



# THE VIDEOACTIVE REPORT

RESEARCHED AND WRITTEN BY  
JON DOVEY & JO DUNGEY



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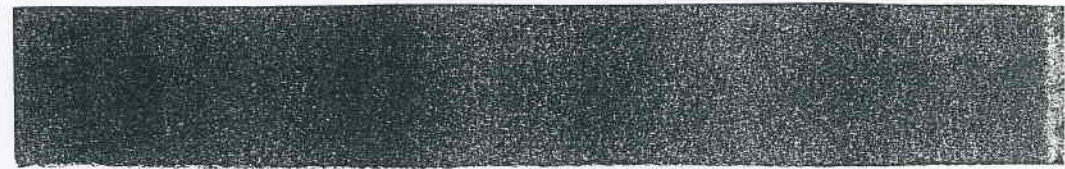
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# CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION



## 1.1 THE BACKGROUND TO VIDEOACTIVE

VIDEOACTIVE is a research project which was set up as a result of discussions between community-based video and film producers in 1983. These discussions centred around the need to develop more effective strategies for distribution in the face of the growing market for programmes on videocassette. By early 1984, funding totalling #15,000 had been obtained from the Gulbenkian Foundation, the British Film Institute, the Greater London Arts Association, Greater London Council and Channel Four. The project was established with an ad hoc management steering group made up of George Auchterlonie, Chapter Video, Dave Halliday, Edinburgh Film Workshop, Aileen Spankie, Glasgow Community Communications, Dave Rushton, Birmingham Trade Union Resource Centre, and Tony Downunt, Albany Video. Two workers, Jo Dungey and Jon Dovey, were appointed in May, 1984 to work part-time conducting the research and writing the report.

Our brief was to report on the current state of distribution practice, to establish how many, and what kind of programmes were available and to investigate ways of reaching new audiences. Specifically, we were charged to look at programmes which are either produced through a process of community involvement or which challenge mainstream media representations. Our research was specifically about distribution on videocassette - though the programmes could be generated on film or on video as long as they fell into the definition above.

We have addressed ourselves to a wide variety of producers and workshop groups, documenting current practices and finding out from them how best their distribution could be supported and improved. Throughout the report, we refer to the "independent, community and workshop production sector". We would stress at this point that "the sector" does not exist as a single, identifiable, homogenous movement, but as a series of practices characterised by differing political and cultural orientations, and beset with its own conflicts around class, race, gender and funding. The use of the term "independent sector" can therefore be taken as referring to that coalition of groups and individuals engaged in the production of audio visual material which locates itself in opposition to mainstream media. An additional aspect of our brief which has developed through the study is that we have concentrated on programmes which are intended to have some social use, be it education, agitation, solidarity, or political and personal consciousness raising.



## 1.2 THE AUDIENCE FOR THIS REPORT

Our report is addressed primarily to those working in the sector identified above. We hope it will provide them with a useful record of current distribution practices and contribute to attempts to improve distribution. There is a constant need within this sector for information exchange and we trust this document may fulfill this function. A secondary audience for our report is the policy-makers and funding bodies who support the sector - Channel Four, British Film Institute, Regional Arts Associations, the Metropolitan and Local authorities - the report should provide them with a useful profile of the sector, as well as policy recommendations. Finally, we also hope the report will be of use to those who actually use the sector: trade unions, education authorities, media teachers, youth workers and social welfare agencies; perhaps helping them to define what the sector is, what it does and what it can offer them.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF DISTRIBUTION WITHIN THE SECTOR

The sector identified above has been producing films and video programmes for the last 15 years. There are now over a hundred groups working in this area, with widely differing levels of resources, pay and conditions - a yearly turnover of several million pounds and a level of capitalisation never previously achieved. Nearly all the major centres of population in the country now have some kind of film or video workshop, and new groups are starting all the time in both rural areas and smaller cities.

Though its concerns vary, this sector has demonstrated a commitment to producing audio visual material through a democratic process and to making such material available as part of a process of social change.

Implicit in this work has been a critique of the methods, styles, representations, and control of mainstream film and television. Producers have been seeking to change the existing relations of the production and consumption of cinematic and television images.

Distribution (i.e. consumption) has always been seen in theory as a crucial part of the sector's work. In practice, it has often been its poor relation. It has not been prioritised by either funding bodies or producers themselves. The endless struggle for adequate levels of subsidy, production, training and access have tended to make more immediate demands upon resources than distribution. In addition, the address to the audience

has been made with the assumption that if the relations of consumption are to be genuinely changed, then the quality of the audience response is just as important as the size of that audience.

Producers have sought to use distribution and exhibition to build ongoing relationships with their audiences, relationships which in the long term feed back into production work. Thus, producers have often been suspicious of attempts to push their work to audiences with whom they have no relationship.

Within specifically community-based film and video production this situation has been exacerbated by the conviction that work produced by and for local audiences, in response to particular local, political and cultural needs, has no need of an audience outside that immediate local context. We would argue that while this is true for some programmes which have a very specific local application, there are also many other programmes which would be useful for people in similar situations elsewhere to see: for example, a tape about tenants fighting for decentralised estate management in Newcastle would be of interest to tenants all over the country engaged in similar campaigns. However, the sector as it now stands has not developed these kinds of distribution networks. This failure has had, and continues to have, an undermining effect upon the sector's confidence. Hardly surprising, if we consider the results of the tape survey contained in this report, the average number of copies sold was only 14 per year, and 80% of the titles sold 5 copies or less!

## 1.4 RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The independent, community and workshop production sector has grown dramatically over the last five years. The campaigns of the seventies began to bear fruit, unionisation for the workers in the sector bought it a degree of respectability, Channel Four invested money in the sector in sums which by comparison with previous investments were very large, and have made real material improvements in the conditions and capitalisation of production; Metropolitan and local authorities have increasingly recognised the value of developing local independent audio visual resources; and finally the market for audio visual material of all kinds has expanded with the result that groups are now far more able to work on commissioned programmes than would have been possible four or five years ago.

Perhaps the most important feature of this changing pattern has been the development of the "franchised" workshop. As a result of an agreement worked out between the ACTT, the film and TV technicians union, Channel Four, the BFI, Regional Arts Associations and the Independent Film and Video Association, workshops can now apply to be "franchised" by the union. This



allows them to work within a specific set of guidelines which are based on the workshop model of production, and to get such work broadcast. It also regularises pay and conditions for workers in the sector. Workshops wishing to become franchised have to show evidence of sufficient funding to employ some full-time workers and have a programme of work approved. The document upon which this agreement is based, 'The Workshop Declaration' is of major significance, for it recognises formally the value of the independent film and video sector, and provides a model for workshops and funding bodies alike to pursue. There are now 16 fully franchised workshops operating throughout the country, with several others pending. In addition to this major consolidation of work within the sector, there are many smaller groups engaged in work which also falls within the sector and new groups are springing up all the time.

It is perhaps a sign of the sector's maturity that distribution is being seriously addressed both in the efforts of individual producers, at regional levels and nationally. The most obvious reason for the vigorous debate about distribution in the sector is that for the first time groups are producing work on a regular basis - the pressure to struggle for basic resources has decreased so distribution can be addressed. Production skills and funding are established - many groups now have a small catalogue of their own programmes which they wish to distribute more widely. However, no national register of such programmes exists, workers are having to learn the skills of marketing and promotion individually with much duplication of effort. The present level of funding security is threatened over the next two years by the abolition of the Metropolitan authorities, the decrease in the rate of Channel Four investment in the sector, and the evaporation of public funds for commissioned work. The sector is faced with the need to promote itself intensely if it is to survive let alone flourish. It urgently needs to sell itself as a distinctive cultural industry, both in its working processes and in its products. Ultimately, it will be judged by the quality of work that it produces - and by how far that work can be seen to be meeting the demands of clearly-defined audiences.

## 1.5 THE ARGUMENT FOR VIDEO CASSETTE

The development of videocassette as the primary means of presenting audio visual productions has also played a role in heightening the sector's awareness of distribution. Videocassette has distinctive qualities which differentiate it from other forms of cultural product. These qualities should form the basis of the development of appropriate distribution strategies. Video distribution is different, it is not the same as film distribution, nor is it the same as book, record, or audio cassette distribution: it cannot be treated as just more of the same.

Both film prints and videocassettes can provide the means for distributing audio visual products. However, by comparison with a film print, video copies are extremely cheap. Thus, film prints are usually rented out, whereas increasingly video cassettes are purchased outright by the user, or rented at a much lower price. Thus, in general, video cassettes can be located closer to books or records than to film.

Further characteristics can be defined at the point of consumption and the viewing situation of video cassettes. The high penetration of VCRs into UK households (estimated variously at between 35% - 40% 1985) has created a change in attitudes across the board to the use of audio visual products. Put simply, people are much more aware of the way they can use video, whether that is for recreation, education, or campaigning. Video cassettes are easy to use, they are available quickly and cheaply, and their use is increasingly centred around individual consumer decisions.

Undoubtedly, these developments were part of the spur to establishing the VIDEOACTIVE research - expectations existed that we would be able to suggest to the sector what it had to do to get its work into people's homes, on the livingroom shelf between "Conan The Destroyer" and "The Evil That Men Do". However, we have observed that domestic VCR use is overwhelmingly purely recreational, whereas most of the sector's output is educational, campaigning or agitational. These two audiences, though they may overlap, are very different. We have observed that attempts so far made by distributors (i.e. The Other Cinema's bookshop distribution scheme and The Exchange Value Video Club) to get independent work into a domestic context have not been successful. Finally, most producers actually do not want their work used in a purely domestic context. The sector has been historically committed to screening work in group and collective viewing situations - contexts in which discussion, education and organisation can occur in a public or semi-public way.

We have defined the audiences identified by producers for their work as being within the "institutional" sector: people involved in or working with groups in schools, colleges, trade unions, hospitals, social welfare organisations, community work settings, youth clubs, political and cultural campaigns. The developments outlined above around the domestic use of video and the ways in which this has changed attitudes towards audio visual work have also had an effect upon the institutional video user. This audience has its expectations of video conditioned by the domestic video boom - they will therefore expect tapes to be made available easily, quickly and cheaply. In addition, the sheer availability of playback equipment from both domestic and institutional sources makes it easy for users to organise playbacks. Much of our research into audiences has therefore centred around ways in which programmes can be further disseminated in cassette through the networks of institutional users.



Further characteristics of video cassette can be identified around the viewing situation. Unlike film, video has no theatrical distribution, tapes are watched in small groups amongst whom discussion can occur after or during the screening. For this reason, they lend themselves to group work activity. (One teacher at least you could see if the audience was falling asleep!).

Video cassettes are cheap, used by non-professionals with increasing ease, lend themselves to group work, and are used more and more within educational and campaigning networks. While the majority of work available on cassette at the moment is produced by the mainstream media, i.e. feature films and broadcast material, the increasing flexibility with which people are prepared to use video suggests that a much greater diversity of material will be disseminated on tape. Within this diversity new audiences for independent work can be found. What follows describes how producers and distributors are attempting to respond to the challenge of cassette distribution and, we hope, suggests strategies which will make more socially useful programming available.



**CHAPTER TWO : SUMMARY OF MAIN  
CONCLUSIONS**





# SUMMARY OF MAIN CONCLUSIONS

1. Distribution cannot be considered in isolation from the range of workshop practices described in Chapter Five. Examining distribution immediately leads back into problems of production. Specifically, production decisions need to be determined by a clear conception of the programme's potential audience. Is production for the benefit of the participants, including the producers, or is it aimed at an audience removed from the production process? Producers in the independent, workshop and community sector need to become much more clear about identifying their audiences. Distribution should be part of the production process from the outset.

2. Channel Four and the Workshop Declaration have led to an increased possibility that the sector's work will be broadcast. This should not lead producers to overlook the potential for expanding cassette distribution. Producers should ensure that they retain the non-broadcast rights to their material. The demands of the broadcast audience and the cassette audience are very different in terms of length and style. Successful exploitation of both markets may require different final edits and presentation.

3. The figures on distribution revealed in our tape survey are disappointingly low - over 80% of the titles in our survey sold less than five copies in a year. Each title had an average of thirty screenings. We conclude that these results are either because the titles have not been adequately promoted or because they were not produced with a target audience in mind.

4. Distribution cannot be assessed only by sales and hire figures; producers stressed repeatedly that the quality of audience response was as significant to them as the number of viewers. A high priority is placed on actively using the work to go out and build audiences on a local and regional basis. This direct contact with audiences is an essential feature of the sector's work.

5. Our research into potential audiences, and the extent of distribution achieved by a few producers, indicate that there is considerable room for expansion. Specifically we estimate that well produced, adequately targetted productions, distributed nationally, should aim to achieve sales of at least 100 titles per year.

6. Producers also need to research more thoroughly the needs of the audiences they are aiming at. Audiences need to be educated in the use of video in education and campaigning. Packaging

~~and presentation of tapes should be improved, with user notes and back-up material. Tapes can be presented as one part of a planned educational programme or campaign pack.~~

7. If producers are to reach new audiences, they need to devote more resources to promotion. Programmes don't get used when nobody knows about them. Each production should have its own promotional strategy, using accurate mailing lists, reviews in appropriate journals, and preview screenings. Cataloguing and information systems are needed for particular audience groups. This work could be undertaken more efficiently if producers combined together on a regional basis. Production budgets need to include funds for the initial outlay on promotion.

8. In mainstream media production, budgets are directly related to distribution potential, often through co-funding with distributors or broadcasters or through pre-sales. This is not the case in the independent sector. Financial returns from distribution make little or no impact upon the costs of production. In some cases, returns from distribution cover the costs of publicity, tape dubbing, distribution workers' wages, etc. However, even then hidden subsidy from other sources, especially in the workshops, may distort this picture.

9. Existing distributors do not successfully serve the interests of producers in the sector. These distributors have all evolved from film-based practice and are only slowly adapting to the needs of video cassette distribution. In addition, each of the existing distributors has a particular identity based on differing political, social and cultural factors - none of these identities encompasses a brief to distribute the work of the sector. Producers in this sector voiced a need for more feedback from distributors about what audiences want.

10. The varying orientations and policies of the producers which make up this sector make it impossible for us to propose setting up a single national distributor. Rather, we would recommend that this report is used as the basis for establishing a national network of distribution workers organised on a region-by-region basis. Each region should undertake combined promotion and information exchange on planned productions, audience requirements, etc. To this end, we have already sponsored an application to the Greater London Enterprise Board to set up a video promotion and distribution agency for the Greater London area and hope that such an agency will help to assist in the emergence of new distribution networks regionally.





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**CHAPTER THREE : TAPE SURVEY**



## INTRODUCTION

We decided at the outset of our study that in order to get a realistic picture of current workshop distribution, we needed to find out exactly what programmes were available on cassette from the sector. After contacting more than a hundred groups, we eventually sent out questionnaires to 67 producers, of whom 37 replied, a 55% response. Producers were asked to give us information on the tapes they currently had available for distribution, including sales and screenings figures for the year preceding survey (1983-4). The questionnaire is reproduced as Appendix 3 to the report.

The data we received was by no means comprehensive. There are 146 titles on our tape list (Appendix 1): we estimate that a totally comprehensive listing would increase this figure by about 33%. In addition, new and better programmes are constantly being produced, the cut-off point for inclusion in the list was Autumn '84: there are no new titles after that date. The survey gives a cross-section of the kind of work being produced in the sector. This work will form the basis for the development of distribution networks.

## 3.2 RESULTS OF SURVEY

The total number of titles in the survey is 146.

The total number of cassettes sold during the year of the survey was 1,997.

Each title sold an average of 13.6 copies.

The gross return to the sector from sales was #44,156.\*

The net return, calculated by subtracting #7.50 from the sale price of each cassette to cover dubbing, post and packing, is #29,179.

The average sales price is #31.50.

There were a total of 4459 screenings of the titles in the survey. An average of 30.47 screenings per title.

Only 34 of the titles in the survey achieved sales of more than 5 copies in the year.

The average number of sales of these 34 titles is 57 copies per year.

\*NB. Symbol # indicates Pounds throughout.



## INTRODUCTION TO TABLE 1 AND GRAPHS 1 AND 2

Table 1 and Graphs 1 and 2 give a breakdown of the tape survey areas: Labour Movement, Social Welfare, Women's Issues, Youth, Health and Sexuality, Anti-Nuclear, History, Race, Rural/Ecology, Community Arts and Ireland. Labour Movement includes such subjects as women and work, oral history, unemployment and local government. Social Welfare includes a range of subjects such as Education, Housing, the aged, community events and documentaries, literacy, and social and community work training. Health and Sexuality covers health service campaigns, handicap and disability, also gender.

Table 1 shows the number of titles in the survey from each subject category, the total sales for each subject and the average number of sales per title in each category. Obviously, many titles will appear in more than one category, the first tape on the list for instance "One in Forty-Four", a programme about schoolgirl pregnancies, is included under Women's Issues, Youth, and Health and Sexuality sections.

Graph 1 simply gives a representation of the numbers of titles in each category, showing the relative popularity of different subject areas in workshop production.

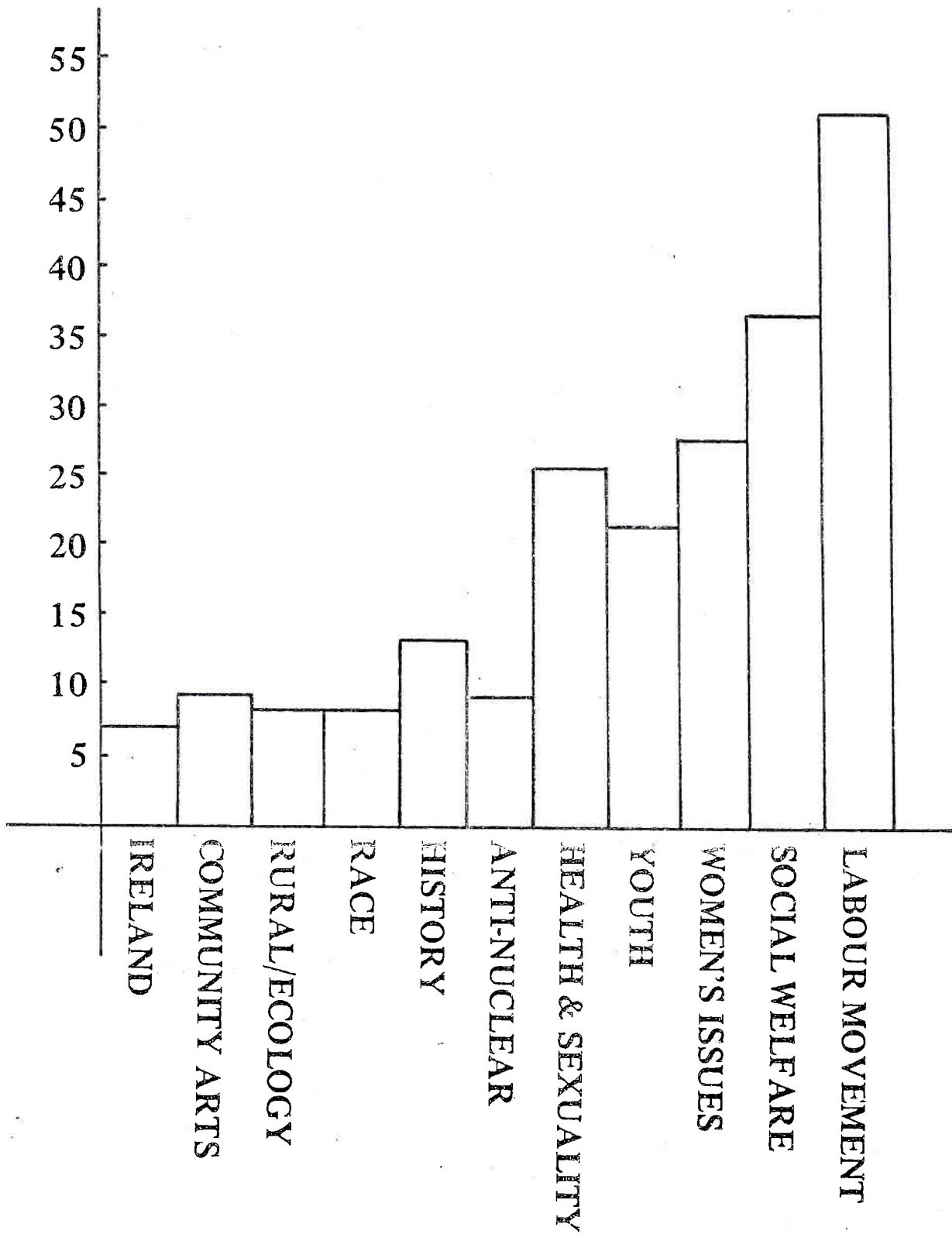
Graph 2 is a visual representation of the average number of sales achieved by titles in each subject category, showing the relative popularity of different subjects to the audience.

**TABLE 1: TOTAL NUMBER OF TITLES IN EACH CATEGORY, TOTAL SALES BY CATEGORY, AND AVERAGE SALES PER TITLE IN EACH CATEGORY.**

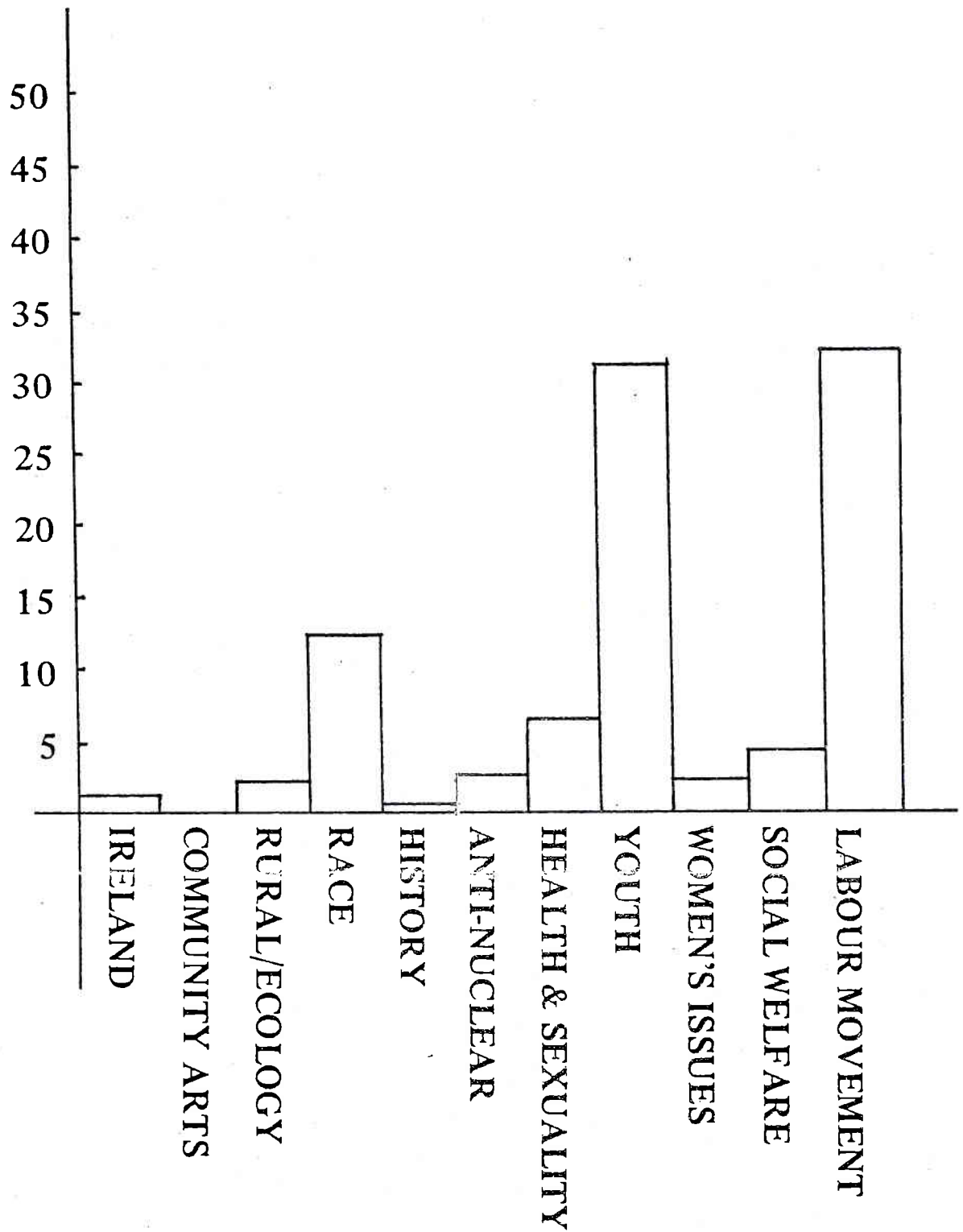
Subject Category	No. of Titles in each Category	Total Sales by Category	Average No. of Sales per Title
LABOUR MOVEMENT	51	1576	31
SOCIAL WELFARE	39	160	4
WOMEN'S ISSUES	27	57	2
YOUTH	21	643	30
ANTI-NUCLEAR & PEACE	9	18	2
HISTORY	13	6	0.5
RACE	8	98	12
RURAL/ECOLOGY	8	15	2
COMMUNITY ARTS	9	0	0
IRELAND	7	6	1



GRAPH 1: NUMBERS OF TITLES IN EACH SUBJECT CATEGORY



**GRAPH 2: AVERAGE NUMBER OF SALES PER TITLE BY SUBJECT CATEGORY**



## CONCLUSIONS

1. The sales and screenings averages listed in Section 2 above are generally low. We can suggest three reasons for this:
  - (a) Our survey included high numbers of programmes which were not produced with a clear idea of what the target audience would be or how it would be reached. These programmes cannot therefore be said to have large distribution potential.
  - (b) Many of the titles listed have had little or no promotional work done around them, and therefore have not realised their potential for distribution.
  - (c) Many producers were unable to give us accurate or complete information on sales and screenings: these gaps lower the overall averages.
2. Those tapes that have achieved a significant number of sales have not brought in enough income to make any impact on the costs of production, though the returns on sales for these tapes will almost certainly cover the costs of distribution and promotion.
3. The most successful titles in terms of tape sales are those which were produced with a clearly identified audience network in mind, e.g. "Put People First" (No. 103), made for the NALGO anti-privatisation campaign, and "Find Your Own Support" (no. 54), made for youth workers.
4. There is a strong correlation between those tapes achieving high sales figures and promotional effort. The tapes that sell high numbers have all been well promoted.
5. The success or failure of distribution cannot be measured purely in terms of sales figures. As the review of workshop distribution practice shows elsewhere in this report, many other factors need to be taken into account. In addition, the average number of screenings per tape in the survey, 30.47, shows that programmes do actually get used, even though they may not be getting sold.
6. The breakdown of programmes by subject matter in section 3 above shows that the most popular subjects for production are those categorised as Labour Movement, Social Welfare, Women's Issues, Health and Youth. However, the average sales per title in each category does not follow the same pattern; the Labour Movement and Youth tapes coming out with almost the same average of 30 sales, tapes on Race showing a high number of sales and the others with very low averages.





