Researcher Co-operation in Mass Communication Research, continued to support our work and made a further grant to the Documentation and Information Retrieval Centre. Pierre Havaux, Director of Unesco's Division of Development of Mass Media, was visiting fellow at the Centre, together with Luis A. Gomez-Perez, Professor in the School of Journalism, Central University of Venezuela; Samuel B. Quaioco, Editor, Home Desk, Ghana News Agency; and Zoltan Jakab, Deputy Head, Mass Communication Research Centre of Hungarian Radio and Television.

The Council of Europe asked us to organize a seminar in Leicester, under their auspices, on Television Language and Cultural Policies, and Paul Croll contributed to the Council's Venice Conference on Television and the Aesthetics of the Urban Environment. Peter Golding presented papers at the European Broadcasting News Conference in Dublin, and at the Symposium on The International Flow of Television Programmes in Tampere, Finland; and Professor Halloran lectured at the Universities of Constance and Pamplona (Symposium on Communication in the Modern World), and in Buenos Aires, Dublin, Zurich, and Florence (XVII International Congress: Themes of social information in the television of some West European countries).

Together with Elizabeth Eyre-Brook, the Director continued to serve as convenor of the Prix Jeunesse International Research Group (Munich), and this Group met in Leicester early in the year. A grant of £12,000 was awarded by Prix Jeunesse to support work on pre-school children and television, and further financial support is anticipated from this source for a project on Youth and the Media. Both of these are international projects and work will be carried out in Ireland, France, Canada, Norway and Sweden, as well as in this country. Dennis Hewitt and Phyllis Annis visited Sweden in connection with this work.

The Director continued to serve on the Governing Body of the British Institute of Human Rights, also as a member of the Communication Advisory Committee of the U.K. National Commission for Unesco; and continued to act in a consultant capacity to Unesco. He was elected as a Consultant Member to the Fondation Internationale des Sciences Humaines, and as a Member of Council to the Media Society of the newly-formed Institute of Journalists. Together with other members of the staff, he gave lectures, papers and broadcasts at universities and other institutions throughout the country.

The Social Science Research Council continued to provide adequate support for our postgraduate work, and the number of full-time students reading for higher degrees by research increased to six. Ten students completed the MA(Education) Course which is provided jointly with the School of Education.

On the whole it was a year of steady progress, marred only towards the end by a growing realization that official policy towards university research, and the general financial situation, could soon produce some difficult problems for us. We have been fortunate in the past in obtaining financial support for our work. But it does seem possible that within the next 12 months we might have to part with staff of proven ability because money might not be available at the right time. This would be a waste and a tragedy but, granted existing research structures and support systems, sooner or later this sort of problem seems inevitable.