

1. Mary Whitehouse and Roy Shaw.

Had Mr Roy Shaw¹ really wished 'to be fair to Mrs Whitehouse' he would have checked his facts before launching out into what was clearly intended to be taken as a serious assessment of the Clean-up T.V. Campaign and The National Viewers and Listeners Association.

I could have given him, amongst other things, accurate information about the membership of National VALA, as given in April this year - 100,000 individual and block memberships, of which M.R.A. is not one! And not 1,000, which was the figure given last November, at the first Press Conference. Such knowledge would have saved Mr Shaw any further mental gymnastics on the question as to whether, and how far, our organisations are, or have been, financed by M.R.A.

Having gone through our accounts in detail I can tell him that 1.25 per cent of the people who have made contributions to our work are in M.R.A. They have contributed between them 2 per cent of the money which has been sent in. We have received no money whatsoever from M.R.A. headquarters. It is interesting to watch how people like Mr Shaw use the personal loyalty Mrs Buckland and I have towards Moral Re-Armament. And before someone comes back and points out that our Vice-Chairman, Dr E. E. Claxton is also a member of M.R.A., I would like to put on record that we had no contact of any kind with Dr Claxton over this matter until, as official representative of the B.M.A. he attended a meeting to discuss the establishment of a Viewers and Listeners Association. He was elected by the Church leaders, including Monsignor Casey, representing Cardinal Heenan, M.P's, and others in public positions who were present. To 'smear' the two of us, and attempt to make our work suspect because of our connection with M.R.A. smacks of the most dangerous kind of religious intolerance. To say

or infer that M.R.A. is 'behind' this Campaign in any other way is to propagate an untruth.

Mr Shaw talks of 'ill founded claims of support' and proceeds to attempt to prove his accusation by quoting from an article in the *Sun*. May I state here and now that a *Sun* journalist did not *find* that of 41 Church of England Bishops only two had written letters of support' - he *assumed* that this was so because two of these Bishops had done us the honour of becoming patrons - a third Bishop from Scotland is now also a patron. The facts are these - The Archbishop of York, and Archbishop Beck have both sent messages of public support for the Clean-up T.V. Campaign, so also have nine Bishops, Anglican and Catholic. Others have expressed their great interest in our work and have asked to be kept in touch with it.

Then the Chief Constables - 'only sixteen had (written letters of support)' quotes Mr Shaw. This is a false statement, which I would have been glad to correct had I been contacted - though I am led to believe that Mr Shaw had no particular desire to check his statements since he only brought the article to my attention at the end of the month in which it was published. Sixteen Chief Constables have personally signed the Manifesto, while fifty four more have written letters giving general support for the Campaign but expressing their reluctance to criticise publicly another public service.

Mr. Shaw goes on to quote from the *Methodist Recorder's* reporting of the 1965 Methodist Conference. Mr Kenneth Greet did not attend a Clean-up T.V. Meeting. He sent in his resignation from the working committee set up at the meeting earlier referred to - only six of the prominent people present were supporters of the Campaign. I am not allowed the space to deal in detail with the full implication

¹Television: Freedom and Responsibility. June 1966.

of what Mr Greet said, I will only say that far from withdrawing his support, the Anglican Bishop of Hereford, who volunteered to become a Patron at this meeting, has remained an increasing source of strength and encouragement to us in the months since. 'No official support from the Churches, or among our own people'. What nonsense! The great majority of the support for the Campaign has come from the Churches, officially or otherwise.

Giving Mr Kenneth Adam 'a public scrubbing in Trafalgar Square' would not be my solution to the present difficulties, and I, at no time, said these words. Neither have I expressed concern about the War Game being shown to M.P's. – it strikes me as a very good idea.

This business of the pathologically obscene letters really is incredible! I receive obscene letters – and phone calls – and threats of physical violence. But I don't start talking about lunatic fringes, or attribute them to members of TRACK, or COSMO, or any of the other groups who may align themselves against us. I have made a number of attempts to check whether the writers of these letters are bona fide members of the campaign, but I have been refused these facilities, and I understand the difficulties in situations of this kind. But just because such accusations are by their very nature difficult to refute, surely good sense, not to mention Christian charity, would have been better served by putting them straight into the fire. When people have to go to lengths such as this to smear the Campaign, then their motives, and the whole basis of their antagonism, becomes suspect.

I am intrigued by the suggestion that 'hell hath no fury like a woman scorned'. Really Mr Shaw! – are you as short of ammunition as that? And this 'unreasoning hatred' I am supposed to have for the B.B.C. How wide of the mark!

It is because we have so high a regard for the Corporation, so much gratitude for what it has done for the country, in the past, and for those people within the Corporation who have made it, in many respects the finest broad-

casting service in the world, that we are so disturbed by the influence now being exerted by a few people whose thinking is so inturbed and small.

We are not interested in censorship. Mr Shaw says that TRACK is interested in freedom and responsibility. So are we. I wonder therefore, why Mr Shaw, attacks us so bitterly? Could it be that we have a different concept of freedom? To our mind this is not the same as licence. We are for the responsibility which includes in its thinking a constant awareness of those who view and listen, which remembers that the essence of television is that it is home shown, and which realises the necessity of articulating a philosophy for television commensurate with it power.

MARY WHITEHOUSE

Roy Shaw comments

I will be brief. I am grateful for Mrs Whitehouse's figures, but to speak of 'a hundred thousand individual and block memberships' gives an impression of greater support than the facts warrant. Only 2,500 of these are individual members, and the rest accounted for by the membership of affiliated bodies – such as the Free Church of Scotland.

On the question of MRA finance and general support, I completely accept Mrs Whitehouse's assurances, and will refrain from any suggestion of an MRA conspiracy. Will Mrs Whitehouse reciprocate by ceasing to allege, with no evidence at all, sinister conspiracies in the B.B.C.?

No hatred of the B.B.C.? Readers can look again (in my article) at Mrs Whitehouse's statements about the Corporation *and* at the terms of her Manifesto, and judge for themselves.

Censorship or responsibility? I *do* know about the difference between liberty and licence, and invoked it in criticising Mrs Fox. I am glad Mrs Whitehouse repudiates the word 'censorship', but if she is not simply stealing liberal clothing, she should stop calling for Government intervention in television administration and programming.

2. Bernardine Bishop and Hilda Graef.

Hilda Graef's review of *Simone Weil: A Sketch for a Portrait* by Richard Rees¹ does Simone Weil a number of injustices. It seems a pity that the book should have been reviewed by

someone with so little sympathy for this admittedly 'odd' woman – by which I don't mean that reviewers should necessarily like their subjects, but it helps if they understand

¹July 1966.