# CHAPTER FOUR : **EXISTING DISTRIBUTORS**



## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section describes the work of a number of existing distributors dealing with radical, innovative or community-based work. It is based on the work of the author and on the work of some of the interviewees. Most of the interviews with these organisations took place in the second half of 1984. Not all aspects of their work are described, but only those connected with video, and with future developments they are planning. All of the existing distributors were film-based, but were aware of video as a rapidly changing and growing sector, and were responding in different ways to this. Some of the new projects were not properly established when we talked to them, and may have changed since that time. The conclusions discuss the role of existing distributors in the development of workshop video distribution.

## 4.2 THE OTHER CINEMA

The Other Cinema was founded as a distributor of radical film, both 35-mm. and 16-mm. Their titles are chosen on political grounds, including feature films, and they have a particular involvement with Third World and development issues, international and women's films. They also distribute work by some experimental film-makers. Video hire started three years ago, and is very rapidly replacing 16-mm as the main medium of non-theatrical distribution. Now, 16-mm is being run down, and new titles are always made available on video. Pricing for hire in 1984 was #20 to #50 for film and #14.95 including postage, for video. Video sales were recognised as a growth area, and they were lowering prices as fast as they could, from #3 per minute, to tapes at #20-#70 each.

The Other Cinema publish an annual catalogue, as well as leaflets, and some films have cinematic launches. They have been developing more targeted promotion, particularly for video, with leaflets featuring about ten titles for a particular area. For example, anti-racist work (grant-aided by the GLC), videos for education, or for trade unionists. These were mailed on a large scale, and leaflets inserted in appropriate magazines such as "Sanity" for the peace movement. The Other Cinema are aiming to develop their mailing system to schools, colleges, trade unions, film societies, political and community organisations. Plans exist for a computerised data base, but it is recognised that compiling this and keeping it genuinely accurate and up-to-date is an expensive and labour-intensive operation. They were hoping to get funding for a worker to develop this, but otherwise have developed The Other Cinema without subsidy.

The Other Cinema had taken some workshop tapes, for instance, from Albany and Films at Work, and were interested in more. Titles were chosen which were well-made, socially useful, and for which it was felt that there was a market.

The Other Cinema were involved in an experimental initiative in 1984-5 to distribute videos for loan through radical bookshops. Shops in London, Leicester, Liverpool and Edinburgh took part. They were supplied with a dozen Other Cinema titles, features and documentaries with a display rack and leaflets. The titles were available for #2.50 for one day and #3.50 per weekend. It was stressed that hire was for domestic viewing only, not for meetings or courses. However, one of the participating bookshops said that they could not "police" what happened to the tapes, once hired.

Unfortunately, not as many bookshops wanted to take part as had been hoped, and the number of loans were low. For example, in Blackthorn Books in Leicester, the most popular titles were feature films such as "Battle of Algiers" but even that only went out four times in several months. Most of the documentaries went out once or twice, if at all, and the shop staff said they had not been able to exchange titles for more feature films which seemed likely to be more successful. Because of low take-up, the scheme had to be wound up after nine months.

This pilot experiment indicates that there does not seem to be much of a domestic audience for documentary-type tapes. Any attempt to build a domestic audience for radical or independent material seems more likely to succeed if it is based on entertainment forms like feature films or music. The attempt to prevent videos hired for domestic showing being shown at meetings or elsewhere is probably almost impossible, and hiring at #14 will be hard to sustain if the same tapes are offered at #2.50 from the same organisation or in a more local and convenient place. Also, it is clear that the use of video will take time to develop and needs active promotion. There may have been an unwillingness to give the shops the most popular feature films which they thought there would be more demand for, because of the commitment to promoting documentaries, and the feeling that this was succumbing too much to the standard High Street video shop formula.

However, The Other Cinema were still interested in working to develop video distribution, with improved mailing, and possibly a 'shop-front' outlet. Although originally a film distributor, The Other Cinema are attempting to respond to the growing market for videos.



## CONCORD FILMS COUNCIL

Concord Films Council are the largest and longest-established radical film distributor. Now based in Ipswich, they started about twenty years ago in London with a group of people who were particularly concerned with using films in association with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Concord are still strongly associated with the peace movement, and distribute a large range of titles on this issue.

They have a very large catalogue (literally: at least 2" thick!). As well as work for the peace movement, there are a large number of titles for education and training, on health issues, international campaigns, anti-racist work and many other subjects - 3,000 titles. One of the problems people experienced with Concord was that their list was so extensive that a less well-known title could get 'lost' in it. However, specialised literature and promotions have been produced.

Concord have 33 staff, of whom ten are full-time. In the last few years, they have experienced a dramatic increase in demand for video. Despite this, over the past four years, the total number of hirings, film and video, has fallen, there has been a rapid increase in video sales. Although they are determined to adapt to the change, in a climate of public spending cuts where overall hiring is falling, it is as yet unclear whether video hire will start to decline because of video sales. They have made an unsuccessful attempt to gain funding for a researcher to investigate future market trends for social issue material.

Concord's sale prices are around #40-60 for 30 to 60 minute tapes. Hire prices are generally between #9 and #15. In one year, 1983-4, about 1700 cassettes were sold, and 6,000 cassettes hired. Video has expanded since then. This was the largest volume of cassette sales and hire by any of the existing distributors.

The most successful area of specific video promotion they have been associated with was their 'Videos for Peace' project. This involved promoting, through special leaflets and advertising, a number of the videos they have on peace movement issues, for sale prices of #20 - #40. These sold more than 250 copies in the trial period, with the highest sellers being Helen Caldicott's "Critical Mass", 40 copies, "If You Love This Planet", 50 copies, and "Protest and Survive", 34 copies. This showed the boost to sales possible with targeted promotion, helped by the fact that the peace movement have had a high awareness of the need to use video and film.

Overall, they are trying to lower sale prices to increase volume of sales, and to ask for payment for sales in advance to reduce administration. They also may extend the hire period (one day

~~at present) to a longer period without increasing the charge.~~  
However, they find that video distribution is changing so fast, it is hard to predict developments very far ahead.

#### 4.4 CIRCLES

Circles is a distributor set up in London to distribute films made by women, particularly work of a more artistic or experimental kind, although their catalogue includes some documentary titles as well.

They are concerned with bringing into distribution work by early women film-makers and of promoting contemporary work, particularly short films. Some of their titles are available on video, and they are interested in taking videos made by women but are not offered much. They have had grants from the Arts Council to publicise and tour "packages" of short films, which must include historical or avant garde aspects of film culture. They are also involved in screenings, particularly women-only screenings at the Four Corners Cinema, East London, where they are based. Their films are shown at women's festivals and other women's movement and cultural events, and they are also involved in festivals and other international distribution.

Circles in late 1984 had two workers, and had just received grant aid from the GLC to employ a worker on publicity and promotion. Their aim was that GLC funding would enable them to take more risks and to move away from direct agit. prop. film. They hoped to take into distribution more films which were "difficult" and to expand their promotional work.

Their interests in the future were in maintaining film hire, and adding video hire and some video sales to this, and in distributing films made by women working in film, or video, as an artistic and experimental medium. Although much of this work is related to feminist political concerns, it is still based on a distribution model which starts from the individual film-maker and then works to find an audience for the film or video when made.

Video hire was the same as for film hire, around #10-#20, with lower rates for unfunded groups, and high prices for video sales. Pricing was considered a very difficult area because of the need to provide income for women film-makers who were often working unfunded. Circles were concerned that the grant-aided workshop sector were creating expectations about lower pricing of video which unfunded film-makers could not match, and that this could harm some production areas.

## 4.5 CINEMA OF WOMEN

Cinema of Women was started in 1979 by six women film-makers as a distributor of feminist film. They have also been distributing video for the past two years. Most of the video they distribute is film-generated work, although they are now being approached by an increasing number of video-makers, particularly campaign groups. Their video hire has come from nothing to 50% of hires, within eighteen months.

C.O.W. started on a shoestring, to distribute films related to the women's movement, and apart from some recent money from the GLC for equipment and a worker to promote screenings, they have had to be self-financing, as well as aiming to provide income for often under-financed women film-makers.

Titles they take into distribution are decided by the collective of six, three of whom are paid workers. They aim to have sole distribution rights on the work they take. The work they distribute includes titles related broadly to campaign issues arising from the women's movement, such as health issues, violence against women, and child care. Demand for this kind of work, shorter films and documentaries, is increasingly for video, rather than film. They are also involved in cinematic distribution of feature films such as "A Question of Silence" and "Born in Flames". They have also sold work to Channel Four. Very little of the work they handle is made by the workshop sector.

Hire charges for video are the same as for film. Each film has a different charge, depending on length, from about #12 to #50. Hire charges, particularly video, can be negotiated downwards for low-funded groups but not below half the listed price. For the future, they aim to develop both video and film hire. They expect an increasing demand for video hire particularly from education. They also expect an increase in video sales to organisations. However, one of the COW workers said that she did not feel that video distribution was different from film or required different strategies.

Demand for particular titles depends both on publicity, and on particular political issues which are current. For example, in the past there was more demand for work on women and body image, and issues of representation. Recently, there has been an increasing demand for material on sexual harassment in the workplace, and Canadian and Australian titles are being distributed because of the lack of British work. Issues where there is a need for work to distribute are racism, multicultural resources for education, and material suitable for children. Although in a few cases they have worked with producers giving feedback on unfinished work, in most cases work is brought to them for consideration when it is complete.



Work is promoted through mailings, through advertising and reviews, particularly in feminist publications, as well as the feature films having cinema launches. They also organise screenings for groups, particularly in London. There are plans to develop a computerised mailing system, possibly in co-operation with the other cinema.

## 4.6 WORKERS FILM ASSOCIATION

The Workers' Film Association started ten years ago as a group of left-wing film users and distributors particularly concerned with issues of class and health. Five years ago, the collective moved to Manchester, where they occupy a former warehouse which they are converting, and which houses a wide range of cultural/political activities. This includes film and video production, distribution, screening and meeting place, bookshop, living space and more. They have had funding from Channel Four, North West Arts and Manchester City Council, as well as having their own income-generating activities.

Most of the work they distribute is on 16-mm film, and although they have developed a video collection, they are still very committed to the use of film. Although they distribute nationally, they also have a more intensive regional and local programme of film exhibition and distribution, featuring in particular issues of health, multinationals and development issues, international solidarity, especially Latin and Central American material, and the Middle East. Their programme of work is based on using film as a tool of political transformation, and has strong international links. They have co-distribution on films with Third World distributors from countries such as Eritrea, Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador.

They aim to hold a relatively small number of films (about forty) and to work with them actively, arranging their own programmes of thematic screenings linked with other activities, and also working with other groups who will use the films politically. The films are promoted through exhibition, and also through leaflets and film lists. They estimate that 80% of their film distribution is within the Manchester area, and 20% elsewhere, whereas when they were London-based, 80% was in London. This indicates the need for active work with the kind of films they handle.

Video distribution has increased, and they are slowly putting some of their films on video. Whereas with film they often have exclusive distribution rights, they have a list of video titles where this is not the case. Videos include titles from TV History Workshop, Trade, T.U.R.C., Riverfront, Race and Class, and some of their own productions. They were also a regional

distribution centre for the Miners Campaign Tapes. Their own work includes tapes on Jorge Sanjines, the Latin American filmmaker, on veterans of the Spanish Civil War, and on fostering. However, much of the material they have recorded remains unedited.

Video distribution is on a local, rather than a national, basis. Compared with film, not a large investment was needed to acquire tapes to distribute, but the income from hire was not so great either. However, it provided a service; many organisations were using video who had been film users and there was increased demand from other organisations. It was expected that tape distribution for campaigns and education would increase.

However, there was concern about the economics of video, and also about tape pirating. They felt that users had to realise that film-makers needed an income or production could not take place. This was especially true of the independent Third World film-makers that W.F.A. distribute, whose financial base was very precarious. Their overall aim was to try to meet new demand, but recognising that they had to be cost-effective.

## 4.7 LONDON VIDEO ARTS

London Video Arts distribute video art, tapes of an experimental or artistic objective, although they also have some small-scale involvement with documentary-type material. They have recently moved to new premises which give them more space for organising exhibition and previews, and they are also involved in screenings at other venues in London. They also have post-production facilities. L.V.A. have received grant aid from the BFI to produce a new catalogue of the material they distribute, with articles about video art. Packages of videos are put together and promoted with publicity and information sheets. They have good links with art schools and higher education departments, and video programmes or packages are toured to venues such as arts centres, art colleges and universities. As well as this kind of distribution, LVA is concerned to act as an archive for art video. They also deal with international distribution, and have worked on overseas distribution of British work with the British Council, and also handle international distribution of some campaign material, for instance from the peace movement.

## 4.8 VIDEO LIBRARIES IN ARTS CENTRES

An example of this development is the video library at the Midland Group Arts Centre in Nottingham. Others exist in Newcastle and at the Watershed, Bristol. The library makes available a wide range of tapes for viewing in booths at the arts centre, for a charge of 50p a tape. The tapes are not available to

take away. A free brochure of the tapes is available, and included are art videos, Arts Council documentaries, independent film, particularly from film-makers (on tape), and a collection of community and campaign tapes, for instance from Albany Video. Nottingham has made a particular feature of the community tapes,

## 4.9 NETWORK ONE

This is a new initiative, funded by the Arts Council, to enable a wider distribution primarily of art video, but also of some community or workshop material of a more formally experimental kind. Mike Stubbs has selected a touring collection of videos which will be circulated, in the first stage, between the video libraries at Watershed in Bristol, the Midland Group in Nottingham, and Spectro in Newcastle. A set of tapes will spend three months in each library and then be rotated. The tape contracts are for hire from the artist, but at the end of the year, the libraries can buy any of the tapes. It is hoped that a new collection of tapes will be compiled each year, and that more video libraries in arts centres will be created which can be added to the network.

## 4.10 ICA VIDEOTHEQUE

The Videothèque in the ICA in London is believed to be the largest art video collection in Britain. The collection includes Arts Council documentaries, feature films, artists' video, and other arts-related tapes such as recordings of dance and other performances. The tapes are available for group or individual viewing every day the ICA is open, but they cannot be loaned out. Tapes are viewed on monitors with headphones for one to four persons. There is a catalogue with information about all the tapes. The ICA also organise weekly screenings of video, as well as developing production of videos which it is planned to distribute through libraries. This is described in the Audiences chapter in the section on libraries.

## 4.11 EXCHANGE VALUE VIDEO CLUB

This postal video loan library originated in several different proposals for video libraries. Earlier attempts to set up postal video libraries by the Observer newspaper and by the BFI had been unable to gain enough members to break even. Eric Walker of Concord Films had plans for a New Left Video Library, sending out tapes for home viewing or small group viewing. There had also been the suggestion that the Labour Party or New Socialist magazine would set up a left-wing video library. Comedia, a



research and publication organisation had been involved in some research on distribution commissioned by GLEB, and brought these two ideas together to form the "Exchange Value" video club. This club had a catalogue of videos, including primarily feature films, but also documentary and campaign tapes for example from Trade films and others. This is promoted in conjunction with New Socialist and aimed at the domestic audience.

## 4.12 TEAM VIDEO

Team Video is a new enterprise to market video cassettes, founded by Chris Thomas and Billy Ridgers, who have been involved in making films and videos for the trade union movement, for example Riverfront Films.

They have launched a catalogue of video cassettes for sale at #35 (VHS); they are not offering any hire service. The catalogue includes stills and descriptions of nearly ten titles, mostly on industrial issues such as new technology, health and safety at work, and industrial relations, and also on the media. Some of the titles were already in distribution, some have been bought in from Australia's Open Channel and from the U.S.A. The catalogue was mailed, using a mailing list developed by Riverfront Films and through the 'Films for Socialists' catalogue, to 6,000 addresses, mostly from the labour movement and higher education.

There has been a very strong response and about 300 to 400 cassettes sold in three months. The biggest-selling titles have been "It Ain't Half Racist, Mum!" and 'Why Their News is Bad News' made for the BBC Open Door series. The titles on new technology were also selling well. It was felt that these were programmes that people had heard of, and that a title would not necessarily reach its peak of distribution until the second or third year of release. It was planned to have targetted mailings for new tapes, drawing on information gained from the initial mailings. Most of the response so far had come from further and higher education.

## 4.13 CONCLUSIONS

1. All of the existing distributors have their own specific identities. They have developed around particular political, cultural and formal considerations to develop particular collections and practices. They have their own different political and cultural aims which they intend to develop;

2. Although some of them, for instance The Other Cinema, COW and Workers Film Association distribute some workshop material, none of the existing distributors have a brief to handle and promote the work of the workshop and community-based sector. For the reasons outlined above in (1), it seems unlikely that existing distributors will extensively increase their take-up of workshop material;

3. All of the existing distributors are film-based. They are all experiencing a falling demand for 16mm and rising demand for video. The economics of video production mean that sale and hire costs can be much lower than film, and projects responding to this to create greater volume of distribution are forcing prices downwards. Existing distributors are being forced to lower their prices.

Although distributors are responding to video in different ways, and most of them are changing to meet new demands, most intend to maintain film distribution. There are reasons for maintaining film distribution for cinema and other large-scale viewing: for the quality of image and for related formal considerations. However, distributors seeking to maintain film alongside video distribution often had an ambiguous attitude to video.

Whilst the increase in demand for video was being responded to, and its potential in varying degrees being recognised, video was at the same time seen as a "threat" to film. Distributors were often trying to maintain the same hire charges and the same distribution strategies for video as for film. The pressure to lower prices was seen as cutting distribution income, rather than part of a move to make work available in new ways and on a much larger scale.

Most of the established distributors claim that maintaining the level of hire and sale prices is necessary to provide income for producers. This may be true of some areas of production, but it is equally possible to argue that lower prices and larger scale distribution would achieve this. If work does not have the potential audience to achieve wider distribution then its financial return is always likely to be low.

4. Some of the distributors are adopting different kinds of promotion to reach new audiences for video;

5. Projects aiming at a domestic audience for radical video have not so far proved very successful;

6. Most of the existing distributors aim to be national distributors, often with sole rights. Yet much of the active work of distribution, promotion and setting-up screenings, developing contacts with potential users, is almost impossible to do throughout the country. Most of the existing distributors cannot develop active distribution of this kind outside the area where they

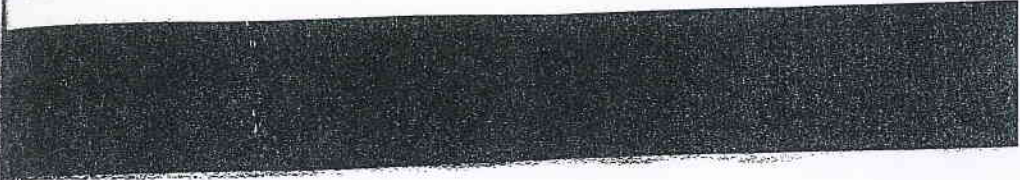
are based. With the considerable potential in future for expanding cassette sales as well as hires, this work needs to be developed in all regions, to expand the audiences for radical work;

7. Producers wanted to receive more feedback of information from distribution, which was one of the main reasons for handling their own distribution. One of the most important defining characteristics of the sector is its aim to maintain a distinct relation with the audience. Rather than the model where the producer as artist completes her or his work, and then seeks an audience for it, radical producers need to work for a defined audience, and need information from audiences and distributors about the work that is required.





**CHAPTER FIVE : AN ACCOUNT OF CURRENT  
WORKSHOP DISTRIBUTION**



## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

1 This chapter will look at the actual practice of distribution within workshops. It will describe the work of thirteen groups, explaining what kind of distribution they do, what their priorities are and how they have been arrived at. Because it is often difficult to separate out distribution from other work these accounts also constitute a general description of workshop practice.

2. On attempting to assess the current state of workshop distribution we were confronted by a bewildering diversity of styles and aims. Within this diversity we have divided groups into three broad categories:-

-Non-franchised groups concerned with practical education and training, access to equipment, and community arts

-Franchised workshops operating under the ACTT Workshop Declaration, each involved in various interpretations of 'integrated practice'.

-Small production companies working to commission both for broadcast, and also for the cassette market.

All of these groups work with different blends of Labour Movement, 'community' based, black, and feminist political perspectives. They also have hugely differing levels of resources, some of the franchised groups have up to ten workers, own their own equipment and premises, other groups are made up of a couple of workers with no equipment, working from one project to another. Each group has its own unique identity made up from a blend of the above factors, the precise position occupied by distribution within such groups will be a function of their overall identity and aims - each group will have developed its own distribution strategy, or lack of it!

## 5.2 NON-FRANCHISED WORKSHOPS

Looking first of all at the smaller nonfranchised groups operating on a workshop model, that is to say concerned to offer a range of film and video related services such as production, access, training and exhibition. There are more groups of this type than any other and they are proliferating at a rapid rate, during the course of the survey we were constantly being informed of

the existence of new and growing groups of this type often away from the main centres of population, in for instance, Plymouth, Aberystwyth, Caenarvon, Swansea, Hull, Shipley, Dorset and Derry.

In the main these groups are using video since it offers a greater ease of access and is cheaper to run, they are funded from a variety of local authority, Manpower Services Commission, Regional Arts Association and Metropolitan Borough sources as well as working to commission. They are often seen by funding bodies as offering a creative use of leisure time and unemployed labour in what is perceived as a hi tech growth area. Such groups have often evolved out of Community Arts work and ideologies, defining their 'catchment' along geographical boundaries which may tie in with their local authority funding sources.

'CONNECTIONS', Based in Hammersmith in West London fit into this category, they evolved from the use of video in play related activities in the area and are now chiefly funded by the GLC with additional support from the local borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, which they define as their area of operation. They are funded for two full time workers and have VHS and Umatic production equipment, using the editing facilities of West London Media another nearby group. They offer open access to groups in their area, giving training where necessary and offering worker participation in joint co-productions. They receive Adult Education funding for running training courses and also offer Women Only training sessions in conjunction with other local groups - they try to work more with groups and their representatives rather than with individuals. Ideas for production arise out of ongoing contact with groups such as loaning out equipment, training and advising on the use of video, they do not feel conflict between access and production, since production comes out of access work with groups.

In the past two years they have produced programmes on a local community health fair, documenting the event; 'Jobs in Space', a fantasy narrative made with a group of unemployed youth about searching for work, 'Summer in the City' a documentation of voluntary organised playschemes within the borough, 'Lark in the Park' about an annual community festival, 'Our House', a documentary about three handicapped people setting up house and re-entering the community; and 'The Bouncing Borough', a record of the work of the local inflatables unit.

These programmes have had an average of only three or four screenings a year organised by Connections itself, though the groups involved in making the tapes may have organised other exhibition. The producers stress the importance of the process of production to the groups involved especially in cases like 'Jobs In Space' and 'Our House', rather than the distribution potential of the finished product. The workers have not prioritised distribution in the past, training, access and process work have taken up more energy. However they have recently held an exhibition of their work in a local gallery



and as a result are pursuing the possibility to house some of their work in public libraries in the borough.

In general however 'Connections' can be said to typify the kind of very locally based workshop for whom distribution is not a priority. While they would welcome wider distribution of their work where appropriate they do not have the resources to do it themselves. In addition the learning experience for the people involved in making the programmes is their major priority.

Tower Hamlets Arts Project has some similarities to the above group in that they have a closely defined East End of London catchment area and work from a community arts basis. They are also involved in theatre, publishing, community writing and running a bookshop, they have only one video worker who, as is often the case in this type of organisation, is also involved in the groups other activities. The video worker there has formed an active workshop of individuals who want to learn about video production, they are trained in various skills with the express purpose of putting together a local video magazine which is called DESPITE TV.

Under the workers co-ordination the members research write and produce an issue of the magazine every two months. They researched where VCRs were located in possible screening venues, including, pubs, clubs, old peoples drop in centres, and youth clubs. The tapes are then distributed by the workshop to these venues, left for an agreed period, usually a week, then collected and passed on to another venue. In this way several issues of the programme will be circulating in the borough at one time.

Ironically although the Despite TV project is aimed very much at local audiences the producers initially found it easier to get the tape screened anywhere else but the local area such was the interest in the idea and its style from other video producers in the sector. In addition the hard slog of actually getting the tapes out and about proved to be not nearly so attractive to the workshop members as producing the next one ! The demand for DESPITE TV from festival organisers, and videoprogrammers as far away as Turin and Paris does show however that even though a programme might be constructed with a particular geographical community in mind it may well have other audiences if the style is attractive and accessible. In addition the magazine format as a means of distribution of very localised video product is obviously one with lots of potential now that VCR ownership is so widespread - hence the interest in the form.

Moving away from London the groups of this scale and scope tend to be less confined to particular geographical areas - obviously

~~when resources are scarcer, as they are outside London, then workshops~~  
are more flexible in the definitions of client groups.

SWINGBRIDGE VIDEO from Gateshead on Tyneside provide a model for groups working on this scale. Swingbridge exists on very low levels of subsidy, with two workers actually earning income from other projects and from teaching in order to keep the project going. Over the last five years they have produced thirteen programmes on video, all of which were locally originated. Their subject matter ranges from community education issues, 'A School In the Community', 'Community Associations in Gateshead', labour movement, 'Part Time Work', 'Who Needs a Union' and 'Behind the Vote' (coproduced with Amber Films), nuclear issues, 'Elastobl-ast', and women's representations 'Autobiographies'. These programmes were produced to commission and through consultation with a whole range of different local statutory and voluntary bodies such as Street Action Centres, Adult Education, Newcastle Poly, the local County Council, MIND, MSC, and NUPE. These groups all have had editorial as well as financial input into the production of the tapes, Swingbridge state,

"In producing videotapes we have developed an approach that encourages the active participation of the commissioning organisations, programmes are produced to stimulate debate and discussion for specific audiences. We do not believe that conventional television production methods which are hierarchical in nature, are suited to the needs of these programmes."

Initial distribution of the above programmes has primarily been through the network offered by the commissioning group, they each have their own audiences with whom they wish to use the tape; this distribution has involved the production of leaflets and user notes to publicise the tape through the client network, - usually on a local or regional basis. This strategy was adequate during the early years of the project, however they are now beginning to seek national distribution of their work, they state,

'Although most of our tapes reflect the issues and concerns of the North East, we recognise that there is a growing demand for video material nationally, the concerns of one region are very often the concerns of another. The increased availability of domestic video machines has made it easier for a wide range of groups to share ideas and experiences through the watching of videotapes.'

To this end they have recently produced a catalogue of all their titles in which each programme has a whole page that can be removed from the catalogue and used independently to dissemination to specific networks. They have so far sent out only 500 copies of this catalogue to a mailing list with a strong regional basis but also to some national contacts. They estimate that the number of copies from distribution last year was #1500, which

~~just about covered the costs of running the distribution side of their project.~~

The philosophy and practice of Swingbridge typify much of the work at this end of the sector. Significantly they have recognised that national distribution is a real possibility for their work and have started to work to this end. They feel that they would support initiatives which could develop their distribution nationally but would not wish to lose control of their regional distribution contacts since they are a valuable source of potential productions - people see their tapes and are then encouraged to contact Swingbridge with ideas for production. However they do not perceive any conflict between national and local distribution they would like to move into a position where the two were complementary rather than exclusive.

BAREFOOT VIDEO based in East Sussex are another group working with limited resources from a strong local community base. They currently have three and a half salaries and an apprenticeship funded by the Gulbenkian Foundation, with a group of volunteers and part time workers, roughly 20 % of their income comes from grant aid, principally from South East Arts, and the Gulbenkian Foundation, the rest from commission for specific production and training work. The primary aim of Barefoot is to facilitate video use by non professionals, giving access to training, skills, and equipment enabling groups in the community to use video.

Their work divides into three main areas:

- a) Community training
- b) Commissions
- c) Research

a) Training

Training programmes are offered to structured, interest based groups such as health workers or local peace activists. They have twelve weeks part time training during which time they produce and distribute their first programme, about six of these training groups will be running at any one time. They aim to equip the groups concerned with the basic skills and motivation to go on using video as part of their work. Groups make a contribution to the running costs of these courses since that encourages them to think out clearly what their aims and objectives are in using video in the first place. Tapes produced through this teaching process include a regular local news magazine made by the Brunswick Community Association which is screened in local pubs and libraries, a tape called 'From Protest to Resistance' made by Brighton CND and now distributed nationally by Concord Films, and a programme called 'Moulsecombe by Sea' made by a local tenants association about the conditions on one of the worst maintained council estates on the area.



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#### b) Commissions.

The funding gained by working to commission is an essential part of the economy of Barefoot. Without this income they would not be able to survive. They have made programmes for national organisations like Gingerbread, the single parents association, and Bootstrap Co-ops in London. These programmes are professionally produced by the project workers to the client specifications and usually then distributed within the client network. Barefoot have also produced a programme to commission for the Channel Four 'People to People' slot, 'Health or Human Rights ? A Happier Old Age...'. The programme is about the government's policy of community healthcare for the elderly and has been made with two groups who have been working through Barefoot for some time, a group of local health workers and the Brunswick Community Association. This production process has shown how groups can be taken through production training on low gauge video to producing for broadcast.

#### c) Research

As part of the rest of their work Barefoot have also done research into use of low gauge video in Third World countries working particularly with a village to village women's communication project in Bangladesh. They have also contributed papers for UNESCO and the Institute of Development Technology around this work.

Barefoot's experience shows how with only a limited amount of public subsidy a mixed economy of production to commission, training and distribution has succeeded. While still maintaining a level of service provision to a local constituency through training, production and access to equipment they have also developed into areas of production with national and broadcast distribution potential. The whole process of combining production and training has ensured access for their users not just to equipment but also to all the skills of production.

### 5.3 FRANCHISED WORKSHOPS

The development and definition of the Workshop Declaration are briefly explained in the introduction to this report, Chapter One, Section 1.4. The Declaration itself places distribution in a supplementary role,

'Workshops and other organisations recognised under this Declaration shall be production oriented. IE They shall be organisations

is however recognised that in the cultural and grant aided sector a range of other activities have and will continue to constitute important elements in the practices characteristic of the sector. These supplementary activities may include exhibition, education, distribution, administration, research or any other activity seen as necessary but supplementary to the central activity of production.'

[Section 14 of the Workshop Declaration]

In the period during which our study was conducted it was apparent that many groups had spent a lot of their recent time setting themselves up under the Declaration, and undertaking the appropriate rearrangements. Most had only just completed their first programme of work therefore distribution for many of them was only just getting on to the agenda. A recent development which reflected this is the appointment in several groups of workers specifically to deal with distribution and promotion.

In Liverpool at **OPEN EYE** this has resulted initially in the publication of a leaflet advertising their productions and facilities aimed specifically at Trade Unions in the Merseyside region. Distribution of programmes is part of their campaign to establish a strong network of production and exhibition amongst local Labour Movement groups. Previously their programmes had been publicised through leaflets and local publicity on an individual basis. Titles include, "There Are No Excuses.", a tape about sexual harassment within the workplace, and 'NGA: On The Line', a short tape made about the mass picket at the Stockport Messenger plant. This programme exemplifies some of the virtues of fast local distribution, despite its poor technical quality, (it was mostly shot at night) dramatic footage it contains ensured a strong immediate appeal and it was widely distributed to branch meetings and campaign events within the region.

**OPEN EYE** also convene a Community Production Group, a forum through which local groups can gain access to production facilities housed at Open Eye. Any group wanting to utilise facilities must join the CPG and resources are allocated to productions by meetings of the entire group. This group represents a real attempt to establish some democratic way of allocating resources for access work within the region. Productions made by the CPG include a tape on the Merseyside Development Council, a programme on NHS Privatisation in the area and a documentary on the Capenhurst nuclear fuel plant made by the Women's Production Group who are part of the CPG. There is also a Black Media Group in Liverpool who were also part of the CPG but are now autonomous, it is hoped that similar groups may also evolve from the CPG to run on their own.

Distribution priorities for Open Eye, rest with raising the profile of independent work within the region, and developing a critical viewing practice within their audiences. They point out that

~~this in itself is creating a demand for useful programming in~~  
the area, and that it would therefore be useful if they had access to more information about workshop produced tapes from other regions which may have relevance to their work. In addition the existence of such an information network would also serve to make their own productions available to audiences outside the immediate region.

Similar emphasis on the development of an independent regionally based film and video culture are pursued in Tyneside by two of the biggest franchised groups in the country, **TRADE FILMS** and **AMBER FILMS**. Trade have produced both fiction and documentary on subjects of relevance to the North East but often with national distribution potential. In 1983 they established the 'Northern Film and Video Archive', as an active resource 'containing documentation of different aspects of life in the region...

..as well as coordinating the distribution of video material through a range of local and national outlets. The Archive holds local history material including video tapes and distributes a series of interviews with local Labour Movement activists to both local and national audiences. In addition it has promoted and distributed two major productions, 'Labouring Under the Law', about the history of Trade Union legislation and 'Who'll Keep the Red Flag Flying', about voting patterns in the last election. Both these programmes were promoted nationally through leaflets in the 'New Socialist' and press reviews in the left press, the former achieving sales of some 60 cassettes in the year of our survey. The development of the archive's national distribution work was curtailed last year by the role they played in distributing the Miners Campaign Tapes within the North East. In addition the work of the archive in making material available for regional use often places more immediate demands upon resources than pursuing national promotional campaigns.

Trade have also recently established a three person Trade Union newsreel production group, whose task is to produce a regular video magazine for use by Trade Unions in the area, their work will also involve opening up new audiences for the use of video and developing reliable distribution networks within the Labour Movement there.

**AMBER FILMS** engage in a range of activities that include running a gallery, a cinema, an animation unit, film production as well as video production and distribution. They have produced a series of documentary and documentary style fiction films which relate to the cultural and political life of the region, and have recently started a video production unit to make local issue based documentaries. Two of their programmes, 'Where Are We Going', a tape about issues facing the NUM in 1983, and 'Behind the Vote' a programme about the Chesterfield by election, have received



distribution has taken a second place to the immediate demands of working with local audiences, Amber stress that local distribution is not just about getting the tapes seen but also about actively working with them in a range of political and cultural animation work. In practice that often means that a member of the production group will accompany the tape to be available for discussion with the audience.

Despite this committment to developing regional audiences through the active use of their own programmes Amber also recognise the potential value of wider distribution for their work. However as usual it is a question of priorities, effective national distribution requires much time and energy which does not necessarily feed into the immediate local concerns of the group. They would therefore welcome the existence of some kind of national network which would support national promotion provided it was accountable to producers.

Like the above groups CHAPTER VIDEO share a committment to working from and with a strong regional base, in this case South Wales, from their premises in Cardiff. Chapter have developed out of the video access movement of the seventies and are now a franchised workshop. Much of their work continues to reflect the ideology of video access in that they attempt to make productions which are directly accountable to the commissioning group. Productions tend to be initiated by local groups who come to the workshop with a need for some kind of video programme which is then made through a collective process of consultation with the client group. Of the fourteen titles which Chapter submitted to our tape survey 6 were produced for the Labour Movement, (5 for the NUM with whom the workshop has strong regional links), three concerned women's issues, (two for Welsh Women's Aid), three tapes were made around social welfare issues, housing, claimants rights, and resettlement of offenders, and two are anti nuclear programmews. Nine of these programmes were commissioned by groups active around the particular issue, they are mostly documentary style campaigning and educational tapes.

In the majority of cases distribution of the programmes has been through the network made available by the commissioning groups, and they have handled most of the promotion and publicity. The success or failure of the programme in distribution terms therefore has depended upon how well equipped the client group is take on this work.

Like most workshops Chapter have a theoretical committment to active use of their programmes with local audience groups as part of a strategy to develop a regional audience for oppositional types of media production, however until recently pressure on time and resources has made it difficult to realise this committment. Increased levels of funding subsequent to being granted a franchise meant that Chapter were able to appoint

~~a co-ordinator who would take on some of the responsibility~~  
for distribution. In practice this has proved difficult, the more immediate tasks of day to day administration and accounting left little time for the long term work of organising distribution. This demonstrates the difficulty of integrating distribution in with other work under the same job description, it can easily get lost because of more pressing short term demands. - Chapter are a group for whom the development of an efficient national network would therefore be extremely useful if it could support their regional distribution efforts as well as start to circulate their work to national audiences which they have so far been unable to reach.

The above groups all demonstrate different styles of working from a regional base seeking to integrate production and distribution around themes of regional, often labour movement based, themes. From here we will consider a further three groups in the franchised workshops section who have developed from a local or regional base to address audiences nationally.

**LEEDS ANIMATION WORKSHOP** are a women's collective producing animated campaigning and educational films. Their emphasis tends to be upon production and distribution rather than activities such as training or access practised in other workshops. They currently distribute five of their own films, 'Who Needs Nurseries? We do!', 'Risky Business', on health hazards at work, 'Pretend You'll Survive', on the nuclear threat, 'Give Us a Smile', a film about sexual harassment, and 'Council Matters' which looks at local authority services and the effect of cuts in spending.

Their new film, 'Crops and Robbers' will be about the politics of food. These titles have all been produced in order to be used directly in campaigning and education around the above issues.

The workshop has developed a considerable degree of expertise in launching and promoting its films. First and foremost they produce work around specific issues with specific types of audience in mind. Through the research and production of a film they build up a mailing list based on the contacts they make, thus the production period is used to get an idea of what the possible user network might be. This information is then added to a list of people who have previously used their work giving an address list which can be used for a mail out to publicise the film when it is launched, their mail outs utilise postcards produced especially for the film by Leeds Postcards and also leaflets describing its content and possible use. In addition they always organise press previews for both local and national press to ensure that the film gets reviewed; their press promotion does not confine itself to the print media but also includes radio and television, they have had work featured on local TV. The BFI have also helped

~~them to organise London launches of their films. They stress~~  
that the process of promoting their work involves keeping up  
the pressure on possible users and reviewers, getting the film  
seen by key people in the appropriate networks in order to get  
word of mouth publicity going, and developing personal contacts  
within publicity and audience networks.

Although Leeds Animation started out distributing solely on  
film all their titles are now also available on videocassette  
and they have witnessed a rapid expansion in this form of  
distribution. Video now accounts for three times as many bookings  
as film prints, and an even higher proportion of sales; purchasing  
a film print is prohibitively expensive for most user groups. Their  
estimated income from distribution for 85/86 is #6250, which  
although high by comparison with many other groups in the sector  
makes little or no significant impact upon the high costs of  
animation production, (estimated running costs for the same period  
are #72000). However their main distribution objective is, to  
maximise audiences rather than make a lot of money.

Leeds have also placed their titles with other existing distri-  
butors such as Concord, COW, The Albany, and the Exchange Value  
Video Club, however they do not feel that this has significantly  
increased their distribution, they feel that their own promotional  
work has been more efficient than that of the other distributors.  
Despite their own promotional expertise and their experiences  
with other distributors they stated in a recent paper to an  
IFVA conference on distribution,

"Despite the charms of D.I.Y and the evidence that small is  
beautiful, there are times when we wonder....if a tiny hard pressed  
group of us can organise publicity and distribution on a national  
scale ...when we're 150 miles from the hub of the universe and  
working flat out on our next production, then wouldn't it be  
possible for a centralised, computerised, full time alternative  
independent professional distribution service with workplace  
nursery based in the West End to do it EVEN BETTER ? "

**SHEFFIELD FILM CO-OP** are another women's production group, franchised  
in 1982, making work of specific relevance to women, they state,

"...we place a high priority on engaging with the current concerns  
of ordinary women in the local community and on sensitively  
representing their experiences on film. Our work is intended  
to combine a challenge to the usual representation of women  
in the media with the depiction of their real activity in society  
in a useful and accessible form."

Like Leeds Animation the Co-op concentrates very much on production  
and distribution of their own work. They currently distribute  
seven titles on subjects such as non-traditional work, abortion,  
violence against women, women's history, and women and work; all



but two of the titles are now available on cassette though most of them were originally made on film; exhibition on film continues to play a significant part in the Co-op's distribution, 56% of screenings were on film in the first ten months of 1984. The total number of screenings in this period was 146, compared with 85 in the previous year. The total income from distribution in this ten month period came to #2850, as against an expenditure budget of #2200. Hire rates for the work varies from one production to another however the rates for film prints and videocassettes are the same. The rates vary from #10 per day on four of the titles to #20 per day for 'Red Skirts on Clydside', a 40 min film about the part played by women in the 1915 Glasgow rent strike and issues raised in reclaiming women's history. Sale prices vary from #3 to #5 per minute and are some of the highest we encountered, reflecting the Co-op's film based background. Pricing for sale depends upon the precise status of the purchaser, so for instance, 'A Question of Choice', a film about low pay and women's work, varies in price on cassette from #52.50 to unfunded groups or individuals with no distribution rights to #175 for a buyer who is funded and wants to distribute the tape. Only 15 video cassettes were sold in the first ten months of 1984, their audiences prefer hiring in general which reflects the high price of purchase.

Promoting and publicising their work plays an important part in the work of the Co-op. Each production has a leaflet designed and printed, together these leaflets form their catalogue, they are made available in a folder which describes the Co-op's work and history. This system allows each title to be promoted separately to particular target audiences. Titles are promoted through mail outs using their own address list, through reviews in the women's and educational press, and to specific networks such as women's studies groups or women's history groups. A recent production, 'Women of Steel', about the part played by women in the work of the munitions factories in Sheffield during the second World War, was previewed to local teachers through the Equal Opportunities Adviser for the city educational department.

Audiences for the titles produced by the Co-op are described as falling into the following categories and proportions,

Schools and Further Education Colleges	13.6%
Tertiary Education	8.9%
Adult Education	8.9%
Women's groups and events	13.0%
Community & Youth centres/groups	16.4%
Labour Party	4.7%
Trade Unions	0.6%
Cinema and general audiences	18.4%
Previews	15.0%

Having established a catalogue and an audience constituency the Co-op wants in the future to expand from this basis. They

wish to develop 'more consistent and conspicuous marketing of films and videos' by following up on mail outs already initiated, echoing the point made by Leeds Animation that promotion has to be seen as an ongoing process. Sheffield Film Co-op also emphasise their continuing support for active distribution by organising screenings with speakers and publishing supporting literature to go out with the films,

"We welcome invitations to be present at screenings where discussion with the audience can take place. This relationship with our audience plays a vital role in the continuing development of our film practice."

The two strands of network promotion on a national basis together with active distribution are viewed as complementary rather than exclusive.

The final group which we will look at in this short review of franchised workshop distribution practice is **ALBANY VIDEO**. Based at The Albany, a theatre and community action centre in Deptford in South East London, Albany Video shares with Chapter (above) a history rooted in the video access movement. Started in 1974 their original work was based upon making video accessible within the immediate locality, working with tenant groups, community campaigns, and young people on playgrounds and in youth clubs. Their work has developed away from producing programmes for immediate local, geographically defined, communities towards producing work for 'communities of interest' around issues of both Londonwide and national concern. Over the past three years they perceived a rapidly expanding demand for programmes on cassette of the type that they and other community based groups were producing. In response to this they set up a specific distribution wing to the workshop which functions separately from the other aspects of production, training, access and exhibition. They put together a catalogue of 22 titles, 9 of which are their own productions, the remainder from a variety of local and national producers. They describe their criteria for selection as,

"Tapes that have been produced by people and groups who are normally excluded from representing themselves in the mainstream media, or have been produced with the active involvement of the people most closely concerned with the issues being discussed: secondly, to make material available which invites a response from its target audience, stimulating discussion and consciousness raising and helping processes of personal and social change"

The subject matter covered by the catalogue include Race, Sexuality and Gender, Youth, Labour Movement issues, the handicapped, and community arts. They had 1000 copies of the catalogue printed in May 1984, and sent out 400 immediately to a mailing list made up of press contacts and personal contacts made from the records



of distribution enquiries. They quickly disseminated the remaining 600 through the course of their day to day work and through the distribtuon work. A sample of seven tapes in the catalogue showed a total of 128 hirings in 1984 and 19 sales; hire rates are usually #10 for two days, and sale prices are split for each programme at an average of #70 to institutions and #30-#40 for unfunded groups or individuals. They calculate that the income from distribution has covered the initial costs of launching the catalogue including the wages of a worker for two days a week to administer the system.

A breakdown of audiences in the first three months of the catalogue shows the following proportions of:

Individuals	12.00%
Arts organisations, including other workshops and community arts groups	12.00%
Educational, including Health & Community Education groups	12.00%
Youth groups	27.00%
Gay groups	8.00%
Community organisations	14.00%
State bodies, including Council Depts. Social Workers and Residential homes	15.00%

50% Of the programme users were from outside London. Promotion of the work has so far been based on the initial push to get the catalogue out, and its success therefore depends upon the quality of the initial mailing list. Again Albany tapes are usually launched to an invited audience of possible users and press reviewers. However probably their greatest promotional asset has been the reputation which Albany Video have built up over ten years as reliable producers of community video work, particularly amongst youth workers and social welfare activists. Albany plan to expand and reprint their catalogue, dropping some of their less successful titles and replacing them with new productions both of their own and from other producers who have started to come to the Albany for distribution now that they know there is an efficient system in operation.

The Albany's distribution work has grown from an initial point at which they perceived a gap in the market and a need to distribute their own titles more efficiently to the point at which they are poised to become a major distributor of community video work. This development illustrates the need that producers feel for a service of this kind.



## PRODUCTION COMPANIES

This section will look at some of those groups and production companies who while not constituted as workshops are nevertheless producing and distributing work which is aimed at the same audiences addressed by the workshops.

Firstly the **BIRMINGHAM TRADE UNION RESOURCE CENTRE (TURC)**, which has developed video production for the Trade Union movement over the last three years as one of a range of services which it is able to offer. Distribution has been seen from the outset as an essential part of this service, and as a result TURC have achieved some of the highest sales figures of any group we encountered. Both 'Put People First', a cassette containing three programmes for use in anti privatisation campaigns, and 'Rights Wot Rights?', a tape about Youth Training Schemes and the role of Unions within them, have each sold over 600 copies. This success has been achieved through a number of strategies. Firstly the programmes were produced in order to fulfil a specific need within the market for audiovisual material with particular audience groups, in other words demand for the programme was identified prior to production. Secondly the funding groups and commissioning bodies were themselves exploited as distribution networks, for instance the NALGO 'Put People First' campaign was responsible for publicising and distributing the tape and about 400 copies were sold by that means. To an extent this also applies to 'Rights-Wot Rights?' though there a much higher proportion of sales were achieved through publicity in possible user networks such as Trade Unions and youth organisations. This publicity utilised mail out leaflets, and press reviews in Labour Weekly, Marxism Today, Times Educational Supplement and The Guardian. Advertisements were also taken in the left press though this was adjudged to be not a very cost effective means of promotion, especially if compared to reviews. Finally the tapes are sold at the extremely low price of #12.50 inc. post and packing; TURC do not hire out their programmes at all, preferring the simpler operation of dealing just with sales. This low sales price assumes that the costs of production have been met 'upfront', income from sales covers the cost of the distribution operation including worker's wages.

The thinking behind the TURC strategy has two strands. Firstly that videocassettes should be made available to the consumer in the same way as books and records rather than like film prints. Secondly that the lower the price the more chance there is of getting the tape to a large grass roots audience at branch or shop level who otherwise would not be able to afford the programme.

Recent developments in TURC's current productions display interesting possibilities in co-production for broadcast and cassette distribution. The animation elements in 'Rights Not Wrongs', the follow

up to , 'Rights, Not Rights ?', and in the press issues tape, 'The Journalists Tale', have been supported to the tune of #30,000 by Channel Four. This has enabled a tripling of the animation budget for the two programmes. The animation, when broadcast on Channel Four, will bring the issues to a wider audience than would probably wish to see the full length tapes with their more closely argued documentary sections. TURC will finish up with three final edits for these programmes, one for a general TV audience, and two on cassette, one for a general Trade Union audience and one for specific Trade Union groups on cassette.

5.5

**RIVERFRONT PICTURES** are a small London-based independent production company who have achieved comparable levels of success in terms of numbers of cassettes sold to the Labour Movement. 'New Technology - Whose Progress ?' was made in 1980 and gives a socialist analysis of the introduction of new technology, it has been widely seen both in educational institutions and the trade unions. Last year, 1984, Riverfront sold 50 cassettes and hired 500 copies; the tape sells at #100 plus vat and hires at #12. 'Technology at Work' a second production around similar themes made in 1983 looks at 5 case histories of the introduction of new technology into the workplace and sold 100 copies last year at #35 per tape. Both programmes were promoted through mail outs within the labour movement of 5000 leaflets and through reviews in Union journals.

**TEAM VIDEO** are a new production and distribution group to emerge from Riverfront; they have put together a catalogue of ten titles for the Labour Movement and educational audience, covering subjects such as health and safety, new technology, race, the media, multi nationals and collective bargaining. The catalogue has been sent to a 6000 address mailing list and tapes sell for #35 and rent for #10. Response so far has been very good, with over #10000 worth of cassettes sold in the first two months. Again this distribution operation is characterised by filling gaps in particular markets.

Finally there is also an identifiable group of small production companies whose work would be of interest to the audiences addressed by the sector however the companies in question simply do not have the resources to develop cassette distribution. **BANNER FILMS**, for instance, of Sheffield, have made a fictional film about unemployment, 'After the Ball', 'Coal Not Dole - Miners United', one of the first films to put the miners' case in the recent struggle, and a four part series, 'A Tale To Tell' about working class story telling and oral history. All of these programmes have now been bought by Channel Four, however their cassette distribution has been very low because Banner are basically just a two person team working to commission, with no subsidy, and therefore do not have the resources to put into developing distribution. In most cases producers working for Channel Four are able to retain

non broadcast copyright, and in theory much of this programming could have a cassette life after broadcast, however many producers working within this context are not geared up to be able to develop this work and would therefore need another agency to take it on.

## 5.5 CONCLUSIONS

This section has dealt with the various styles and aims of distribution practice within the sector. A fuller analysis of the numbers of titles in cassette distribution and their sales performance can be found in Chapter Three (Tape Survey). However these conclusions are in part underpinned by the figures revealed by our survey ie 80% of the titles in our listing sold 5 or less cassettes last year, (1984), the remaining 20% averaged sales of 50 cassettes per year. Further evidence of the economic basis of workshop distribution practice is revealed from the figures available for net distribution income to those groups able to give us such information, ie Swingbridge #1500 pa, Leeds Animation #6250, Sheffield Film Co-op #3500, Albany Video #3500. Distribution income makes no significant impact upon production costs, though it may go a good deal of the way to covering the costs of the distribution function itself.

These figures underline the fact that workshop distribution does not fit into a conventional market economy model of production and distribution. The experiences and aims of the various groups outlined above goes some way to explaining why this is so. Because distribution is usually only one of a number of functions pursued in a workshop its position and relative priority differs from group to group depending upon the exact nature of their work. Most workshops do not view distribution as a potential source of major income, nor do they necessarily want to reach 'mass' audiences. They repeatedly stress that the quality of distribution is of more lasting significance than its quantity.

To summarise the workshop descriptions given above we can identify a number of factors which will determine what kind of distribution practice a group is likely to want to pursue. For instance, if a workshop is committed to working from a very localised base, making training and equipment available to its residents this may militate against the production of tapes which have relevance to audiences outside the immediate area. If production is based on access then the learning process for the group involved is more important than the distribution potential of the finished product. This however is not always the case, the experience of Barefoot Video shows how groups can be taken through the production process to a point at which they can make programmes which can have national cassette distribution or contribute to broadcast produc-



tion. This is a long term process which has more in common with practical media education than with conventional production and distribution.

Another strand relating to the 'access led' model of production is the practice of making work on behalf of client groups who are then themselves entrusted with its distribution. In such cases the tape is only likely to reach the immediate client network unless the 'client' group in question is geared up to more widescale distribution.

A second major identifiable priority affecting the style of workshop distribution is the commitment shared by many producers to developing regional audience networks through a process of active distribution, ie actually going out with your tapes and using them in political and cultural animation work. This direct contact with audiences then feeds back into production so that a regional closed circuit of production and consumption is developed. This circuit then becomes the basis for developing genuine alternatives to the one way pattern of mass media consumption of audio visual product. Open Eye in Merseyside, Trade Films and Amber Films in Tyneside and Chapter Video in Cardiff all pursue this model of distribution work.

A third identifiable grouping are those production companies and workshops who are producing work to commission for specific audiences or for broadcast but who are not set up to handle cassette promotion. This grouping clearly highlights how the skills of producing programmes are very different to the skills of marketing and promotion.

Finally we also identified a group of workshops who are increasingly viewing widescale distribution of their work as an essential part of their overall function. In these cases resources are being specifically allocated to national distribution and promotion, both in terms of workers wages and of publicity budgets. These workshops do not necessarily reject the idea of active distribution, however they have made a decision that they wish to maximise audiences for their work, even if this means not having direct contact with the audience. Within the context of this report this grouping is the most significant because it views the two major strands of active distribution and maximising audience numbers as complementary activities rather than exclusive. They are responding to the challenge of larger audiences offered by videocassette and see their response as part of the process of beginning to build national networks which are qualitatively different to mass media patterns of audio visual distribution.

## 5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are intended to aid both producers and funding bodies in the formulation of future distribution policies and practice.

- 1) Producers throughout the workshop sector need to raise their awareness of who their programmes are intended for, how that audience will be reached and how that strategy will be financed. This recommendation applies across the board to producers working in every area of the sector.
- 2) Both funding bodies and producers should recognise the importance of including the costs of distribution into their original production budgets. This applies to **all** forms of distribution work, even purely 'local' distribution costs money.
- 3) Producers working to commission should try to ensure that they retain copyright on programmes made for client groups so that those programmes can be made available to other audiences to whom they might be relevant.
- 4) At this stage the different styles and aims of groups in the sector as well the overwhelming commitment to regional work make it impossible for us to recommend setting up a single national agency to promote its work. While there is no shortage of centralised functions which could be undertaken by such an agency the very real differences of orientation within the sector render such a plan unworkable. We would therefore recommend that this report is used as the basis for forming a national network of distribution workers within the sector which could be used to exchange information and share resources in order to continue the development of distribution.



**CHAPTER SIX : AUDIENCES**





## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Part of the brief for this report was to look at the audiences which the sector serves and to report on ways in which they could be expanded. In doing so, we have made the assumption that most of the work covered by the report is intended for group viewing in institutional or organised situations, rather than for individual domestic consumption. It would not have been possible for us to examine every audience group which the sector reaches and we therefore decided to choose four groupings for study: the Trades Union and Labour Movements, Youth and Youth Workers, Public Libraries, and Education. These areas were chosen because they offered both some existing contact and also potential for growth.

Distribution from the sector is essentially through existing networks; networks of common interest which exist at both a national, regional and local level. Each network has its own communication channels which have to be used to promote and distribute the programme. These channels are different for each of the audience groups we have chosen. However, we hope that by examining the particular channels in each case, it will be possible to draw general conclusions which will aid the sector in formulating strategies for improving their network distribution.

## 6.2.1 INTRODUCTION

Use of video has grown steadily in the trade union movement over the last five years. This development has been partly in response to growing management use of video which has often excluded unions from the consultative process, and partly from the realisation that video can be a more effective means of communicating with the union membership than more traditional literary propaganda. A recent TUC survey on union communications strategies showed that half their respondents had used video in some form.

## 6.2.2 RESEARCH AIMS

The main aim of our research in this area has been to determine the pattern and extent of video use within trades unions and thus to draw conclusions for the independent and workshop sector. The research was carried out through personal and telephone interviews and therefore tends to be qualitative rather than quantitative. We spoke to representatives from the following unions: NUPE, NALGO, Transport and General, USDAW, NUT, COHSE, CPSA, SCPS, NATFHE, General and Municipal, NUR, Bakers Food and Allied Workers, and the TUC. Our discussions centred around:-

- which tapes are getting used?
- how does the user find out about them?
- how much users are prepared to pay, what kind of budgets do they have for video?
- what the users' goals are in their use of tape?
- what kind of venues they have available?

What follows is a summary of the above areas of discussion.

## 6.2.3 PROGRAMME USE AND ACQUISITION

Use of video cassette within the trade unions has developed primarily through its use as an educational and training resource. Several unions started out using video simply by making off-air recordings of relevant programmes to be replayed in training sessions ("When the Chips are Down" and "The Silicone Factor" are oft-quoted examples). From this beginning, they have expanded their use of the medium to include buying in relevant non-broadcast programmes, hiring of a range of titles, and commissioning their

own productions. By and large the union day or weekend training schools continue to provide the main site for the use of video programmes. The Labour Movement training system provides the infrastructure through which a more widespread use of programmes will grow.

As a general rule, programmes are acquired centrally, usually by national education officers, or sometimes in the press and publicity department; they build up a central library of tapes for use on training sessions. The availability of these titles is then made known through the union's internal publicity structures: in practice this usually means that education officers, regional officers, and others involved in the training process will get to hear about titles that are available. The TGWU for instance have built up a library of 250 titles since 1980. These titles are held centrally and are used in training sessions which are organised on a regional basis. USDAW, NALGO, NUT, NUPE, SCPS & NATFHE all hold centralised libraries ranging from a few titles to over a hundred. The frequency with which these tapes get screened depends upon the size, scope and structure of the union's training activities as well as upon the degree of 'video awareness' amongst the union's activists. USDAW for instance use their tapes on twice-yearly residential training weeks, whereas NALGO use video on most of the 300 training courses they run every year.

## 6.2.4 DISTRIBUTION WITHIN THE TRADE UNIONS

At this point, we can begin to identify a problem with distributing to the trade unions which is to do with the degree to which programmes actually get used by rank and file members. From the producers' point of view, it is a problem with economic and political implications. If programmes are simply acquired centrally and used in training sessions, that will obviously limit the amount of sales that any given title will receive. Organisers are only likely to want to buy two or three copies of a tape at most if it is only to be used within the formal educational context. In addition, many producers would rather see their work being used widely at rank and file level in the union, than sitting on a shelf where it is only made available on limited terms.

The point was made to us that a distribution system within the union that relies on this centralised pattern is only as good as the officers that run it. It was suggested that too many tapes are bought by unions centrally, but then sit on shelves without really getting out to the membership.

Unions which have invested large sums in commissioning programmes for their membership have had to seriously address this problem. NALGO, for instance, have invested in productions about



privatisation, "Put People First", VTS and unions, "Rights Won Rights?" and new technology. These productions have been promoted to the membership through regional organisers, through their own newspaper (circulation 30,000) and through regional preview screenings. The tapes are made available for #10 sale or free hire to union members. At these low prices, it is hoped that the tapes will get used by members either at home or in branch meetings. Other unions, the CPSA, SCPS, and the NUR are all in the process of trying to develop internal distribution to disseminate tapes they have had made. Unions need to realise that there is no point investing large sums of money into the production of video programmes unless that investment is matched by a commitment to developing efficient internal distribution networks.

## 6.2.5 EQUIPMENT

A lack of playback equipment has certainly contributed to the difficulties outlined above. Most unions now have VCRs at head office which can easily be made available for occasional training schools or conferences, etc. However, finding VCRs for branch level activity has proved much more of a problem. NUPE have tackled this issue head on, each of their 11 regional offices will shortly be equipped with two VCRs for playback of tapes at a local level. They estimate that currently, with one VCR in each region, about 7,000 members are able to see the programmes they have produced. (Again, this is a case of production forcing the development of distribution, NUPE have established their own production and duplication facilities with the intention of producing several issue-based campaign programmes per year, plus a regular magazine show). Other unions such as NATFHE or NUT have experienced less of a problem in this area, since nearly all educational institutions are already equipped with VCRs. NALGO and the CPSA, on the other hand, have used management hardware for replay of tapes which would obviously become impossible around contentious issues. Some unions have also investigated so far without success, the prospects of coming to an arrangement with commercial VCR High Street rental companies.

By offering free hire of programmes to union members, it may be possible to encourage their screening in a domestic situation, in the same way that a union paper might be taken home and read. Alternatively, it may be possible to encourage members to bring in their own machines to branch meetings for screenings. Jim Sutherland of NUPE calculates that if only 1% of the membership rent VCRs, then there are over 7,000 machines possessed within the union (this is probably a gross underestimate, since nationally 25% of homes had VCRs at March '84). As yet, there has been

no concerted campaign to press domestic machines into use in this way, though the distribution of the Miners Campaign tapes shows some interesting examples of what might be possible in particular circumstances.

A development which would ameliorate this difficulty would be the publication of a national resources guide which would list all workshops, educational institutions, and resource centres, which would be willing to make playback facilities available for nominal fees to local Labour Movement groups. This would obviously be a sizeable undertaking, but could be achieved by each region compiling their own guide for local Labour Movement groups.

## 2.6 PROMOTION TO TRADE UNIONS

Union organisers and officers come to hear about programmes through three main sources: direct mailing, press reviews, and word of mouth. They regard promotion from the independent sector as pretty ad hoc.

Direct mailings are only efficient as long as they reach the right desk within any organisation. Within the middle size or smaller union, information is quite likely sooner or later to filter through to the person generally recognised as responsible for video programming, assuming such a person exists. However, within the larger unions with a higher level of video use it is necessary to mail to several different officers both centrally and regionally for the information to have any significant take-up. Publicising work through the central organisation of the union presupposes that the information will filter through to branch level which as we have seen is not always the case. Realistically, however, decisions to purchase programmes are far more likely to be taken at a central point in the union than at branch level. In addition, disseminating publicity centrally through the union is a lot faster and cheaper than trying to contact every steward or every branch. Contact at branch level is most easily fostered on a local basis, especially through hiring of programmes (as with "NGA On The Line" and also in the North-East through the activities of both Amber and Trade Films, see workshop section).

Getting the tape reviewed in the Left press seemed to be the next best way to promote work to wider Labour Movement audiences. Reviews were judged more effective and cheaper than taking advertisements. The numerous trade union newspapers and bulletins are the best place to situate reviews. Most unions still devote by far the greater proportion of their communication budget to producing papers for the membership. Non-union published trade magazines and journals are another good bet - most of these publications, are desperate for copy and will be only too

~~happy to publish your press release or review the tape. National~~  
publications, such as Labour Research, New Socialist and Marxism  
Today, are also worth pursuing for review coverage.

Finally, union organisers get to hear of programmes "on the grapevine". In practice, this means hearing about it from someone who has seen it. Clearly, the best way to prime this network with information is to lay on preview screenings, both in London and regionally, to an invited audience of potential tape users. Short of that, the solution is to actually go out visiting, setting up screenings for as many unionists as you can find.

## 6.2.7 THE IMPACT OF INDEPENDENT DISTRIBUTORS ON TRADE UNIONS

Within the independent sector a limited number of producers and distributors have achieved a significant profile in the Labour Movement, usually through a steady stream of promotion and production over a number of years. Most of the officers to whom we spoke were aware of The Other Cinema and Concord Films as the main distributors of the kind of work they might be interested in; The Other Cinema in particular have made an impact upon the movement through their 'Videos for Trade Unions' promotional leaflet. Generally speaking, though, awareness of the independent production sector and its work is low within the national union structures, there is little or no concept of what the sector represents, or what it can offer the Labour Movement. A few production groups have managed to achieve distribution for their work on a national basis: Birmingham Trade Union Resource Centre is well known, as are Riverfront Pictures, the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom, International Broadcasting Trust, the Oxford-based Trade Union International Research and Education Group, and Leeds Animation Workshop. It has been necessary for these groups to maintain a consistent level of contact through several productions for such recognition to exist. The consensus from trade union officers was certainly that they would like to hear about more work that is relevant through more organised channels than through the current ad hoc system, in which much effort is duplicated, and through which they feel that relevant work may be passing them by.

## 6.2.8 PRICING

Opinions on the pricing of programmes reflected more widely-held views and divergencies. While some organisers felt that #20 was a very cheap price to pay for a programme most simply stated that the cheaper a programme was put out the more they would be able to buy and get into circulation. Only one of the organisers we talked to said they would be prepared to spend up to #50 on a programme. In general, they definitely tend toward the



cheap and cheerful philosophy of video programme pricing. Most of the officers in a position to buy programmes have no budget specifically allocated to that purpose, so it is having to come out of general or running costs. We only came across one national education officer who had a budget for video as an ongoing component, and that was a small sum for previewing programmes to the education committee.

## 8.9 PRODUCTION LINKS WITH TRADE UNIONS

Sections of the independent and workshop production sector have long recognised the desirability of producing work for the trade unions and for the Labour Movement as a whole. One of this sector's defining characteristics is its opposition to mainstream media, particularly in its representation of the Left, of women, and black people, and of issues like the war in Ireland. Similarly, the trade union movement has realised that it has to produce its own programming if it is to receive adequate representation. In addition, the working style of many producers in the sector, working with client groups on a democratic basis, enabling them to get their message across, has obvious applications to working with trade unions. The unionisation of producers in the sector has aided this process, trade unions have tended to be suspicious of independent media teams from outside of the formal framework of the movement: recognition by the ACTT establishes the sector's credibility for other unions.

Though some unions still prefer to commission commercial companies such as Blackrod and Wyvern to make their programmes a growing number of independent producers are having success in this field. Amongst them are Smith Bundy Video, the Birmingham Trade Union Resource Centre, Riverfront Pictures, and its more recent offshoot Team Video, Trade Films and Triple Vision. All these groups are having to work through the problems of producing for trade unions, problems of establishing where editorial control lies, especially when programmes are co-funded by several unions or by unions and local authorities, as in "Rights Wot Rights?".

Even if a production is only funded by one union, there are still likely to be editorial disagreements between different political factions within the union who have conflicting ideas about how such a large investment is to be made. What kind of image does the union want to put across? Does it want to challenge management use of video by presenting a very slick broadcast-style video, or does it want to emphasise the rank and file by using ordinary members in the tape and producing a more accessible programme? Those groups working with unions have found that their production process has had to involve a long slow exercise in consultation, and education around representation, production and distribution.

## 6.2.10 **CONTENT AND STYLE OF TRADE UNION PROGRAMMES**

In terms of subject matter, unions display a preference for programmes dealing with specific issues and campaigns. The subjects which are perceived as most useful for both training and campaigning are Trade Unions and the Media, Womens Issues, Equal Opportunities, Race, Health and Safety, New Technology, International Issues, Unemployment, Privatisation and Trade Unions and the Law (especially the political levy legislation). Most of the officers we spoke to were in agreement that more programming in these areas would be welcomed. However, this perception may simply be a reflection of the kind of programmes that have so far been made available to them. Several people, for instance, drew our attention to the fact that nobody had yet produced a useable programme about the nuts and bolts of trade union organisation, how to run a branch, negotiating procedures, etc. Certain general points came up repeatedly about presentation and style. The importance of researching the audience for the programme was stressed, also the points that subject matter should be dealt with in a trade union context, and be workplace-related wherever possible. There was also a noticeable insistence upon the 'professional look' necessary to achieve a successful screening, which is presumably derived from officers' perception of the membership's televisual taste. (Though the widespread distribution of a tape like 'NGA On The Line' by Open Eye of Liverpool shows that no matter how "unprofessional" a tape might look, if the content is good enough, topical enough, it will carry the audience.) Our attention was also drawn to the importance of keeping programme length to under 30 minutes to facilitate lunchtime and meeting use. A final point was that programmes should be made in an 'open-ended' style, in order to stimulate discussion, rather than simply providing facts and information.

We were also able to identify a growing market within the movement for programmes which might be defined as having both an educational and recreational purpose for evening screenings at conferences, training schools and so on, with 'Rosie the Riveter' being quoted as an example.

## 6.2.11 **THE MINERS' CAMPAIGN TAPES**

The production and distribution of the Miners' Campaign Tapes in 1984 is the strongest example to date of co-operation between the Trade Union movement and the independent and workshop production sector. Six short tapes were produced, using material shot by groups all over the country, to put the NUM's arguments in the recent struggle.

The project was initiated by ACTT members in the workshop sector and endorsed by Kent, South Wales, Derbyshire, Northumberland and Yorkshire NUM areas. Not all of those who contributed were franchised workshops, but included Open Eye, Chapter, Trade, Platform Films, Nottingham Video Project, Active Image, Amber, Edinburgh Film Workshop Trust, Birmingham Film and Video Workshop and others. Several of these projects had previous involvement with trade union video and links with local NUM areas before the dispute. For instance, Chapter had produced work in South Wales such as "Rumours at the Miners Fortnight", and Amber had produced "Where Are We Going?" and "News from Durham" with the NUM in County Durham.

Material was shot all over the country by different groups and edited at LVA and later at Chapter, by Chris Rushton. The first four tapes "Not Just Tea and Sandwiches", "The Coal Board's Butchery", "The Strike and the Industry" and "Solidarity: Trade Unions Support The Miners" were launched at BAFTA in London with support from Roy Lockett of the ACTT. There were also regional launches. There were two later tapes: "The Lie Machine: Media Coverage and the Strike", and "Only Doing Their Job? The Police, The Law and The Miners". In addition, there was a wide range of other video material produced around the strike and its aftermath. Many of these titles were released too late to be included in our tape survey. Large numbers of tapes were duplicated and a sliding scale of prices was established, with tapes being given free to the NUM and to striking miners.

For the launch, thousands of leaflets and posters were printed, funded by the NUJ. In addition, the tapes were widely reviewed and publicised, were promoted by the workshops involved, and through the areas of the NUM. 'The Miner' was an important means of publicity.

The tapes were distributed from two main centres: Trade in the North and Platform Films in London. In addition, sub-masters of the tapes were supplied to eight participating projects in different regions for them to make VHS copies and distribute them locally. From the launch, Videoactive were involved in an attempt to monitor the distribution, using a feedback sheet to be supplied with each tape. However, large numbers of tapes were given away free, and then presumably passed from hand to hand; plus there was pressures of the strike and other work, so some workshops were more systematic about the feedback sheets than others. This meant that efficient monitoring was not possible, although some results were collated by Trade Films. This limited survey showed that the majority, 55%, of users found out about the tapes through 'The Miner', the NUM paper. Another 40% discovered the tapes by word of mouth. 60% of the tapes went out for free, nearly all of them on VHS. Within the NUM, 35% of the tapes went to individuals for use in meetings or at home, with another 25% going to the Women's Support Groups.



~~The main problems that arose around distribution concerned the~~  
precarious financing of the project. The ACTT workers and projects who initiated it intended it as a solidarity action and would not take money from the NUM. The project was financed by donations from unions and individuals, from the budgets of the workshops involved, and from benefits and fundraising, but had no consistent source of finance. This caused continuing financial problems, as well as stretching the people who were working for it on top of their other work, to the limit. The very differing levels of resources of projects meant that, for instance, Nottingham Video Project, obviously distributing in a key area of the dispute, which has limited MSC funding and a very low tape budget, could not produce and distribute large numbers of free tapes.

However, the tapes were very widely distributed within the NUM and other unions, through miners support groups, and widely shown to boost morale, to build support, and raise money for the strike.

The urgency of the strike forged greater unity and collaboration and pushed people into finding new audiences and ways to distribute tapes. Clearly, the widespread criticism of television coverage during the strike increased concern to create alternatives. However, the lack of predictability of the course and length of the strike led to ad hoc responses, rather than systematic planning, of publicity and distribution. The Miners' Campaign Tape Project played a very major role in establishing the potential of video and the workshop sector to create counter propaganda. If this potential is to be realised several lessons can be learnt:

1. The fact that so many tapes were given away free meant the project always had financial problems - if trade union video is to develop, the labour movement has to take more responsibility for supporting it financially. The widespread distribution of free tapes, although it got them seen more widely, may in some ways have been an awkward precedent.
2. The project was a unique example of collaboration within the sector, yet there is great potential for further collaborative productions. What is needed is a more effective network of communication regarding plans and work in progress.
3. The idea of tapes being made available from regional distribution centres enabled distribution to be expanded, and to use existing contacts as well as developing new ones. However, some of the projects do not have the resources to develop this without support. This needs to be resourced in future. Trade unions also need to develop more effective distribution strategies.

## 12 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS : VIDEO DISTRIBUTION WITH TRADE UNIONS

These conclusions are primarily aimed at producers in the sector. However, we hope they will find a secondary audience amongst union officials and members who may be committed to using video.

(a) There is a growing market for programmes within the Trade Unions. The highest sales figures of tapes in our programme survey (Appendix 1) were recorded by titles aimed at the Labour Movement.

(b) Trade Unions prefer to use programmes that are based on specific issues or campaigns.

(c) The Trade Unions themselves need to address the problem of effective internal distribution of video programmes.

(d) Producers making programmes for Trade Unions should continue to take on board the educational work involved: in particular, they should be raising the issue of effective distribution within the union to the right audiences.

(e) We recommend that producers in the sector should gather information for Trade Unions about what equipment for playback of tapes is available to them, and where they can get it from. This work should be undertaken on a regional basis.

(f) We also recommend that the sector should undertake to put together a listing of all its programmes that would be suitable for use by Trade Unions, and that this listing be updated as new work becomes available.

## 6.3 VIDEO AND YOUTH WORK

### 6.3.1 INTRODUCTION

Figures from our tape survey (Appendix A) suggest that programmes made for the Youth audience are popular subjects for production in the independent sector. 21 titles in the listing are concerned with issues relating to youth, and these titles have the relatively high sales average of 30 per year. Our contacts with production groups and workshops also indicated that there is hardly a group in the country **not** involved in making something related to youth issues. Video offers itself at first sight as an exciting and immediate medium for communicating with young audiences.

### 6.2 CURRENT USE OF VIDEO WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Current use of video in this area can be divided into three broad categories: (1) use in general youth club sessions; (2) use in more specialist youth work which has social education objectives; and (3) use of video for training youth workers themselves. This final category raises a slight confusion of objectives which runs throughout this area: are programmes being made for youth themselves or for youth workers? Obviously, in the majority of cases tapes are going to be acquired by the youth workers, so in a sense programmes have to be aimed at them, and made in a way that they will find useful.

Looking firstly at use of video in general youth club work, we found that many youth workers had experienced difficulty in introducing tapes into mainstream club sessions. Although the youth workers were interested in introducing work which would stimulate discussion and raise social issues, they often encountered resistance from the kids themselves, this resistance can be traced to the context of the youth club itself in which a good deal of emphasis is placed on activities which are more entertaining than educational. Also clubs often have a fixed routine which workers found difficult to change by introducing video programmes. There has been quite a high use of feature films in this kind of context, with some attempt to use them to stimulate discussion; one example cited was the screening of "Ghandi" to raise issues of racism and imperialism. However, such films are very long and are not designed to stimulate discussion - in addition the use of feature films presents problems because of their usually uncritical representations of sexism and violence. Youth workers that we spoke to in this context expressed a clear need for training in the use of video which would cover basic problems like how to set up a screening, how to prepare for it, what tapes to select, and so on. There was also a need to be able to preview tapes in order to do preparatory work



with the group.

A more fruitful area for use of video in youth work has been in those sessions which are designed for social education and tend therefore to be more structured. This may include looking at topics such as racism, unemployment, and sexism. Working with young women is the strongest developed of these practices. Girls work has developed rapidly where women youth workers have sought to make better provision for girls from a consciously feminist perspective, setting up girls-only sessions and promoting their participation in non-traditional activities. In this context, youth workers have demanded resources such as video programmes to support their work.

In addition, workers themselves have found it much easier to introduce video into these kinds of sessions. Other examples might include some work with the young unemployed and some YTS schemes, especially those Mode B schemes that include education as well as work experience, and in weekends away with groups of young people.

The third area in which video is used in youth work is in youth worker training. Youth workers get trained on full-time youth and community work courses in polytechnics and colleges of further education. There is also a lot of in-service training for part-time and volunteer youth workers, which is under the control of the Area Youth Office. This audience could use two different kinds of programme; one kind aimed specifically at training the workers, such as "Find Your Own Support", a tape made by AVID of Leicester which sold 100 copies, and secondly, tapes aimed at young people themselves which could be used to educate the workers. This was considered an area with great potential for expansion.

### 6.3.3 PROMOTIONAL NETWORKS

There are already two promotional networks carrying information about available video in this audience group. Firstly, the National Association of Youth Clubs, which is an umbrella organisation catering for voluntary, rather than local authority, youth clubs. They have commissioned productions such as "Junior Clubs", a training tape about work with younger children, and "It's Different For Girls", about youth work with girls, which they publicise and distribute through their membership structure. Within NAYC, the Girls Work Unit is a separate department also involved in promotion and distribution of work specifically relating to working with girls. The Unit holds a library of seven titles including "Superman and the Bride", "Us Girls", and "Hamari Rangily Zindagi", a tape about young Asian women. These titles are distributed nationally for #3 hire (plus V.A.T.).

The Girls Work Unit also publishes a review catalogue of titles from other distributors which could be used in this area of

work. NAYC have plans in hand to publish a general review catalogue of titles available for youth workers: this would obviously be a useful publicity network. They are also discussing plans to expand the video collection into a library of about forty titles, suitable for various aspects of youth work. The second existing promotional network within youth work is the channel offered by the National Youth Bureau, another national agency involved in publication, training, research and development. They publish lists of films and tapes for youth workers which are classified by subject headings such as community involvement, juvenile crime, peace, politics, racism and unemployment. They welcome hearing from producers wishing to publicise their work.

Many local authority youth clubs use the local educational libraries and networks. These clubs are under the control of local authority youth officers, and publicity should also be sent to these local youth offices in a national promotion.

Youth workers themselves also stressed the importance of reviews as a means of finding out about tapes. The National Youth Bureau publish "Youth in Society" which will publish reviews, and the NAYC put out a "Working with Girls" newsletter, as well as other publications. Other relevant publications include "The Times Educational Supplement", "Rapport", published by the Youth and Community Work Union, and general magazines such as "Spare Rib".

Albany Video, a franchised workshop producing and distributing several titles for youth, stressed that personal recommendation was a particularly important means of getting information out to the youth work audience. Launch events were not considered to be of as much value as reviews and mail shots to start people using the tapes. In particular, they cited one of their programmes, "Fatherhood", which took off after reviews in "The Guardian" and "The Times Educational Supplement".

In general, however, youth workers had a low awareness of the independent sector and its work. Only small numbers of the suitable programmes made by the sector were promoted through the existing channels. Workers emphasised that they would welcome further information. They also felt that they were likely to want to hire in tapes rather than buy them, and therefore that locally-based libraries where they could also preview work, would be a useful support in the development of their use of video tape.

### 6.3.4 KIND OF PROGRAMMES NEEDED

Workers who actually had experience of using video tapes with young people stressed that successful programmes needed to be under thirty minutes in length, that attention span would drift if tapes were longer. Also, the use of music and contemporary

styles, were useful in getting the audience's attention. Further feedback on the style of programmes emphasised that the work should be based on the experience of the young people who constitute the audience; amongst the radical fringe of youth workers there was awareness that too many programmes were middle class. Finally, it was suggested that in order to really lead to discussion programmes should be provocative, challenging the assumptions of its audience. This still will also work best when the programme is left open-ended, rather than presenting the audience with solutions.

Workers expressed a need for materials across a range of issues. Employment and unemployment; sexism, including introducing gender and sexism awareness to young men; racism: it was noted that there are very few tapes which actually have a young black person's perspective. Tapes on the police and youth crime, the media, violence and drug abuse were also suggested as issues which needed resources. There was also a desire for materials portraying contemporary youth cultures, and more general portrayal of the circumstances of young people's lives, particularly for use in training.

### 6.3.5 VIDEO PRODUCTION AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Many youth clubs and projects have access to basic VHS video recording equipment. This is often used for recording events and for role play. Essentially, much of this type of work is process, rather than product, oriented - it is not intended to produce work of lasting quality for distribution. Video is often offered by youth projects as one of a range of activities which can bring young people together in creative work.

As suggested in the introduction to this section, most independent and community-based workshops have made programmes with youth groups, including Nottingham Video Project, Video in Pilsen, Birmingham Film and Video Workshop and Albany Video. In some cases, this has led to the production of work suitable for distribution and even for broadcast. Youth workers themselves were keen to use tapes produced by other groups of young people, feeling that such work would address the audience in its own language. However, producers who had actually been involved in making programmes with young people stressed that it is not as easy as it might appear. First of all, it has to be recognised as a long-term process which will involve a lot of education and group work before production can take place; "Framed Youth", a tape about young gays and lesbians, was the result of nine months of intense workshop activity within the production group. Similarly, "What Are They Telling Us It's Illegal For?" and "Giro", produced at Birmingham Film and Video Workshop, are the product of a very long-term collaborative process between the young people and the video makers. Producers emphasised



that they have to take responsibility for their own skills in translating young people's experience into usable products; unrestricted pure access would only lead to disappointed groups of young people if it did not include access to the production skills of video makers. Despite these provisos, the potential for young people to create their own media images is clearly enormous and justifies further development.

### 6.3.6 TWO PRODUCTION GROUPS WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Albany Video produce work across a range of issues. However, we found that they were particularly well known amongst youth workers as both producers and distributors of programmes for youth. They felt that they had acquired this reputation after the success of their programme "Us Girls", made in 1979 about a group of young working class women from a stage play of the same name. This was the first of their tapes to be distributed nationally, and coincided with the development of Girls Work. They felt that the growth of use of video tapes in youth work had coincided generally with the rise of a more radical approach amongst youth workers concerned to use their work as a forum for social education. The Albany's distribution service had developed alongside these developments in youth work. They now distribute fourteen programmes suitable for use with young people, and their three most hired tapes are all aimed at youth. ("Us Girls", "Framed Youth" and "A Place of My Own", about youth homelessness). Programmes are usually made as part of a collaborative process with the young people involved and is usually initiated by people working with youth in the area.

Albany consider that with better promotion there is considerable scope for expansion in this market, perhaps into the more mainstream areas of youth work and away from just the radical fringe of youth workers. Such an expansion would be facilitated by producers starting to work in more attractive formats than just the conventional documentary, using fictional narrative, music and series.

AVID are a video production co-op based in Leicester, originally set up as a CP scheme by the NAYC to service its AV needs. They are now a self-financing independent co-op, although they still get office space through NAYC. They have made a number of programmes for youth and youth workers such as "Junior Clubs", a training tape about younger age group clubs, "An Acquired Taste", about young people and alcohol, and "Find Your Own Support", a training tape made for isolated youth workers. The latter programme was part of a resource pack, and sold over 100 copies. They have also made "Control Yourself", a tape about young people setting up workers' co-ops, for the Industrial Common Ownership Movement, and a tape on young people and decision-making for the National Council of Voluntary Services. Many of these programmes have been distributed through the networks offered by the

commissioning agency and through the NAYC, who have both publicised the titles and offered them for sale at around 16 each.

## 6.3.7 CONCLUSIONS

(a) Scope for an expansion of distribution in this audience group can be identified in two main areas:

(1) Youth work training: training packages that included written material as well as a video programme could be further promoted to youth and community work courses and to local authority youth offices engaged in organising in-service training;

(2) Tapes for use with young people. In particular, such programmes should be aimed at youth work with a social education function such as Girls Work and some work with the unemployed. Such tapes need to be made in a language and style that young people relate to. These tapes might have additional use in schools and further education.

(b) Publicity and promotion: As in other audience groups not enough independent product is known about by youth workers - it needs to be better promoted, to voluntary clubs through the National Association of Youth Clubs, through local authority youth services, and to higher education. Mail-outs will reach many of these internal networks and reviews must also be obtained to reach individual workers. In particular, reviews in "Youth In Society", "Rapport", "The Guardian" and "The Times Educational Supplement", and the NAYC and NYB listings. There is a need for a centralised source of information on resources available.

(c) Youth offices need to catalogue local playback and production resources for youth workers. In addition, they should be working towards keeping localised libraries of tapes for use by workers in their area, with preview facilities.

(d) Youth workers themselves need to have made available some kind of educational guide to the use of video, which would include practical help on how to set up screenings, which kind of work to select and where from, and how to get the best out of ensuing discussions. Written support material to accompany programmes, with suggestions for areas of discussion and related exercises, would also be useful.

## **6.4 DISTRIBUTION TO EDUCATION**

### **6.4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Schools and colleges appear at first sight to offer a large audience to the producers considered by this report. The majority of programmes made by the sector claim a broadly educational aim, often imparting both arguments and information in order to raise their audience's awareness of the subject. There are estimated to be 7,000 secondary schools with VCR playback, 1,000 teachers' centres, and 8,000 primary schools, not to mention higher and further education. Awareness of the potential for video use in the classroom has been steadily increasing over the past few years, however, the take-up of independently-produced work by teachers have been very limited. By looking at the overall contours of this market, we hope this section will give producers and distributors some guidelines to follow in getting their work into schools and colleges.

### **6.4.2 OFF-AIR RECORDING**

Firstly, it is important to recognise that despite the high numbers of VCRs within education, this does not of itself create an audience for independently-produced work, or indeed any kind of non-broadcast programming. By far the greatest use of VCRs in education is for time shift viewing, off-air recording. Teachers are able to find most of the programmes they need by careful scrutiny of the Radio and TV Times. Most of the programmes recorded will be from schools broadcasts or OU courses, with the more adventurous teachers risking use of pertinent drama or current affairs material. This use of off-air material is not without its problems due to the current copyright laws; unless the school pays a licence fee, off-air recording is in fact illegal. A great deal of time and resources within education are devoted to servicing the various licensing agreements which exist between the producers and educational authorities. Despite this difficulty, software from broadcast television enjoys a very high profile and is therefore likely to continue to provide a substantial amount of schools' and colleges' video programming.

### **6.4.3 EXISTING EDUCATIONAL DISTRIBUTORS**

So, if a teacher decides they need something on video which they can't get off air, where will they look? The first most likely source of tapes is the library of titles now held by most educational authorities centrally. (In some cases, the



educational AV libraries are controlled by the public library service.) In the past, programmes have often been made available free from such a source; libraries have been expanding quickly over the past five years, and now show signs of slowing up. If the teacher cannot find what they want from such a library, they may, if they're keen, look further afield to other distributors. A first source of information might be the general bibliographical guides to film and video such as the BFI's "Films and Video on Offer" or the British Universities Film and Video Council's catalogue - neither of which are exactly replete with entries from the independent sector. Following this, they will then be faced with going through the catalogues of individual distributors, and at this point another factor arises which presents particular difficulties to the individual producer trying to make contact with potential users in this market.

There are more distributors servicing the educational AV audience than any other special interest sector. At the top end of the market, we find the sales wings of the BBC and the IBA companies, many of whom are establishing educational 'liaison' units to sell programmes direct to schools and colleges. At a comparative level, there are also companies such as Harris Films, the biggest distributor of 16mm feature films in the UK, and the educational wing of Walt Disney Productions. Then there are a host of specialist distributors such as Boulton Hawker Films, dealing primarily with biology and health education films, Oxford Scientific Films, Argus Film Library, CFL Vision and Educational and Television Films Ltd. This plethora of AV distribution to the educational institutions means of course that competition for teachers' attention is intense.

#### 6.4.4 CONCORD FILMS

By far the most significant educational distributor as far as the independent sector is concerned is the Concord Films Council. Concord have a policy of only distributing productions which 'promote constructive discussion on contemporary social issues and culture' a definition which could well be applied to many of the programmes made by the sector. Concord handle a catalogue of around 3,000 titles and about 50-60% of their 500,000 turnover comes directly from educational institutions. The trends indicated from their order book give a good profile of developments in this market for independent producers. They report that the total volume of business has declined from 1978 when 28,000 hire invoices were issued, to 18,000 in 1984 - cuts in educational budgets are blamed as the major reason for this decline (a point to which we shall return). Video cassette now amounts to nearly half the bookings Concord take, and represent 85% of the total sales of titles; sales themselves have risen from 300 invoices issued in 1977 to 1,100 in 1984, and a significant number of these invoices are for more than one title as educational libraries

in particular build up their stock. However, the increase in video sales shows signs of levelling off. The overall picture then is of a dramatic increase in the use of video cassette over the past six years, with a strong preference for the purchase of titles on cassette. These trends, however, are set against a background of steadily declining business.

## 6.4.5 EDUCATION CUTS

The impact of continuing cuts in educational spending is likely significantly to reduce the size of the market for independent producers. Video has not been around long enough in the classroom for it to have become an established part of educational practice; teachers are still learning how best to use video with a class, how to develop it as part of an active learning process, using a critical viewing process, rather than it being just a period of telly.

Many teachers at the moment cannot even afford the books that they need, therefore the marginal position occupied by video in the educational process is likely to be substantially eroded by the policies of the present government.

## 6.4.6 STRATEGIES FOR THE INDEPENDENT PRODUCER/DISTRIBUTOR

### (a) PRICING

In the past, many producers have operated a dual price structure for the sale of titles, and in some cases for their hire, with educational institutions being charged at the higher end of the scale, paying upwards of £50 for the purchase of a tape. This policy has evolved on the basis of comparing the resources of say a local community group and those of a school or college and therefore deciding that if the community group is being charged at such and such a rate then the school should be charged a lot more. Our research has suggested that continuing this policy will lead to dwindling sales in this area for the immediate (i.e. Thatcherite) future: while some sales will be possible at such a rate we would argue that a lot more would be possible if cassettes were offered more cheaply. We would recommend that a sale price of between £20-£30 is appropriate, given this overall market background.

### (b) CURRICULUM RELEVANCE

The second major factor determining the success or failure of a programme in this market is its subject matter. The more

clearly a tape can be seen to fit into a curriculum course, the more likely it is to get used - often the most successful programmes within educational distribution are scientific, showing things that could not be seen by the class in any other way. Teachers like to know when they read about a programme what kind of timetabled lessons they could use it in. It is simply not enough for a producer to say "this programme is intended for educational use" without defined precisely what kind of educational use, what courses will it fit into? This requires the producers to do some work at the script stage to actually check out what areas of curricula the programme might be relevant to, what kind of resources are available in that area of study, and therefore get some ideas of what the teachers' requirements might be. Looking to our tape survey (see Appendix A), we can see that there are a lot of titles there which could be said to have educational relevance to school age audiences; going on subject matter, there are approximately 25 titles of direct relevance to such an age group, 11 of these titles concern gender and women's issues, a further 6 are about work, or the lack of it. So we immediately have to ask where in the timetable do discussions of gender find their way into school? In the main, this would probably be in areas such as Life Skills, or Social Studies. Tapes about work or unemployment might fit into Careers Education sessions. Other titles on our survey might fit into Environmental Studies, particularly the history, geography mix that now goes by that name. However, what is clear from the survey list is that not many of the titles actually slot directly into mainstream curriculum subject areas - as such they are more likely to find users in the other areas of education outside of schools, such as youth work and youth cultural activities. Given that current sector production appears then to only be appropriate to fairly marginal curriculum areas, it might be a good idea if producers were able to put more work into researching curriculum use of programmes in their area of interest in more mainstream subjects. The growth of media studies as a school subject may provide a very significant curriculum area as it develops - we shall return to this below.

#### (c) PACKAGING

A third, and related, crucial factor affecting distribution to education is the way that programmes are packaged. As we have already stated above, teachers are still learning how best to use videos in the classroom, and they appreciate all the help they can get. Therefore, a fully comprehensive set of teachers' notes to accompany the programme is a must - these should include possible stopping points in the tape, transcripts of text or script, a guide to the questions and discussion areas which might arise from the programme and some ideas for practical exercises which could come out of discussion - in other words the distributor does not provide simply a tape, but an entire planned lesson for the teacher or group leader to adapt to their



own needs. An extension of this idea is not to simply provide material for one session, but to provide a package with enough material for a four or six week block of sessions - this might include a number of titles looking at different areas of the same subject, and building up the group's awareness of the subject area using video, discussions, practical exercises and so on. The distributor is then in a position of selling not just a tape, but a whole educational package which can be re-used with different groups at different times.

#### (d) PROMOTION

The fourth and final crucial factor affecting distribution in this, as in any other area, is promotion. Getting the information about your programme to the right people within the appropriate network - the people who are actually in a position to make a decision to hire or buy the tape. Within education specifically, this is not an easy process, since decision-making with regard to resource acquisition varies from authority to authority and even from school to school. What is clear is that it is not enough, nor very efficient, to do a mass mail-out of all schools if the leaflet simply sits on the desk of the school secretary. So what are the networks within education that we might be able to employ? First of all, the producer might go for trying to get the programme bought by as many local authority AV libraries as possible, so the librarians need to be contacted first of all, then the producer needs to establish whether in fact the librarians there actually have the power to recommend acquisitions - if they do, all well and good; however, in many cases the librarians buy in titles on the basis of advice from educators themselves - for instance within the ILEA each subject has an inspectorate dealing with curriculum matters and each inspectorate has a subject advisory committee which recommends the purchase of films or videos to the central media library. So the promotional information, the invitation to the launch, or preview copy of the tape, needs to go to the relevant subject advisory committee.

Getting the information to as many Media Resources Officers as possible would be a useful supplementary network to follow in addition to the above - they can then make requests for the tape from central librarians or try to get their school to get hold of it. The above pursues the centralised avenues of educational distribution. However, it is also possible to try to communicate direct with the teachers themselves, the most likely users of the tapes. To do this, the producer might utilise the specialist teachers subject journals (such as the one for English and Drama) or the network of teachers' centres which often function around specific groupings, and may put out their own local newsletters. In addition, the Times Educational Supplement and the Guardian education pages will also review work. Ultimately, creating an awareness and demand from the teachers themselves for the tape is the primary goal of promotion in this area - if this

is successful, then the pressure will be there for the central libraries and MROs to get hold of it. All of the above entails an enormous amount of work; as with any promotional campaign, it is a question of choosing the particular elements of what is possible to suit the particular programme and resources. It is certainly worth producers combining together to undertake the work - especially if this could be achieved on a regional basis so that producers in any given region had a good idea who the 'key' decision-makers in education were in their area so that they could make that information available to other producers.

## 6.4.7 MEDIA STUDIES INITIATIVES

The development of media studies in school might provide independent producers with a useful point of entry into this audience group. Given that much workshop production is concerned with oppositional practices to mainstream media, it is reasonable to assume that it might find a place within media studies curricula, and that through such use it might disseminate further through the school timetable. Scotland already has its own Association of Media Teachers. They can be contacted via the Edinburgh Film Workshop Trust. Currently (Spring '85), the BFI and the Society for Education in Film and Television are planning to establish a media education initiative network, which would involve as many educators as possible involved in media studies, both in higher and school education; they are organised on a regional basis and should be able to provide producers with a very useful mailing list for getting publicity into schools, as well as providing feedback to producers on what kind of programming is useful, successful and so on. In other words, producers in the independent sector should involve themselves in the development of these networks with a view to stimulating both new production and distribution possibilities.

## 6.4.8 CONCLUSIONS

We would conclude that for the independent production sector to improve its distribution within education, a number of developments and strategies need to take place:-

1. Producers and distributors need to adjust their pricing to account for an 80s, not a 70s, level of educational resources. Sale prices should be set between £20-£30;
2. Programmes need to be designed in the first place to be relevant to definite areas of the curriculum;
3. Titles should be packaged to facilitate teachers' ease of

~~use provided with back-up material around which lessons can be structured;~~

4. Programmes need to be promoted through the appropriate networks.

## 6.4.9 RECOMMENDATIONS

With this in mind, we can make the following practical recommendations:-

- Producers and distributors should ensure that their titles appear in the BFI "Films and Video on Offer" and the British Universities Film and Video Council's catalogue listings;
- Producers should try to design programmes for more mainstream curriculum subjects;
- Producers and distributors should combine together to undertake packaging and promotion in order to reduce duplication and use resources efficiently;
- Producers in the sector should actively involve themselves in the development of media education initiatives.



## 6.5 PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND VIDEO

### 6.5.1 INTRODUCTION

The public library service has huge potential for increasing the availability of video. Library services are under the control of the County Council or Metropolitan Borough in which they are situated. Although libraries have a statutory obligation to provide a free book loan service, there is no single policy on video. The range of services in addition to book loan varies widely. In different authorities, library services may have emphasis, for instance, on links with museum services, arts provision, including services to amateur groups, with education, including adult education. They may also be included as part of leisure services or recreation departments, or may have an emphasis on provision of community information services and facilities for community and voluntary groups. This gives a range of possibilities for the development of new video services by public libraries: there is no standard pattern likely to emerge. However, new services have developed against a background of public spending cuts.

Many library services have come under pressure to earn income and video loan has been no exception. However, some local authorities, recognising that new developments in media require a response from public services, have started to develop strategic media policies. This has been part of a process in which libraries have started to see themselves as community-based resource centres, with a brief that extends beyond simply providing books. Some local authorities and producers are therefore now beginning to see that libraries have potential as localised sites of distribution and screening for alternative audio visual products.

This section will deal with the general background of library use of video with specific reference to a number of authorities.

### 6.5.2 VIDEO LOAN IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES : 1982 SURVEY

In 1982, Catherine Pinnion, the Audio-Visual Services Librarian for Sheffield Public Libraries, conducted for the Library Association Audio-Visual Group, a survey on the development of video collections in public libraries. Although the situation is changing rapidly, this is the most up-to-date overview available.

The survey was carried out in June 1982, and 160 out of 167 library authorities responded. At that time, 25 had established a video loan service, 59 authorities were actively considering doing so or had plans for such a service, and 76 were either

~~not considering video or had rejected the idea, at least for the time being. Many authorities, whilst recognising the importance of video, were more concerned about improving or maintaining existing library provision in a time of financial cutbacks. It was this consideration which was holding authorities back~~

However, financial problems made it difficult for libraries to introduce a new service without making charges, and only two authorities, Dumbarton and Kent, had introduced free services. Although public library authorities are legally obliged to provide a free book loan service, they can charge for other services if they so decide. Dumbarton had begun its service as a result of a government grant in 1975 which enabled them to make programmes about the locality and these, together with commercially-made educational tapes were available free of charge. Kent also had a loan service for educational and documentary material free of charge.

Most authorities were charging for video loan, and some aimed to make this service self-financing. This meant an emphasis on popular feature films, with an estimated 30% of such collections consisting of feature films. This meant stock had to be replaced frequently to meet demand. It was the experience of many librarians that this was the kind of material demanded by the public and that non-fiction was not borrowed. Some libraries have made arrangements with commercial video dealers to supply collections, and in some cases to provide the whole service, or to take a share of the income. However, most authorities had bought their collections outright, rather than leasing them. Hire charges were comparable with commercial video shops. Security of collections was proving a major problem, and libraries were having to provide a much higher level of protection and insurance than was normal in libraries.

Generally, the early stages of development of video loan in libraries were dominated by collections similar to those found in commercial hire outlets, and by the aim that the collections should generate income to finance overheads.

### 6.5.3 PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND VIDEO : RECENT TRENDS

Catherine Pinnion was asked for her views on how the situation had changed since the 1982 survey.

Since the survey, there have been some setbacks, and some changes in policy. There are now about forty-five authorities with video collections. As has been said, there had been emphasis on stocking the most popular feature films, and on income from the service. However, in a situation of great competition with commercial video hire and where interest in popular film titles was often short-lived and collections had to be frequently up-dated,





## 6.5.4 MEDIA POLICY AND THE LIBRARY SERVICE

Sheffield City Council has been one of the local authorities in the forefront of developing a media policy which includes video. In 1982-3, they, jointly with the GLC, sponsored a series of public hearings and publications on cable television and its implications (Cable Working Papers 1983, see in particular 'Cable and Community Programming' by Sheffield TV Group). These concluded that cable TV in the form envisaged by the Conservative Government and the cable industry would destroy rather than create jobs in the media, cultural and leisure spheres. The policy of Sheffield now is not to fund community programmes for use by commercial cable companies, but instead to promote alternatives.

Sheffield is aiming to develop a local media policy in which video features strongly, encouraging local production, loan and viewing. The public libraries, under their new Director, Pat Coleman, were a major factor in this. A Community Communications Co-ordinator has been appointed, who is also co-ordinator of the Media Policy Group who are working to develop and implement this policy. The aim is to have centralised edit facilities, encourage independent local production, and for the library service to have video production equipment available for local community groups. The City Council has also commissioned or part-funded tapes on a range of social and economic issues, such as 'Council Matters' from Leeds Animation, and tapes on electrification of the railways; and the steel industry, from Steel Bank. Independent distribution of video through the library service, both for home viewing and promoting group viewing, is central to providing alternatives to existing media.

As has been mentioned, Sheffield Central Library has a video loan collection, which it is hoped to expand to other library branches. The public library branches were also used to distribute City Council campaign tapes, for example, on ratecapping. The Central Library collection includes popular feature films, educational tapes and locally-produced and campaign tapes, including work from local producers such as Sheffield Film Co-op and Steel Bank. It is planned to expand the acquisition of such independent work. There is a sliding scale of charges: £1 for features, 50p for non-fiction, with campaign and local work free.

The video collection has proved popular and was attracting people into the library who had not previously been users. However, it was the feature films which were popular, and although this made some income which helped the collection to be maintained, the take-up of the campaign tapes and other local and independent work had been disappointing. For instance, Sheffield have a Peace Campaign Officer and are committed to campaigning in this area. As part of this campaign, the library had acquired a collection of videos on the peace movement and nuclear disarmament,

available for free loan. However, these had been borrowed very little. Distribution of radical and campaign material from shelves dominated by entertainment films was proving a problem. It was felt that it may have been unrealistic to expect that people would borrow such material for home viewing. More work was needed on active distribution and specific publicity about what was available. It was hoped that local libraries would be able to develop facilities for group viewing and promote public screenings. They had recognised a need to put more work into active distribution, as the policy aims of promoting a different kind of media use, such as group viewing and discussion, was cutting against the whole trend of increasingly privatised home entertainment, and people's existing expectations of the media.

Sheffield has a wide involvement in video production within adult education, arts groups, unemployment centres, and so on, but there is a lack of staffing and of access to editing equipment. The Community Communications Co-ordinator is now responsible for a central editing suite, for giving advice to groups, and for the development of a centralised media resource of video equipment. It was felt that a major problem in local authorities was that video equipment was purchased by different departments and individuals and then was frequently under-used. Firstly, although money is provided for equipment, there is a lack of revenue funding for staffing. Secondly, people having access to equipment may not be trained in its use, or it is maltreated, or kept by over-protective technicians, or interest in using it wanes. A centralised resource with playback and basic equipment would enable it to be better utilised. There were problems, however, in establishing a service which cut across departments, as they had to agree on joint finance or cross-charging. It was also hoped to put more resources into exhibition and distribution.

## 5.5 A LIBRARY BASED MEDIA RESOURCE

The London Borough of Hackney Library Service have an established media resource centre, which makes audio-visual and reprographic facilities available to community groups. This does not include loan of pre-recorded tapes.

Hackney Media Resource is based at Shoreditch Library. It was set up as an Inner Area Programme project four or five years ago. Any non-political group based in the borough can affiliate for #5 and then use and hire equipment free. This has proved very popular and about two hundred local groups are affiliated. The Centre provides reprographic and display equipment, as well as audio and audio-visual equipment for sound, photography, film and video. The video equipment includes four portapaks, lighting and playback equipment: all VHS. There is no edit

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suite, although it is hoped soon to have this. Most of the video made is not of a high enough standard to pay for editing, although some is edited at Fantasy Factory or Annars. All the video equipment is heavily used, and playback equipment especially is heavily booked in advance. The staff also run training courses in video.

Rapid expansion in the use of the service since it was opened have created problems, as it does not have an adequate budget to replace worn-out equipment, to meet expanding demand, and also is unable to increase its existing staff of two. This means new services such as lending-out of tapes cannot be discussed as there is no room or staff time. As is often the case, staff are under-resourced in providing a service for which demand is rapidly escalating, yet are aware of other local government departments buying similar equipment which is not made accessible and is under-used.

The staff are also becoming more involved in discussions about media initiatives in the borough such as cable TV, use of computers and video. After the GLC/Sheffield reports on cable, workers were employed to work on the issue in Hackney. Now Hackney Cable TV has been funded by the Economic Development Unit, and hopes to get EEC funding to produce five hours community cable programming a week. Generally, Hackney Library Service do not loan video and have not had a strong emphasis on media other than books. The Media Resource has not been very integrated with the library service, as well as facing increasing financial problems. The workers felt there was a severe imbalance in the library service between funding for books and for audio-visual services. Recently, however, a change in the library management structure and a new policy emphasis on community information indicate that the situation should improve. There are plans to move to a separate building, to have more funding, and to be more integrated into the library service, recognising the strong links the Resource has developed with community groups.

The staff recognise the potential, given the resources, for developing distribution of film or video, and exhibition. Although 60% of the libraries have meeting rooms, screenings have not been developed. In the area, there are screenings at the Rio Cinema and at Hoxton Hall Community Theatre.

Overall, the Media Resource has shown the huge level of demand for access to audio-visual equipment by voluntary groups. There is clearly great potential for library services to develop this, as well as related areas like video tape distribution and screenings.



## 6.5.6 PROMOTING VIDEO TO SCHOOL AUDIO- VISUAL LIBRARY SERVICES

We took Leicestershire as an example of an audio-visual library service to schools. Not all education or library authorities have a centralised service of this type, but it is estimated that about half the counties have some sort of AV service for schools. In some authorities, there is more emphasis on putting AV materials into resource centres in individual schools and on employing librarians within the schools. In Leicestershire, the film and video loan service is funded by the Education Committee alongside the book library service to schools and is available as a free service to all the local education authority's schools and colleges. Most of the demand comes from schools, as further education and the sixth-form colleges are more self-sufficient.

The library staff select materials being considered for purchase, and show them to subject-based preview panels who recommend what should be bought. Panels include Primary, Modern Languages, Media Studies, In-service Training, Drama and Music, and so on. These viewing evenings are open to any interested teacher. The librarian looks for titles which relate to new curriculum developments in schools, and for areas where existing stock is out of date or cannot meet demand.

The budget for buying film and video for 1984-85 was £5,300, far smaller than the book budget. As in many places, the demand for video rather than film is increasing, school projectors are being replaced with video recorders, old film stock is being replaced with video, and in the previous year 70% of titles were on video (all VHS). Secondary schools in particular were asking for video, although film was still preferred for larger screenings, especially in primary schools. Prices paid for tapes ranged between £17 and £400, (£400 was paid for the BBC's "Hamlet"). £100 was considered to be a high price which would only be paid for material which was central to the curriculum and sure to be widely demanded. If a tape was at a low price, it was far more likely that the librarian would take a risk and buy it, or if good material was priced around £25-30, they might buy more than one copy.

There is a range of ways in which librarians find out about available material. Material is chosen for preview from recommendations from the County's Education Advisers, who also use tapes themselves, both in in-service training and in schools. The librarians consult a large range of catalogues, as well as most educational journals when looking for new stock, such as the Times Educational Supplement, Junior Education, Audio-Visual Librarian, School Librarian, and other educational journals. Reviews are important in choosing material to preview. Other sources of titles available include: Penguin Video Catalogue, BFI Catalogues, catalogues of the BBC, EMI, Patterson, Disney, Guild Sound and Vision, the Central Film Library, ILEA library,

library suppliers such as Chivers and T.C. Farries, and the Sheffield-based Learning Resources information service.

or visited by representatives and told about new material. The librarians were not necessarily keen on being sent preview copies of materials they had not requested. There might be interest in attending previews if they were local and if a range of genuinely appropriate material was being shown, but being sent information and then requesting preview copies of selected titles was preferred. Some firms were developing preview tapes with highlights of a range of items. Another new development was that some firms would sell tapes for a higher price, which included the right for the purchaser to make copies from it.

The library service buys all their books from licensed library suppliers, which are bookshops and specialist wholesalers who can offer a book-processing service (library jackets, labels and so on) and supply books in large quantities with 10% discount. For audio-visual materials the rules are more lenient and librarians can go to producers or other sources for specialist materials. Chivers, in Bath, and T.C. Farries, in Dumfries, are library suppliers specialising in audio-visual materials, including video, from a wide range of producers, for educational and public libraries. Librarians are able to order from them, or to visit them to preview a large amount of material at a time in their showroom, and then order in bulk. Library suppliers bring to the attention of librarians a wide range of materials, and are the most convenient way for them to order materials, as they are geared to the purchasing and administrative routines of libraries. For instance, libraries would not send money with an order, but would expect to be invoiced. The extent to which librarians will search out materials from small producers will depend on the diligence of the librarian, the amount of information made available to them, and their specialist subject knowledge.

There were often areas where enough good material could not be found. Libraries are forced to rely on too much USA educational material, which may not be appropriate. In particular, there is not enough British material for younger children. There are often gaps in subject areas which can mean old films are being loaned out which are really out-of-date. For primary-aged children and the 11 to 14 age group there was a lack of material on social issues such as housing, local studies, topics like people's lives in the community such as the elderly or handicapped. There was also interest in more material related to fiction for younger children. In addition, new curriculum topics, for instance dance, would be developed by the education authority. There was also a lack of materials to support the multicultural education policy.

Library services would certainly be interested in buying community or workshop-produced material, but at present librarians are

not informed about what is available, and better promotion is necessary, with preview tapes available on request. The criteria for selection includes the production quality, format, and how effective teachers feel it would be in use, as well as existing gaps in the library. In particular, libraries have an interest in material for schools on local history or local studies for their area. For material of this kind which was not available from elsewhere, they might be prepared to consider less professional work.

It would be worth producers sending promotional material to educational library services, to local education authority subject advisers, and to library suppliers specialising in audio-visual materials.

## 6.5.7 ICA VIDEO DISTRIBUTION TO LIBRARIES

The Institute of Contemporary Arts in London is involved in a new initiative to produce video tapes and sell them to libraries. The project aims to make some of the events and work of the ICA more accessible, particularly outside London. Initially, video is being used to record some of their lecture and seminar programme, starting with an established lunch-time series "In Conversation", featuring contemporary literature. An author discusses her or his life and work, and usually their recent publication, with another writer or critic in front of an audience. With the backing of the Greater London Enterprise Board, whose cultural industries sector is interested in the potential of the public library service for making cultural products more widely available, funding has been given for a pilot project. "Creative Television" recorded ten of the Autumn 1984 events. The aim is to produce 24 tapes a year of this kind of event, including interviews with a particular author, and thematic compilation tapes. It is intended that the tapes would be bought by libraries on a subscription basis, paying for a complete set of 24 tapes and receiving two a month. It is intended that they could then be made available from the libraries, for screening in the libraries, or for use in a more formal educational setting, in schools or adult education. The tape project was launched at a reception for Chief Librarians early in 1985. The ICA are planning to develop productions based on other arts and events and to distribute to libraries, and possibly to distribute work by other producers to libraries.

## 6.5.8 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Public libraries form the largest potential resource for making video available very widely. Work needs to be undertaken to make librarians more aware of the different kinds of video





## 6.6 AUDIENCES - CONCLUSIONS

1. The overwhelming conclusion that can be drawn from each of the networks we have looked at is that the sector suffers from a chronic lack of promotion. This absence is apparent on two levels. Firstly, the audience groups we have examined had very little awareness of the sector as a whole, of what it stands for, or of how it could be useful to them. Secondly, the audiences we looked at had very little knowledge of programmes produced by groups in the sector, and without exception agreed that they would welcome more promotional information.

2. Taking the four networks as a whole, certain principles of promotion can be suggested. Firstly, each network has two channels for information dissemination, the formal and the informal. Formal channels follow the pathways inside the institutions that make up the network, such as Education Officers in the case of Trade Unions, or local education authority AV librarians in the case of education; by and large these are the individuals within the networks who have the power and the budget to buy your tape. The best way to reach these key positions is by use of a good mailing list for sending out publicity and by setting up preview screenings for them. The informal channels of the network are made up from those grass roots members of the organisation who will actually want to use your programme, shop stewards and rank and file in the case of the trade union movement, teachers in the case of education. These informal channels are best served by getting work reviewed in the appropriate papers and journals, and by establishing local resources for tape hire.

3. Each programme, or group of programmes, will require slightly different blends of the above strategies, depending upon its subject matter, and the balance of local, regional and national possibilities which this offers. Each title should have a carefully worked out promotional strategy and budget using mail shot, previews and reviews.

4. Programmes should be produced in accordance with the specific requirements of the envisaged audience regarding subject matter, length and style.

5. A general consensus on pricing amongst the networks we have discussed was apparent at a purchase price between £20-£30, with hire prices not going over £10.

6. Some promotional initiatives are best dealt with on a local or regional level, rather than a national level, e.g. public libraries, some local authority youth clubs and education authorities. Collecting and updating the information to promote to these groups is extremely difficult on a national basis and might better be achieved by workshops and distributors in each

region undertaking the work, then pooling the results.

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7. We are conscious that the use of video is itself in its infancy in the audience groups we have examined. There is a need for more general information on the use of video, how it can be used, how to set up screenings, where material is made available, where playback resources are located and how resulting discussions can be led.

8. Audiences expressed a need for tapes to be packaged with supporting material which would help them to build a discussion session around the screening, exercises that might be applicable, and sources of other information.





**CHAPTER SEVEN : LONDON REGION**



## 7.1 WHY THIS SECTION IS HERE

Although the Videoactive report has been written about distribution nationally, one of the conditions of our grant aid from the Greater London Council and from the Greater London Arts Association was that we specifically include a section about distribution in London.

## 7.2 LONDON AS A CENTRE

The character and quality of the London region is determined by the fact that it is the national centre for the audio-visual industries, as well as being an extremely large and diverse region in its own right. Recent attempts to develop regional strategies for the area have defined the region according to the ACTT London and the South East region which includes from Ipswich to Brighton in its area. The GLC economic policy group paper on the "Audio and Audio Visual Media Industries in London" (June, 1983) estimated that there were at that time some 50,000 workers employed in an industry with a 1,033.5m turnover a year: this estimate included all broadcast TV workers in the capital, as well as film workers and employees of independent facilities and production groups. Within the independent, community, workshop, production and distribution sectors in the region there are probably something like a hundred full-time posts with the same number of freelance, casual and sessional workers partly employed.

By the side of the commercial sector, the non-profit area is clearly miniscule. However, in comparison with the other regions, London has an enormous number of people employed in non-profit production and distribution, and community/workshop practices.

## 7.3 PROFILE OF THE SECTOR IN LONDON

The full range of workshop practices identified elsewhere in this report can be found in the London region. Diversity is the region's main characteristic. A recent report "Video In London", commissioned by the IFVA, identified more than 50 groups working specifically with video. There are also film-based workshops and production companies, which although not grant-aided, make programmes of interest to the sector.

London has a very large number of access-based workshops, whose practice is based on local concerns and issues. Groups such as Moonshine, West London Media, Lambeth Video and Tower Hamlets Arts Project have all tended to define themselves around geographical areas, often through funding links with the appropriate boroughs. There are also a number of franchised workshops in the capital whose concerns tend to be broader than the smaller access-based groups, though they may, like Four Corners and Albany Video, also engage in local work. Some groups specialise in working with particular interest groups, Women in Sync, are a women's video resource, the Irish Video Project makes tapes on Irish issues, Sankofa, Black Audio Film Group, Ceddo, work on a range of issues relevant to black people, while Retake and the Asian Film Collective work with the Asian Community. The range of practice in the capital also supports a number of London-wide specialist groups such as Fantasy Factory, a post-production resource, the Women's Film and TV Network, and VET, the Video Engineering and Training scheme, which offers technical support and training to a number of subscribing video groups.

Despite this profusion of activity, this sector in London is only just beginning to see itself as a distinctive region with its own identity. This development has in part been prompted by the GLC establishing the notion of London's "cultural industries" as playing a central role in their Arts and Recreational policy. The Council has recognised the value and aims of the sector in London and has assisted it by defining London-wide policy objectives as well as through direct subsidy (£356,650 in 1983/4). Part of this subsidy enabled the IFVA to employ a part-time London region organiser, which resulted in, among other things, the London region Video Forum getting established as a site for regionally-based policy discussion. No single forum exists for all independent producers in the capital. Within the union, film and video makers are split into separate groups: Grant-aided and London TV freelance. The Grant-aided shop have however recently produced a draft London plan containing policy development proposals. So far, none of these groupings has been able to lead the way in establishing consensus on the development of the sector in London; they have also been very much production-led, and have not addressed themselves specifically to distribution.

The imminent demise of the GLC faces the sector in London with a real need to unite behind concrete proposals for development. However, the very diversity of the sector within the South East regional militates against this process. In other regions, the comparative scarcity of resources leads towards styles of working which are often consciously modelled on the cultural character of the area. In London, no such homogenous tendency exists, for the cultural character of the region is a unique mixture which would be difficult to encompass in a single policy plan. In addition, this process would require time, resources and money, which in London tend to be concentrated in the work of individual groups, with little overall co-ordination.



## 7.4 EXHIBITION

Looking first of all at exhibition in London, there is a growing number of venues where videos can be viewed in public and group contexts. Many workshops engage in seasons or screenings, often around particular themes. For instance, Sankofa recently put on a series called "Power and Control" looking at questions around black representations, Four Corners have run screenings specifically around work which relates to the East End, Albany Video are going to be running screenings for women this year. Other workshops such as Moonshine run screenings on a variety of topics for their membership to which producers are invited for discussion, London Video Arts have continued to run screenings of recent video art, and the ICA videotheque have also provided an important showcase for much video art work, both through their regular screenings and also through the availability of the videotheque to members of the public during the day.

All the above types of screenings provide an important basis for much workshop practice establishing a forum for critical viewing which informs production. However, they do not in themselves address the question of gaining new audiences for the work.

The Tower Hamlets Arts Project, "Despite TV", has tried to tackle this problem by making a regular local magazine show which is then distributed through the local community to youth clubs, pubs, old people's centres - anywhere, in fact, where a VCR might be pressed into public use.

The GLC-sponsored "Anti-Racist Film Programme" provides a significant model for exhibition, which tries to reach new audiences. They put together a number of programmes of films and videos dealing with issues and representations of the black and Asian communities. These programmes were then toured on a rotating basis to a whole variety of venues which included cinemas like the Everyman, and the Rio, workshops with screening facilities like Four Corners and Cinema Action, community centres such as Jackson's Lane, the Factory, and Hounslow Community Centre, places like the Caribbean Cultural Institute and the Caribbean Education Centre, to relevant conferences and to some schools and colleges. The broad range of venues used was born out of the particular circumstances of the growing black and Asian film and video culture in the region. It was based on the perceived need to actually build an audience and an awareness for programmes dealing with relevant issues. The structure of the programme was based on an outreach philosophy, trying to get the programmes out to as many different kinds of people, black and white, as possible.

This programme of exhibition could provide the sector as a whole with a useful model for developing exhibition and for building

audiences. Its execution required, of course, large amounts of money and organisation from the GLC, which may not be forthcoming to post-abolition London.

Public places of music-based entertainment are increasingly providing venues for the screening of independently-produced work as promoters and punters alike seek some respite from the unending diet of pop promo. nap. Initially, much of the work screened in such venues has been music-based, and while it is likely that this will continue to provide the staple, it may also provide us with access to audiences for other kinds of work in the long term. It is having the effect of making people more accepting of the idea of TV in public places: so for instance it is now quite usual for, say, a political benefit to include screenings of video tapes. "The Enemy Within" have produced a tape, "The Days After" for the NUM hardship fund which includes scratch video as well as lengthy chunks of the documentary "The Case for Coal".

Another new exhibition and distribution venue is being opened up through the public library systems in London. Several libraries have expressed interest in having programmes available on their shelves, and Islington libraries have actually voted money for acquisition. In addition, GLEB and the ICA are launching a scheme to promote video cassettes to libraries nationally, starting from a London base. Once this avenue is opened up, it may have enormous practical advantages to developing systems of localised distribution and access to work. However, it is worth noting that unless library authorities can actually devote some resources to promoting the titles that they buy the tapes may well just sit on their shelves, as they already sit on a lot of others.

Finally, an important new departure in the availability of exhibition sites London-wide is the opening, in September, 1985, of the Metro, a new cinema and video screening venue in the West End. Grand-aided by £270,000-worth of GLC subsidy, the Metro is being launched by The Other Cinema and will provide the independent sector with a West End showcase venue for its work, both for repertory screening seasons and for preview facilities - given that amount of GLC subsidy, it is not unreasonable to suppose that independent producers in London should be able to avail themselves of the facilities on offer. However, Tony Kirkhope of The Other Cinema points out that in the long term it is hoped that the Metro will become a commercially viable cinema, "Adventurous programming, responsiveness to independent film culture and to the community and minority audiences, will be paid for by strategy, not grant aid."

## 7.5 DISTRIBUTION

Many of the leading distributors for the sector, including The

Other Cinema, Albany Video, Cinema of Women, Circles, Contemporary Films, London Video Arts, Educational and TV Films are all based in London. Though none of them has a specific brief for dealing with London audiences, their presence obviously stimulates local

distribution activity and perhaps more importantly represents a considerable degree of expertise in the field. In addition, their presence also suggests that London audiences have comparatively easy access to many of the leading catalogues of relevant work.

By and large, producers in London have not used this expertise as a resource to inform their work: a regular producer/distributor forum in the capital might begin to create dialogue between the two parts of the sector.

Numbers of workshops also undertake distribution work within London, both of their own programmes and of other peoples. Albany Video run a national catalogue of around 20 community-based programmes and are now also distributing Sankofa's 'Territories' along with the producers. London Video Arts have the largest distribution catalogue of video art in the country and distribute to galleries, colleges and festivals both here and abroad. Other groups like Annares, Films at Work and Activision concentrate on distributing the programmes which they produce. Andy Lipman in his report for the IFVA observes:-

"In the absence of a central marketing and promotion agency for independent cassette distribution, the burden falls on individual groups, who often lack the administrative staff to daily take bookings and despatch tapes, or the resources to successfully promote new work."

This again suggests the need for some collective, London-wide, initiative so that workshops can pool promotional and marketing expertise.

A new London-based initiative is being launched by The Cartel, the distribution wing of Rough Trade records. The Cartel is launching a nationwide distribution network for independent music based video producers. This year, they will be launching a catalogue of independently-produced work through 30 record stores nationwide. Stores in most cases already stock commercial rock video output, but rarely have the resources to take on numbers of individual small producers or distributors. The cassettes will be packaged with promotional material and will be promoted along with the relevant music. Again, at first the programming flowing through this network will be music-based, but it is hoped that it will create audiences for different types of work, certainly The Cartel are interested to hear of any work which the producers feel would be appropriate for such an audience.



## 7.6 THE GREATER LONDON ENTERPRISE BOARD

7.7

The GLEB was created by the present Labour GLC as an investment company to create jobs and industry in the region. GLEB took on some of the research undertaken by the GLC into London's cultural industries and established a Cultural Industries Unit to invest in these industries. Having worked with record and book distributors, the GLEB turned its attention to video in 1985. They identified distribution of independently produced work as the major problem facing the sector if it is to survive. They therefore commissioned a series of reports into independent distribution, and have convened a series of meetings of interested parties in the region, in order to arrive at some kind of consensus on what developments are needed. The essential feature of the GLEB's practice which independent producers have to understand is that they are an investment company, not a grant aiding body. Whatever groups they decide to support have to show that they will be able to pay back GLEB loans and survive as a viable, job-creating concern. GLEB have stated "Our strategy seeks to integrate both the social relationships of production with the disciplines exerted by the marketplace in the form of attractiveness of presentation and editorial flair."

They identified four major problems for distribution at the moment: a lack of outlets for the work, a lack of marketing and promotional skills, under-developed sense of production values and editorial flair and difficulties around the legal practices associated with distribution (rights and residuals, etc.). Having established this groundwork, they are currently soliciting investment proposals from interested parties in the region, with a view to investing substantial sums into this area in this financial year.

The authors of this report have been involved in making a series of proposals to the GLEB, with a view to setting up a company to undertake some of the distribution work which we have identified as necessary. This will probably take the form of a small promotion and distribution company to handle work made by independent producers. The company will only deal with video cassette and will try to maximise sales to nationally-based organisations and networks.

The GLEB initiatives will hopefully have a significant impact upon independent distribution practice within the capital.

## 7.7 THE BLACK WORKSHOPS

We have already referred to the new black workshops in London above. However, as a group, they represent a significant new departure in the London workshop movement. Since the workshops have been establishing themselves during the research for this report they are still in the process of formulating their distribution strategies. However, they have all run workshop-based exhibition programmes and their work was exhibited as part of the GLC's Anti-Racist Film programmes.

The specific concerns and context for their work suggest that the workshops will develop distribution networks which will be initiated and co-ordinated autonomously, and will seek to promote both their own and other relevant work both within London's black and Asian Communities and to a wider audience. Sankofa observed that the existing white-based distributors tend to only distribute particular kinds of black programmes which only locate black representation within the context of 'social problem'. They wish to see a network emerging which will handle a whole variety of black representations, including narrative, documentary, fiction, educational and cultural films and experimental work. To this end, discussions are continuing within the Association of Black Workshops; the GLC also plan to follow up the Anti-Racist film programme by setting up a more permanent network of active and regular screenings of relevant work in a variety of venues.

## 7.8 CONCLUSIONS

Developing a regional distribution strategy is a vital part of promoting the sector. Ensuring that programmes actually get seen and building an audience for the work will strengthen the sector in the long term. It should also be seen as part of our obligation to make our production work responsive to the needs of those groups with whom we choose to work.

As the brief review of work given above suggests, there is a great deal of production, exhibition and distribution work getting done in London. Much of this work is based on local contacts, and relationships with client groups built up over a long time. Work tends to happen on a borough by borough, and area by area basis, rather than on a London-wide scale. Most of the distribution activity happens as part of these locally based networks.

The disadvantage of these work patterns is that they tend to be quite fragmented, groups often remain ignorant of one another's practice and the overall impact of the sector upon the public consciousness remains small. (Even though this impact may be strong in particular areas of the city.) We need to develop distribution practices which will spread from the localised bases already within our grasp to genuine attempts to expand our audiences, and reach new viewers who otherwise would not know about the sector and its work.

This kind of co-ordination and consensus will of course require resources - funding patterns have in part been responsible for the current profile of the sector in London. In the absence of the GLC those bodies with a London-wide brief, the relevant union shops, the IFVA, the GLAA, and those within the BFI responsible for administering the London region need to address these issues of distribution in formulating their plans for the sector.

Against this background we make the following suggestions for future developments:

1. London producers and workshops should agree to establish a single venue where their work will be available on a library basis for preview screenings to potential users. The IFVA have plans in hand for the acquisition of screening facilities which may make this possible.

2. One of the existing workshops or distributors should be supported in gaining the resources necessary to organise touring packages of locally produced work to new venues and audiences. For instance a touring package dealing with the various anti-ratecapping campaigns last year would have been popular and useful. Such packages could be screened in existing venues such as independent cinemas, workshops, community centres, trade union events and so on.



3. A regular producer-distributor forum should be established, in order to exchange information on audiences and planned production.

4. Production groups need to lobby on a borough-by-borough basis to make their libraries and get their tapes onto the shelves.

5. Funding bodies should continue to support workshop screening programmes which play an important part in the sector's working practice.

6. When the GLC is abolished, the ILEA will be the only remaining elected London-wide body. The sector should therefore take steps to get more of its work distributed through ILEA schools and colleges.

7. The BFI will receive £1 million from the government to replace money spent by the Met counties and the GLC on film and video. The GLC spent 25% of their grant subsidy on distribution and exhibition in 1983-4. We should therefore lobby the BFI to maintain this proportion of spending on distribution when they decide to allocate some of the £1 million.



## **CHAPTER EIGHT : REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION**



## INTRODUCTION

As we have observed in Chapter Five, active distribution of programmes on a local and regional basis is one of the sector's essential features. This work is aimed at building a local audience for productions which will then inform and participate in programme-making. Developing regional audience networks is a prerequisite for maintaining producers' responsiveness to the needs of the area in which they work.

In practice, however, a lot of work does not actually realise even its regional distribution potential, either because of lack of planning and resources, or because producers don't have enough confidence in the work itself.

As we have indicated elsewhere in this report, recent developments such as Channel Four funding and the general expansion of markets for audio visual products have led to a growing desire to expand distribution. However, this desire has been tempered by the need to maintain the benefits of a close interactive relationship between producer, subject and audience. Production groups are often committed to a programme of work closely integrated with the culture of the region and are wary of their work being taken over and reshaped by a national, and probably London-based, organisation. A further influence upon the development of regional independent media culture has been the attempt to establish it as an industrial sector in its own right. This development has coincided with the growing interest in regional economic planning by Labour local authorities. For instance, the work done by the GLC as part of the London Industrial Strategy on Cultural Industries and similar work done for the West Midlands County Council. These planning developments have strengthened the hand of regional producers seeking to consolidate their funding base.

## 8.2 REGIONAL ALLIANCES

The desire for greater resources and longer-term stability for production has led some production groups to establish regional federations and alliances such as The Association of Scottish Workshops, the London Video Forum, the West Midlands Media Consortium, the Northern Ireland Association of Workshops, and the North East Media Development Council. Regionally-based strategies can help to support small diverse production groups and develop the sector without losing original aims of participation and democratic production. The existing regional alliances have



various aims such as promoting awareness of the sector, negotiating with funding bodies, establishing training programmes and providing collectively-owned production resources such as broadcast quality equipment. However, at this stage, these initiatives have not as yet been fully developed as well as production must be planned for and resourced if a regional model of development for the sector is to succeed.

### 3.3 EXAMPLES OF REGIONAL PLANNING

#### NORTH EAST

As we have seen, there is a considerable development of radical film and video production in the north-east such as Trade Films, including Broadcast Facilities North, Northern Newsreel and the North East Film and Television Archive, Amber, including the Current Affairs Unit, Swingbridge, some of whose work is described earlier, and smaller groups like Spectro and Magination. Broadcast Facilities North results from the need to develop the potential for making broadcast quality productions, and the need to pool resources to have the equipment for this.

A new initiative is the North East Media Development Council. This has been formed with representatives from different groups including the ACTT and the Northern Association of Media Technicians. Its aim is to consolidate production, distribution and exhibition in the region and to encourage new initiatives. It is hoped to expand production through gaining recognition of the future potential of media production as an industry for the North East. It is hoped to secure local authority investment in production units which would produce videos in areas like health or education.

Groups in the North East have been involved in a number of initiatives to take tapes out to find new audiences, for example, in the distribution of the miners tapes, in the Working Class Women's Travelling Cinema, which takes films and video, including feature films, to locations where there is no cinema and also to audiences which would not otherwise see the work. This started from involvement in a local women's refuge, screening films to women involved.

Another is Trade's development of a trade union newsreel. Although in its early stages, plans are that trade unions will subscribe to receive regular tapes made locally, and show them at meetings and in the workplace. It is hoped to develop new audiences for the work in this way, as well as funding production.

## WEST MIDLANDS

There are diverse projects and workshops working with film and video in the West Midlands, including Birmingham Film and Video Workshop. This was started in 1979 originally as a film workshop. With the development of the Workshop Declaration, the workshop expanded its video production and now has six workers. Programmes which have been shown on Channel 4 include 'What Are They Telling Us It's Illegal For?' and 'Giro', both made by Johnnie Turpie with unemployed young people in Telford, and "Property Rites" a film about society's attitude to sexual violence against women, in the 19th Century and now. These and other works are also being distributed on cassette. The workshop was also involved in distributing the miners campaign tapes.

Other production groups include TURC Video which is funded by West Midlands County Council and whose work in producing video for the trade union movement is described earlier. Other groups, including Wide Angles Film and Photography at present working with community groups with photography but planning expansion in community video, and Vokani, a group at present providing screenings mostly organised by the black community in Birmingham. There is also a Women's Film and Video workshop - a women's project to provide training and to make films and videos. At present, the project does not have paid workers or premises, but they have completed 'Poles Apart', a tape about girls and adventure play, and further tapes are being produced, as well as work in education and training. Also, the Women's Film Consortium organise screenings of work. After Image are a group working with the mentally handicapped in Wolverhampton. Other production groups exist in the West Midlands in Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Coventry and Walsall, but apart from TURC and BFVW, they do not distribute on a very large scale.

TURC provided the initial focus for the establishment of the Midlands Video Consortium which is a forum for equipment exchange and for joint initiatives on funding. It currently has 17-20 member groups who meet monthly to discuss joint exhibition, equipment needs, projects and co-workers. The West Midlands County Council Economic Development Committee have commissioned research into the audio visual industries in the area, with a view to economic development and job creation. The Video Consortium is active in pursuing the implementation of the resulting policy proposals. The Council's research recognised the lack of co-ordination and the need for the sector in this region to achieve a higher profile. There is an increasing amount of production, but much of it is not widely known or available because of insufficient promotion and screening facilities. The Consortium has so far concerned itself with equipment acquisition and general funding development rather than distribution. However, it is to be hoped that it will also address itself to organising regional distribution initiatives.

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## SCOTLAND

The Scottish Association of Workshops was formed by Glasgow Film and Video Workshop, Film Workshop Trust (Edinburgh), Video in Dilston, and The Tullis Workshop, Glasgow, in 1982, on behalf of the sector in Scotland. There are no franchised workshops in Scotland, and the sector has suffered a serious lack of adequate or long-term funding. Such projects as do exist have had to rely on short-term or piecemeal funding from a variety of sources. The Scottish Association of Workshops are concerned to promote the value of the sector and the need for financial support for a media which can redress the existing media image of Scotland and reflect Scottish society and culture as they appear to Scots themselves. In particular, needs which have been emphasised are the Gaelic-speaking area of Scotland, the fact that geographically most of Scotland is very isolated from the main centres of media production, and the need for development of media representation in the interests of disadvantaged groups.

At present, there are projects in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Alva, as well as smaller community video projects on Skye and the Uists, Aberdeen and Torphins, and in Orkney, which have not been able to develop because of lack of funds.

### 1. The Island House, Alva

This project works both with 16mm film and with video, and now has five staff. Films include "The Alva Games", 1982, a documentary about the games made with local people, and "Hallaig", a 70-minute documentary about the Scottish poet, Sorley MacLean, made with assistance from the Scottish Film Production Fund. There is also community video work being done with local people.

### 2. Glasgow Film and Video Workshop

Set up in February, 1983, this is an organisation of about 80 members involved in film and video. It has no permanent staff and for only 6 months in 1983/4 were they able to employ a full-time co-ordinator. Training in the use of film and video is provided for local organisations, and work has been done with local youth theatres, with the mentally handicapped, with youth work and social work departments. Productions include "Mayfest '84", about the Glasgow Arts Festival attempting to take events out into the city, and "Women in the Electronics Industry".

### 3. Film Workshop Trust, Edinburgh

Film Workshop Trust was established in 1977. They work in VHS and U-matic video, and are involved in both making programmes to commission, and in video training, media education and work with disadvantaged groups. They now have four workers. An



animation workshop was started in 1981. Channel 4 capital enabled the purchase of U-matic editing and a broadcast camera, and in 1984 a 50-minute documentary "Moving In" was completed for Channel 4, on the provision of new forms of assisted accommodation for the disabled in the community. Other work includes work for the Nature Conservancy Council, including work in Gaelic in the Highlands and Islands. Another project is "Site One", a film about the US Navy Nuclear Submarine Base at Holy Loch, which was screened by Channel Four as part of its anti-nuclear season. Educational work with community groups includes an extended involvement with Musselbrough Unemployed Workers Centre, who have made programmes about the decline of the basic industries of the region. A Women's Film and Video Unit has also been recently established.

#### 4. Video in Pilton

This is a project working with video in Pilton, a council estate on the outskirts of Edinburgh. The project is concerned to provide a means of expression for the concerns of the local tenants, and they have particularly focused on housing and health issues. There are two workers and much of the filming is done by local volunteers. They have recorded local festivals, worked with children, and made local rock videos. A successful tape was made about the Scottish Women's Health Fair. Funding was obtained from the Lothian Health Board and the Scottish Health Education Board for "In The Clear", a documentary about an anti-TB campaign in Scotland in the 1950s. They also have funding from the Dutch Bernard Van Leer Foundation. Tapes are distributed locally by the project and through local video shops, and a catalogue has been produced by them.

At the 1984 Edinburgh Festival, the Association as part of the Film Festival presented a 2-1/2 day programme on the work of the Scottish workshops, as well as tapes and films from English workshops. They argue that Scotland has been excluded from recent workshop growth by lack of funding, despite the potential shown by the work being done at present. They are primarily concerned with lobbying for a considerable increase in resources from Scottish bodies, to increase the number of workshops and put those that already exist on a more secure footing. As the workshops are all geographically close, there is also contact through sharing of edit facilities, but at present work on distribution has not been undertaken.

The Scottish Association of Workshops was formed to advance these aims, to lobby for increased funding for the workshop sector and to provide more production resources. Again, this initiative does not at present include specific allocation of resources to distribution.

## 8.4 CONCLUSIONS

Many promising initiatives in regional development are in their early stages. However, in most cases this work is being done to expand basic production resources with very little priority given to organising distribution or ensuring that work produced will reach the audiences it is intended for. Too often, groups assume that if only they had the resources they need for production then distribution will look after itself. This unfortunately is not the case. The regions must give greater attention to organising distribution and to planning for the necessary levels of time and resources to support such organisation. It is essential that the products of the sector are taken out and new audiences developed, energy needs to be put in to get more hires and sales of work as well as to set up screenings. Audiences and organisations who might want to use video need to be supported and educated in how to use tapes. Increased promotion and co-ordination will also have the effect of raising the profile of the sector generally, thereby encouraging other organisations to become involved in production and funding. Developing regional distribution networks which could then be linked nationally will lead to a general expansion of distribution which still remains responsive to regional and local needs.

## 8.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We welcome the development of greater regional liaison between producers. Such liaisons need to plan for a greater resource allocation to distribution. We recommend that each regional plan should include funding for at least one worker to be responsible for the development of distribution.

2. Resources should be allocated to the co-ordination of information between regions and within regions. This would include information about productions at the planning and research stage to avoid duplication and enable greater collaboration where appropriate. Information systems should be developed on tapes available for hire or sale such as regionally-based catalogues; such data could also take into account the availability of archive material. These information systems need to be established on compatible computer systems which could be based in regional centres.

3. More promotion is the key to expanding distribution. Much of this work could be shared by groups in each region. It could include, for instance, shared catalogues, publicity and mail-outs, launch events and previews and promotion to local public bodies like libraries. This will have the effect of not only increasing distribution, but of promoting the sector more generally to bodies who may be interested in commissioning work and funding.

4. Organisation of physical distribution, i.e. sales and hires. No standard pattern for sales and hires can be imposed as different producers will vary in their use of national distributors and their ability and wish to handle their own sales and loans. At a regional level, as well as a local level, there is a need to make tapes available for loan, as it is envisaged that national distribution will increasingly focus on tape sales. Hire may be more conveniently handled at a local or regional level, with facilities for previewing tapes. Media centres, arts centres, libraries, education authorities, regional TUC and trades councils, trade union education officers, local authority departments such as youth and community work, should all be encouraged to develop video loan resources. The autonomy of these bodies means that a standardised pattern cannot be imposed. Workshops could themselves keep libraries of nationally, as well as locally, produced tapes to enable previewing.

5. Regions need to look at greater co-ordination of production. At present, there is informal contact and also sharing of production equipment. An improved information flow could lead to more productions like the Miners Campaign tapes, which took material from all over the country produced by workshops to create combined productions.

6. This research has not emphasised broadcast or cable, but work at a regional level needs to represent the interests of local producers in both these areas, lobbying for access to regional and national television.

7. Many of the regional planning initiatives are threatened by the abolition of the GLC and the Metropolitan Counties. The BFI will be receiving a sum from the government to replace some of this lost investment. Those groups who have been in receipt of Metropolitan county funding will need to lobby the BFI to ensure that some of the sum they receive continues to go on supporting regional plans.

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**APPENDIX A : TAPE LIST**

**APPENDIX B : ADDRESS LIST**

**APPENDIX C : SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE**

**APPENDIX D : VIDEO DISTRIBUTION  
AND THE LAW**



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# APPENDIX A : TAPE LIST

## INTRODUCTION

This Appendix contains a list of 146 programmes available on cassette from the independent, workshop and community production sectors. These were all the titles we were able to gather information on during the course of our survey which ended in Autumn '84. The list contains no titles released after that date.

The titles are listed alphabetically, numbered, with a brief subject description, the name of the producer/distributor, and information on their distribution record.

We are conscious that though this listing was not designed as a catalogue, it may well be used as such in the absence of any other material covering the same ground. Ideally, a catalogue would have fewer entries, more quality control, and fuller descriptions of the work. To aid its use as a resource, we have therefore included overleaf a listing of the titles' index numbers by subject category, so that readers can scan the list for particular kinds of programmes. Many titles appear under more than one category. Addresses of distributors can be found in the Address List (Appendix B), Producers and Distributors Section.

# PROGRAMME INDEX NUMBERS BY SUBJECT

## CATEGORY

### LABOUR MOVEMENT

4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 20, 23, 24, 25, 35, 36, 37, 42, 50, 51, 57, 73, 74, 76, 80, 81, 84, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 96, 97, 98, 103, 105, 100, 107, 108, 109, 110, 114, 119, 124, 126, 130, 131, 138, 139, 141, 143, 144, 145, 146.

### SOCIAL WELFARE

2, 3, 5, 10, 14, 17, 19, 31, 32, 34, 35, 39, 41, 47, 54, 56, 58, 62, 65, 69, 70, 78, 82, 85, 86, 87, 88, 94, 95, 106, 112, 117, 118, 120, 127, 128, 138, 145.

### WOMEN'S ISSUES

1, 4, 21, 22, 29, 30, 34, 44, 46, 57, 60, 62, 66, 72, 73, 82, 96, 98, 99, 100, 105, 115, 116, 126, 138, 143, 144.

### YOUTH

1, 3, 15, 23, 28, 40, 45, 55, 63, 70, 73, 74, 91, 107, 113, 129, 131, 137, 139, 146.

### HEALTH AND SEXUALITY

1, 2, 10, 14, 15, 20, 26, 28, 35, 41, 49, 53, 55, 61, 66, 67, 86, 93, 95, 110, 129, 133, 135, 140, 144.

### ANTI-NUCLEAR

29, 49, 60, 64, 101, 102, 104, 111, 132.

### HISTORY

6, 7, 8, 9, 22, 36, 59, 67, 81, 105, 123, 134, 143.

### RACE

12, 16, 31, 45, 68, 71, 72, 123.

### RURAL/ECOLOGY

22, 27, 40, 52, 72, 120, 132, 142.

### COMMUNITY ARTS

18, 38, 43, 77, 83, 94, 117, 118, 122.

### IRELAND

11, 19, 33, 116, 127, 134, 136.



<u>No.</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Producer/Distributor</u>
001	1 IN 44	20	Fictional Treatment of Schoolgirl Pregnancies	Nottingham Youth Theatre c/o Albany Video
002	57 VARIETIES	15	Education and Disability	Commedia
003	A PLACE OF MY OWN, Parts I and II	27   25	Youth Homelessness	Albany Video
004	A QUESTION OF CHOICE	17	Women and Work	Sheffield Film Co-Op
006	A TALE TO TELL; (1) YOU HAD TO LAUGH	26	Working Class History & Humour	Banner Film & TV
007	A TALE TO TELL; (2) WOMEN & LASSES	26	Working Class Women's History	Banner Film & TV
008	A TALE TO TELL; (3) WE OWED & RAN	26	Oral History Working Class	Banner Film & TV
009	A TALE TO TELL; (4) US AND THEM	26	Oral History; Work Management and Strikes	Banner Film & TV
010	A.R.C.H.	15	Community Health Event Documentation	Connections
011	ACCEPTABLE LEVELS	104	Media on Irish War Fiction	Frontroom Belfast Film Workshop
012	AFIA	22	Immigration controls - the Afia Begum deportation campaign	PCL Albany Video
013	AFTER THE BALL	26	Fiction; unemployment and its Personal Effects	Banner Film & TV
014	ALL FOR FUN AND FOR ALL	18	Handicapped children's play	Community Communication



<u>Title</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Producer/Distributor</u>	<u>Sale Price</u>	<u>Yrs. Sale</u>	<u>Yrs. Hire</u>	<u>Yrs. Screenings</u>
032 CAN'T LIVE CAN'T DIE	25	Claimants' rights and benefit system	Chapter Video	£21	-	£1	-
033 CAUSE OF IRELAND	104	The war in Ireland	Platform Films	-	-	£5	30
034 CHANGING OUR LIVES	18	Women's community action centre	Sheffield Film Co-op	£54 VHS £90 Umatic £20	-	£0	5
035 CHEAP, CHEERFUL AND DEADLY	60	Asbestos in Schools	Annares Co-op	-	25	£0	100
036 CITY GENERAL	-	6-part history of City General Hospital, Stoke by the people who work there	TV History Workshop	-	-	-	-
037 COAL NOT DOLE - MINERS UNITED	41	Miners' strike	Banner Film & TV	£40 VHS £55 Umatic	3	£0	40
038 COMMUNITY PRODUCTION GROUP PROMO>	10	Community video	Open Eye CPG	-	-	£1	10
039 COMMUNITY ASSN. IN GATESHEAD	28	Community Action	Swingbridge Video	£30 VHS; £40 Umatic £40	1	£5	5
040 CONTROL YOURSELF	29	Young people forming workers' co-ops	AVID	-	-	-	-
041 COSMOS VIDEO	15	Doc. about support groups for ex-psychiatric patients	Commedia	£15	-	£	-
042 COUNCIL MATTERS	10	Local govt., privatisation and cuts; animation	Leeds Animation workshop	£40	7	£.0	7
043 COUNTER IMAGE	1	Compilation of workshop productn.	Counter Image	-	-	-	-
044 CONTING INSIDE	28	Women's Asylum refuges	Chapter Video	£21	-	£1	30

Producer/Distributor Sale Yrs. Hire Yrs. Screenings



045	DI VIDE AND RULE NEVER	40	Anti-racist film around youth issues and styles	Newsreel collective   Other Cinema, Concord	2	£85	£16	40
046	DOMESTIC BLISS	52	Drama   soap on women, lesbianism and mothering	Newsreel Collective Concord	-	-	£15	-
047	DON'T TALK WET	27	Housing campaign against damp	Swingbridge Video	5	£14	£15	5
048	DOWN THE DRAIN	23	Ecology; Land drainage	East Anglian Filmmakers	0	£30	£5	4
049	EL STOBLAST	28	Medical view of nuclear war	Swingbridge Video	15	£16	-	-
050	EVERYBODY NEEDS EDUCATION	27	NUPE Weekend Schools	Chapter Video	-	£21	£11	-
051	FACES OF RESISTANCE	68	Chile solidarity	Open Eye	-	-	£15	10
052	FARMING AND WILDLIFE	34	Management of wildlife on Scottish farms	Edinburgh Film Workshop Trust	12	£25	-	100
053	FATHERHOOD	40	Men's experience of fatherhood	Albany video	4	£70	£10	4
054	FIND YOUR OWN SUPPORT	20	Training programme on support for isolated workers youth	Avid NAYC	100	£25	-	1,000
055	FRAMED YOUTH	45	Young gays and lesbians	Gay Video Project   Other Cinema, Albany	9	£40, £7,	£10	66
056	FREEDOM TO PLAY	16	Kids play and the environment with ref. to redevelopment	Hull Film & Video Workshop	1	£60	-	10
057	GIVE US A SMILE	13	Animation; sexual harassment	Leeds Animation Workshop	10	£40	£10	36
058	HALFWAY INFORMATION	17	doc. about Halfway Village	Community Communications	-	£40, £15, £5	-	-
059	HARD TIMES AND EASY TIMES	30	Oral history (Brighton)	Brighton Film and Video Workshop	0	£30	£7	20
060	HELEN JOHN, PEACE CAMPAIGNER	30	Interview with Helen John; Politics and Personal Change	TV History Workshop	-	£25	£10	-

061	HET UP	12	Animation; lesbian view of heterosexuality	Witch		£7.50	5
062	HOME SWEET HOME	25	Women council tenants' experience of housing services & provision	Commedia	£15		-
063	HOOIGANS OR REBELS	52	School resistance	TV History workshop	-		-
064	HOOVER HOAX	20	Nuclear power	Brighton Film & Video Workshop	£10	£5	6
065	HOUSING TAPES; (1) SWAT (2) Homelessness	10  10	Homelessness and housing	Chapter Video	£21	£11	5
066	IDEAS INTO ACTION	30	Women's health	Video In Pilton	-		10
067	IN THE CLEAR	40	Community health campaign against TB in Edinburgh in the 1950s	Video in Pilton	£15	£5	-
068	INSTITUTIONAL RACISM	18	Racism in housing, education and the law	Albany Video	£50	£10	22
069	INTERCARE	25	CofE and social action	Swingbridge Video	£30	£15	3
070	IRONBRIDGE YOUTH CLUB	15	Local Youth Club doc.	Open Eye	-	£0.50	5
071	IT AIN'T ARF RACIST MUM	28	Racism in media	BBC Open Door Team Video	£35	£15	300
072	JEAN BERNARD	30	Interview with Jean Bernard; Black Parents Activist	TV History Workshop	£25	£10	-
073	JOBS FOR THE GIRLS	29	Fiction; non-trad. jobs for girls	Sheffield Film Co-op	£87	£12	18
074	JOBS IN SPACE	20	Youth unemployment drama	Connections	-	£2-£10	5
075	JUNIOR CLUBS	22	Doc. on different types of Junior youth clubs	Avid NAYC	£20	£1A	30
076	KEEP IT LOCAL	9	Ratecapping in Leicester	Avid, Leicester City Council	-	free	-

077	LARK IN THE PARK	14	Community festival documentation	Connections	-	-	2/3
078	LITERACY; A RIGHT NOT A PRIVILEGE	30	Adult literacy	Brighton Film and Video Workshop	-	1	£10 10
079	MACHAIR CROFTING & WILDLIFE		Impact of new agriculture programmes on wildlife in Western Isles	Edinburgh Film workshop Trust	-	-	-
080	MAKING NEWS	35	Media bias in 1982 NHS dispute	CPBF, Concord & Other Cinema	£35	70	£15 250
081	MAKING CARS	180	People's history of the Cowley Car Plant in Oxford	TV History Workshop	£45	-	£10 -
082	MARIA BURGWIN	30	Interview with Maria Burgwyn; Tenants' rights campaigner	TV History Workshop	£25	-	£10 -
083	MAYFEST	30	Doc. of Glasgow Community Arts Festival	Glasgow Film & Video Workshop	-	-	- 4
084	MINERS STRIKE 1981	48	1981 Strike South Wales	Chapter Video	£21	10	£11 10
085	MOULSECOOMBE BY SEA	14	Poor housing conditions, doc. and fiction	Birham Road Area Action Group Barefoot Video	NEG	0	£8 20 0.50p
086	MOVING IN	52	Doc. of physically handicapped people moving out of institutions into their own flats	Edinburgh Film workshop Trust	-	-	-
087	MOVING ON FROM ARLINGTON HOUSE	35	Hostel dwellers moving out into the community	Philip O'Shea Moonshine	£35	12	£10 30
088	MYSELF PROJECT	23	Interpersonal education in schools	Swingbridge Video	£30 VHS; £40 Umatic	1	£15 5
089	NEW TECHNOLOGY; WHOSE PROGRESS?	36	Labour movement analysis of new technology	Riverfront Pictures	£100	50	£12 500
090	NEWS FROM DURHAM  WHERE ARE WE GOING?	12  35	NUM issues in 1983	Amber Fi	£35	25	£10 60



091	NEWTOWN	Work, leisure and unemployment	Brighton Film and Video Workshop	£10	0	£5	10
092	NGA WARRINGTON ON THE LINE	Mass picket documentary	Open Eye	-	-	£5	100
093	NO CUT PRICE WAY TO CARING	Privatisation of NHS work	Barefoot Video	NEG	0	free  £5	10
094	NORWICH HOLIDAY PLAYSCHMES	Holiday playschemes	East Anglian Filmmakers	-	-	-	-
095	OUR HOUSE	Mental handicap group home documentary	Connections	-	-	£5- £10	3
096	PART TIME WORK	Conditions of work for part-timers	Swingbridge Video	-	6	£15	15
097	PERSONAL VIEWS	Experiences of YOP trainees	Swingbridge Video	£30 VHS; £40 Umatic	4	£15	10
098	PIECE AT ANY PRICE	Recording of a play about women out workers in the hosiery trade	Avid	-	-	-	-
099	POLES APART; GIRLS BOYS AND PLAYWORK	Gender, conflict and socialisation in play work	Concord NAYC BFVW	-	25	(25)	-
100	POLITICAL ANNIE'S OFF AGAIN	Women at work - eq.opp. struggle	Chapter Video	£21	5	£11	7
101	PRETEND YOU'LL SURVIVE	Animation anti-nuke peace issues	Leeds Animation	£40	3	£10	10
102	PROGRAMME FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF A NUCLEAR FAMILY	Nuclear war	Chapter video	£21	-	£11	12
103	PUT PEOPLE FIRST	Trade unionism, privatisation and Cuts	Birmingham Trade Union Resource Centre	£12.50	500	-	-

104	RECLAIM CHILWELL	46	Anti-nuke occupation of base	Jerky Video Collective c/o Nottingham Video Project	£5	-	£2.50	-
105	RED SKIRTS ON CLYDESIDE	40	Women's history, women and labour movement	Sheffield Film Co-op	£120 VHS; £200	-	£20	12
106	RELAXING IN RETIREMENT	10	Norwich Council facilities for Retired	East Anglian Filmmakers	£35	-	£9	N/A
107	RIGHTS - WOT RIGHTS?	20	YTS Conditions and trade unions	Birmingham Trade Union Resource Centre	£12.50	350	-	-
108	RISKY BUSINESS	15	Health and Safety at Work	Leeds Animation Workshop	£40	11	£10	6
109	RUMOURS AT THE MINERS' FORTNIGHT	25	South Wales miners	Chapter Video Workshop  TV History Workshop	£21	5	£11	20
110	SAFE IN WHOSE HANDS?	30	Fighting Health Cuts	Merton Resource Centre	£10	10	£2	3
111	SITE ONE	30	US Nuclear base at Holy Loch; Its impact on local people and national security	Edinburgh Film Workshop	-	-	-	-
112	SLEEPING GIANT	14	Problems and positive action for pensioners	Community Communications	£40	-	-	200
113	SNAPSHOTS	20	NACRO YTS	Chapter Video	£21	-	£11	-
114	SOLIDARITY IN ACTION	3	Organising a food collection	Birmingham Trade Union Resource Centre	£6.50	-	-	6
115	SENSUALITY	15	Women Only; images of sensuality	W.I.T.C.H.	-	-	£7.50	5
116	STRIP SEARCH; SECURITY OR SUBJUGATION?		Strip searching in Armagh prison	Derry Film & Video Workshop The Other Cinema	-	-	-	-
117	SUMMER IN THE CITY	19	Under-5 playschemes in Glasgow	Community Communications	£40,£15,£5	-	-	-
118	SUMMER IN THE CITY	15	Voluntary playscheme documentation	Connections	-	-	£5-£10	4

119	TECHNOLOGY AND WORK	30	New technology & labour movemnt.	Riverfront Pictures	£35	100	£3	100
120	KILLIN G TIME	33	Fiction about old age	Placebo Productions	-	-	-	-
121	THE BIG MEETING	45	1983 Miners Gala	Chapter Video	£21	5	£11	10
122	THE BOUNCING BOROUGH	15	Inflatables documentation	Connections	-	-	£5-£10	3
123	THE BRIXTON TAPES	40	Interviews with Brixton people in the aftermath of the riots	TV History Workshop	£30	-	£10	-
124	THE CASE FOR COAL	25	Coal industry and Tory energy policy	Chapter video	£21	-	£11	-
125	THE EVIDENCE I SHALL GIVE	34	Social roots of petty crime	Valley & Vale Community Arts	£20	0	£10	15
126	THERE ARE NO EXCUSES	8	Sexual harrassment	Open Eye	-	-	-	-
127	THEY DON'T PLAY ANYMORE	30	Play activities in West Belfast	Belfast Media Workshop	£25	0	-	5
128	TOWN TEACHER	25	Environmental teaching in the City	Swingbridge Video	£30	2	£5 VHS	10
129	TRUE ROMANCE	35	Young people and gender, sexuality and relationships. Fiction	Newsreel Colective T.O.C. Concord	£80	8	£15	150
130	TU TV SAMPLER	15	Extracts from TU and management videos	Birmingham Trade Union Resource Centre	£12.50	15	-	5
131	UNEMPLOYMENT IN SCOTSWOOD	25	Youth and unemployment	Swingbridge Video	£30	5	£5 VHS	20
132	UNSTABLE ELEMENTS; ATOMIC STORIES 1939 85	90	Doc. history of UK nuclear development and fiction on ecological themes	Newsreel Concord Films	-	-	£16	-
133	US GIRLS	30	Young women and sexism	Albany Video	£35	-	£10	32
134	VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS	15	Working class artist & his work	Belfast Media Workshop	£35	6	£15	15



135	WATCH OUT THERE'S A QUEER ABOUT	45	Spoof police training film about gay men and the law	Albany Video	1	£70, £40	11
136	WE OURSELVES SPEAK	113	The war in Ireland	Activision	-	£25	-
137	WHAT THEY TELLING US IT'S ILLEGAL FOR ?	40	Home taping - music and youth	Birmingham Film and Video Workshop	-	-	£13.50
138	WHO NEEDS NURSERIES? - WE DO!	11	Animation - need for nursery Provision	Leeds Animation workshop	4	£40	£10
139	WHO NEEDS A UNION?	25	Unions and YTS schemes	Swingbridge Video	50	£14.50 VHS	£5 VHS
140	WHY IS IT FOR THEM AND NOT ME?	85	Sexuality and physical handicap	Brook Advisory Services	55	£35	£15
141	WHY THEIR NEWS IS BAD NEWS	35	Media bias	Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom	60	£35	£15
142	WILDLIFE IN CITIES	30	Ecology	Birmingham Environmental Education Project	1	£15	£2
143	WOMEN OF STEEL	27	Women and work in WW II labour history	Sheffield Film Co-op	-	£135 VHS	£12
144	WOMEN'S HOSPITAL	18	Struggle Against Closure	Open Eye CPG	-	-	£0.50
145	YOU'LL NEVER WORK ALONE	20	Workers' co-ops	Open Eye  WITCH	-	-	-
146	YOUTH UNITE	20	Young Socialist doc. on youth and YTS	Hull Film and Video Workshop	-	-	-

# APPENDIX B : ADDRESS LIST

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FUNDING BODIES AND REPRESENTATIVE ORGANISATIONS

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Chris Richards (Borough Initiatives Fund),  
25|31 Tavistock Place,  
LONDON,  
WC1 9SF. 388 2211

### GLC

Paul Maris  
Justin Lewis  
Room 675  
Film and Video Officer  
County Hall  
LONDON  
SE1 7PB 633 1363

also PARMINDER VIR  
JUNE GIVANNI  
Race Equality Unit  
633 2611

### CHANNEL FOUR

Derek Jones Educational Liaison Officer  
Alan Fountain  
Rod Stoneman  
Caroline Spry  
60 Charlotte Street  
LONDON  
W1P 2AX 631 4444

### BFI

Manuel Alvarado, Broadcasting Research Unit  
Wayne Drew  
Steve Brookes  
127 Charing Cross Road  
LONDON  
WC2H 0EA. 439 3378  
438 4355

also Gillian Hartnoll,  
Head Librarian,  
Irene Whitehead, David Lusted  
Education,  
Ian Christie (Distribution)

IFVA  
Simon Blanchard  
79 Wardour Street  
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ACTT  
Secretary Grant Aided Shop  
Secretary TV Freeland Shop  
Also Roy Lockett  
2 Soho Square  
LONDON  
W1V 6DD. 437 8506

EAST MIDLANDS ARTS  
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Forest Road  
Loughborough  
LEICS  
LE11 3HU 0509 218292

NORTH WEST ARTS  
Film & Video Officer  
4th Floor  
12 Harter Street  
MANCHESTER  
M1 6HY 061 228 3062

SOUTHERN ARTS  
Film & Video Officer  
19 Southgate Street  
Winchester  
HANTS  
SO23 9DQ 0962 55099

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Film & Vide Officer  
8|9 Bridge Street  
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CB2 1UA 0223 357596

SOUTH EAST ARTS  
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9-10 Crescent Road  
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TN1 2LU 0892 41666

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60 Highbury Grove  
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N5 2AG. 226 5375

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WELSH ARTS COUNCIL  
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NATIONAL YOUTH BUREAU  
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 National Youth Bureau  
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# PRODUCERS AND DISTRIBUTORS

This list contains most of the producers and distributors with whom we had contact while compiling this report. It also contains all the distributors of the titles in the tape list. To find out how to get hold of a programme check the producer|distributor against the title in the tape list - then look up the distributor in the alphabetical list below.

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LE1 5NY 0533 539733

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Richard K

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Education & Publications Unit  
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BIRMINGHAM  
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LONDON N15 802 9034

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WOMEN'S FILM AND VIDEO DISTRIBUTION  
113 Roman Road  
LONDON  
E2 0HU 981 6828

CLIO CO-OP  
91c Mildmay Road  
LONDON N1 249 2551



COLCHESTER FILM & WORKSHOP The Minories 14 High Street COLCHESTER 0206 577067 Nick Hunt	DERRY VIDEO WORKSHOP 36 William Street Derry NORTHERN IRELAND BT46 6EY 0504 268048	FORUM 22 Fr Ashtc BRIS BS3
COMEDIA 1 Douglas Terrace Laymarket EDINBURGH EH11 2BJ 031 337 4922	EAST ANGLIAN FILM MAKERS LTD 22-24 Colegate, NORWICH NR3 1BQ 0603 22313 David Hilton	FOUR 113- Beth Lond
COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS 1 Ballantay Quadrant Castlemilk GLASGOW G45	EDINBURGH FILM WORKSHOP TRUST 17 Great King Street EDINBURGH EH13 6QW 031 556 2078 Dave Halliday	FRON 79 W Lond
CONCORD FILMS COUNCIL 101 Felixstowe Road IPSWICH IP3 9BJ 0473 76012	EDUCATION AND TELEVISION FILMS LTD. 247A Upper Street LONDON N1 1RU 226 2298	GLAS 9 Ba Cast GLAS G45
CONTEMPORARY FILMS LTD 55 Greek Street LONDON W1V 6DB 434 2623	EXETER FILM WORKSHOP Spacex Gallery 45 Preston Street EXETER EX1 1AT 0392 31786 Judith Higginbottam	HACK 18 S LOND N16 Lloy
CONVERSE PICTURES LESBIAN & GAY VIDEO PROJECT Con Marche Building 44 Brixton Road LONDON SW9 8EJ 274 4000 ext. 200	FACTION FILMS 7-9 Earlham Street London WC2	CONN HAMM 16 A Lond Pau.
COUNTER IMAGE Office 3 3rd Floor 16 Peter Street MANCHESTER M2 5GR 061 833 0986	FANTASY FACTORY VIDEO LTD 42 Theobalds Road London WC1	HAR 30 LON
CULTURAL PARTNERSHIPS 17 Dalston Lane Hackney LONDON E2 254 8217	FILM & WORK 1A Terrace Road LONDON E9 7ES 986 9218 Derek Freedman	HEA 55 BRI
	FILM WORK GROUP 79 Lofts Road London SW10 352 0538 Nigel Perkins	HUL OU1 Nor HUI HU2

FORUM TELEVISION

22 Frayne Road  
Ashton Gate  
BRISTOL  
BS3 1RU

INDEPENDENT FILM & VIDEOMAKERS

ASSOCIATION  
79 Wardour Street  
London W1 439 0460

Simon Blanchard

FOUR CORNERS

113-115 Roman Road  
Bethnal Green Road  
London E2 981 4243

INDEPENDENT VIDEO

Media Centre  
South Hill Park  
Bracknell  
BERKS  
RG12 4PA 0344 427272

FRONTROOM

79 Wardour Street  
London W1 734 4603

Barry Gibson

GLASGOW COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS

9 Ballantay Quadrant  
Castlemilk  
GLASGOW  
G45 634 0381

IPSWICH FILM & VIDEO WORKSHOP

Centre Peace  
2 St. Helens Street  
IPSWICH

HACKNEY YOUTH COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT

18 Stoke Newington Road  
LONDON  
N16 254 1193

David Gillam

IRISH VIDEO PROJECT

307 Chapter Road  
London NW2 459 1036

Lloyd Rainford

CONNECTIONS

HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM VIDEO PROJECT  
16 Askew Crescent  
London W12 740 7271

JUBILEE COMMUNITY ARTS COMPANY

Jubilee Centre  
Whitehall Road  
Greets Green  
West Bromwich  
WEST MIDLANDS 21 557 1569

Paula Thompson

Cynthia Woodhouse

HARINGAY MEDIA UNIT

30 Philip Lane  
LONDON N15 801 7699  
801 5555

KINO-EYE VIDEO PRODUCTIONS

Camden Unemployment Action Centre  
St. Pancras Way  
London NW1

HEADFIRST PRODUCTIONS

55 Cobden Road  
BRIGHTON

KINGSWAY PRINCETON COLLEGE

Hugh Myddleton Annexe,  
Sans Walk  
London EC1

HULL FILM & VIDEO WORKSHOP

OUTREACH COMMUNITY ARTS  
Northumberland Avenue  
HULL  
HU2 0RN 0482 226420

KUUMBA PRODUCTIONS

c/o Partners in Production  
74 Newman Street  
London W1 636 6696

Menelik Shabazz

LAMBETH VIDEO  
~~245a Coldharbour Lane~~  
LONDON SW9 737 5903

LEEDS ANIMATION WORKSHOP  
45 Bayswater Row  
LEEDS 0532 484997

Gillian Lacey

LEEDS VIDEO UNIT  
Belle Vue Centre  
201 Belle Vue Road  
LEEDS 0532 440015

LEEDS VIDEO UNIT  
8 Woodsley Road  
LEEDS  
LS2 9LU 0532 44015

LEICESTER INDEPENDENT FILM  
& VIDEO ASSOCIATION  
The Workspace  
Newark Street  
LEICESTER

LONDON FILM MAKERS CO-OP  
42 Gloucester Avenue  
London NW1 586 4806

LONDON VIDEO ARTS  
23 Frith Street  
London W1 437 2786

Jane Parrish

LUSIA FILMS (formerly Berwick  
Street Film Collective)  
7-9 Earlham Street  
London WC2 240 2350

MEDIA ARTS LAB  
Town Hall Studios  
Regent Circus  
SWINDON 0793 26161 or  
3116

Martin Parry

MEDIA WORKSHOP  
22 Lombard Street  
BELFAST 0232 240123

Peter Miller

MERSEYSIDE BLACK MEDIA WORKSHOP  
90-92 Whitechapel  
LIVERPOOL  
L1 6EN 051 709 9460

Michael Greenidge

MERTON COMMUNITY VIDEO  
42 Russel Road  
Wimbledon  
London SW19 540 8791

MOONSHINE COMMUNITY ARTS WORKSHOP  
Victor Road  
London NW10 969 7959

NEWCASTLE AND MEDIA WORKSHOP  
Bells Court  
Pilgrim Street  
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

NEWSREEL COLLECTIVE  
4 Denmark Street  
London NW3

NOTTINGHAM VIDEO PROJECT  
The Workshop  
ICC  
61b Mansfield Road  
NOTTINGHAM 0602 470356

James Morgan

OEDIPUS PRODUCTIONS  
6 Windmill Street  
LONDON  
W1N 1HF 631 4631

OPEN EYE FILM WORKSHOP  
90 whitechapel  
LIVERPOOL 051 709 9460

Ian Morton

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OXFORD FILM MAKERS WORKSHOP

The Stables  
North Place  
Headington  
OXFORD  
OL3 9HY                    0865 60074

RETAKE

2-9 Fawley Road  
West Hampstead  
London NW6                431 2032  
  
Ahmed A Jamal

PINHOLE VIDEO  
44 Branksome Road  
London SW2

RIVERFRONT PICTURES LTD  
G4 New Crane Wharf  
Garnet Street  
LONDON  
E1 OQT                    481 2939

PLACEBO PRODUCTIONS  
239 Hoxton Street  
London N1

Chris Thomas

PLATFORM FILMS  
13 Tankerton House  
Tankerton Street  
London WC1                278 8394

SANKOFA  
Unit 5,  
Cockpit Yard,  
Worthington Street,  
London, WC1                831 0024

Chris Reeves

Isaac Julien

PLYMOUTH VIDEO|MUSIC PROJECT  
Plymouth Arts Centre  
38 Looe Street  
PLYMOUTH

SHEFFIELD FILMCO-OP  
Albreda House,  
Lydgate Lane  
SHEFFIELD  
S10 5HF                    0742 668857

Avron White

PORTSMOUTH FILM & VIDEO  
WORKSHOP  
Portsmouth College of Art,  
Design & Further Education  
Winston Churchill Avenue  
PORTSMOUTH                0705 826435

SMITH BUNDY VIDEO  
10a The Pavement  
Clapham Common  
LONDON  
SW4 0HY                    720 5979

David Baker

Beryl Richards|S. Gibson|S. Mills

POWER HOUSE VIDEO COLLECTIVE  
8 Aireville Drive  
Shipley  
BRADFORD  
BD18 3AD

STAR VIDEO  
100 Powerscroft Road  
London E5                    986 4470

Raj Patel

PROJECTS UK  
5 Savile Place  
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE  
                                  0632 614527

SOCIAL ARTS TRUST  
Room 20. 1st Floor,  
Exchange Buildings,  
Quayside,  
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE  
NE1 3AQ                    0632 616581

STEEL BANK VIDEO

Albreda House  
Lydgate Lane  
SHEFFIELD  
S10 5FH 0742 662583  
  
Simon Reynell

SWANSEA VIDEO & FILM CO-OP  
37 Beaufort Avenue  
Langland  
SWANSEA 0792 69783  
  
Tim Exton

SWINGBRIDGE VIDEO  
10a Bridge Street  
Gateshead  
TYNE AND WEAR  
NE8 2BH 0632 776680  
  
Hugh Kelly

TEAM VIDEO  
2 Ridgemount  
Ridge Road  
LONDON  
NW2 2QX 794 2825

THE OTHER CINEMA  
Tisbury Court  
79 Wardour Street  
LONDON  
W1V 3TH 734 8508

TOWER HAMLETS ARTS PROJECT  
178 Whitechapel Road  
London E1 247 0216  
  
Mark Saunders

TRADE FILMS  
36 Bottle Bank  
Gateshead  
TYNE AND WEAR  
NE8 2BH 0632 775532

John Eden | Stewart Mackinnon

TRILITH (DORSET RURAL VIDEO PROJECT)

Corner Cottage  
Brickyard Lane  
  
Bourton  
Gillingham  
DORSET

Trevor Bailey

TRIPLE VISION  
40B Greenwood Road  
LONDON  
E8 1AB 254 4377

Terry Flaxton | Penny Dedman

WEFT - WOMEN'S MEDIA RESOURCE GROUP  
Rio Cinema  
Kingsland High Road  
Hackney,  
London E8

WEST LONDON MEDIA  
118 Talbot Road  
Notting Hill  
LONDON N 221 1859  
  
Janet Potter

W.I.T.C.H.  
90 Whitechapel  
LIVERPOOL 2

WOMEN'S FILM & TV NETWORK  
79 Wardour Street  
London W1  
  
Rowena Rowling

WOMEN IN SYNC  
38 Mount Pleasant  
London, WC1 278 2215

WORKERS FILM ASSOCIATION  
9 Lucy Street  
MANCHESTER  
M15 4BX 061 848 9782 | 9785  
  
Fred Coker

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WORKSHOP FILMS

20 Henrietta Street  
BATH  
BA2 6LP                    0225 63590

YORK FILM WORKSHOP

8 The Crescent  
Blossom Street  
YORK                    York 641394

Bill Theo Wright

VALLEY & VALE COMMUNITY ARTS

The Old Junior School  
Maesteg Road  
Tondu  
MID-GLAMORGAN    0656 724799

VIDEO IN PILTON

30 Ferry Road Avenue  
West Pilton  
EDINBURGH            -31 33222 5764

VIKING VIDEO

100 West Green Road  
London, N15            809 0514

Vernon King

TUIREG (TRADE UNION  
INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH &  
EDUCATION GROUP)

Ruskin College  
Walcot Street  
OXFORD                    Oxford 54599

TV HISTORY WORKSHOP .

42 Queen Square  
London WC1            405 9748

Greg Lanning

TWILIGHT VIDEO

51 Camborne Avenue  
LONDON  
W13 0QZ                    579 5483

W.D. Yardie

WREXHAM COMMUNITY VIDEO

Church House  
Pihosddu Road  
Wrexham  
CLWYN                    0978 264051

Eddy Meak





11. How has the tape been publicised and promoted?
  
12. What audiences are there for this tape which have not been reached?
  
13. Are there any restrictions you would want to place on its distribution, e.g. women only, only in a particular region, to specific groups?
  
14. What kind, if any, of support material or written material goes out with the tape?
  
15. Who commissioned the tape?
  
16. Do they have copies which they distribute?
  
17. Who owns the non-theatrical distribution rights?
  
18. Does anyone else, to your knowledge, distribute the tape?

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## APPENDIX D :

# VIDEO DISTRIBUTION AND THE LAW

By Andy Lipman, Legal Adviser to Independent Film & Videomakers Association

This paper outlines the implications of the Video Recordings Act, 1984 for independent distributors and lists the principal organisations that deal with copyright issues for independent producers.

The Video Recordings Act 1984 comes into force on 1st September, 1985. The Act requires video cassettes intended for distribution for viewing 'in the home' to be certificated by the new 'designated authority' under the Act (the British Board of Film Classification) and to be properly labelled to that effect.

However, many video recordings on cassette will be exempt from the provisions of the Act, either because of their content ('exempt works') or the nature of their supply ('exempt supply'), and this paper argues that the overwhelming number of tapes distributed by the independent sector will fall into these exempt categories and that consequently the vast proportion of such tapes will not be required to be submitted to the Board for certification.

Before examining these questions in detail, it is important firstly, to understand that the Video Recordings Act does not affect the liability, under the Obscene Publications Act, of any video deemed to be 'obscene' (the court's test is whether the material "has a tendency to deprave and corrupt"). It is irrelevant whether or not that recording has received a certificate from the Board.

Up to now, the Director of Public Prosecutions has not taken any film, intended for cinema exhibition to court for obscenity, if it has been given a certificate from the Board. But, in the case of video recordings, the prior consent of the DPP for prosecution is not required, and private prosecutions against video recordings for obscenity may still be brought. Recently, of course, prosecutions have been brought, with varying degrees of success, across the country against so-called 'video nasties' - fictional thriller| horror films depicting, in the court's view, excessive violence, 'depraved sexual practices' (such as sado-masochism) and explicit scenes of hard drug-taking. There has been one instance of a compilation video recording showing extracts of news footage of torture and gross violence which has been found obscene, because it had been put together, in the court's view, solely to appeal to sadistic taste. Independent distributors need to be aware that the Obscene Publications legislation still applies to them, without in most cases, having to worry that there will be any grounds for its use against them. It is also worth remembering that for obscenity, the work as a whole and the context of any controversial scene has to be considered.

~~This paper argues that most independent tapes fall into the category of 'exempt works'. To be exempt, a work must, if taken as a whole (i) be designed to inform, educate or instruct; (ii) be concerned with sport, religion or music; (iii) be a video game, provided, however, it does not (a) depict to any significant extent human sexual activity or acts of force or restraint associated with such activity, or is designed to any significant extent to stimulate, or encourage, such activity; (b) depict to any significant extent mutilation or torture of, or other acts of gross violence towards humans or animals, or is designed to any extent to stimulate or encourage such acts; (c) depicts to any significant extent human genital organs or human urinary or excretory functions.~~

It is a defence to the charge of supplying a video recording without a certificate, if the accused believed on reasonable grounds that the work was 'exempt' or that the supply was 'exempt' (see below).

So it is argued here that the independent distributors should carry on as normal, on the grounds that most tapes are designed to 'inform (and educate', as either documentaries or video art, or are concerned with 'music' (pop videos, etc.) and that if they nevertheless depict any of the matters referred to above (sexual activity, violence, genitals) then it is not "to any significant extent" and furthermore is not designed to "stimulate or encourage" such activity, within the meaning of the Act.

Only test cases in court will ultimately decide what these vague terms mean - and it is argued here that at the present time it is advisable not to submit any borderline material for certification and allow the Board to set precedents on these issues.

It is also important to remember that if a tape does indeed depict the matters above - to a significant extent, perhaps - the tape will be required to be submitted for certification. Just because it's no longer exempt DOES NOT MEAN THE TAPE IS ILLEGAL, it just means it has to be submitted for certificate (U, PG, 15, 18 or Restricted 18 for tapes only distributable from licensed sex shops) and that after certification and the proper label being fixed to it, the tape can be distributed as normal. The Act is not banning outright images of sexual activity, violence, genitals, etc. - just attempting to classify the age of the audience which the Board deems it's suitable for. (This paper is not examining the political or moral issues of censorship - just how this ill-conceived piece of legislation, now in place, will actually affect us).

James Ferman, director of the British Board of Film Classification, has made it clear that the Board intends to keep the certification categories valid, notwithstanding the Act's proviso to pay special attention to the likelihood the tape being viewed in the home. In other words, at this stage at least, the Board will consider 'adult' material in the context of whether the material is suitable for adults to watch in the home. (In such cases, it would grant an 18 or P18 certificate). The Board is not going to reduce the "acceptable level" of all material to that suitable for a seven-year-old.

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On the other hand, the Board will distinguish between films intended for the cinema, which may get one certificate, and a video version of the same film (which may be given a different classification). The reasoning for this is, as the Board argues, that the video recorder allows the viewer to replay, slow motion, etc., so particular care has to be taken over 'difficult' scenes (sex, violence, drugs, criminal techniques), which if depicted, may be too explicit when played in slow motion.

Excessive nudity may stop the tape being exempt (genitals), but it is to be noted that 'bad language' in an otherwise exempt work will not affect its exemption.

The less clear area, looking at the whole Act, is the status of dramatic, fictional material, as opposed to documentary, the latter being at first sight exempt because it is obviously designed to 'inform and instruct'. Similarly, drama that is clearly used to educate, instruct, inform, such as demonstrations, re-enactments, etc. The borderline, and unanswerable questions at this stage relate to the line between 'educate' and 'entertain' - is Chekhov's 'Cherry Orchard' an entertaining piece of theatre or a drama educating us about the pre-revolution Russian aristocracy? Your guess is as good as mine.

For the record, the cost of submitting a tape to the Board for charities and non-profit-making organisations (who can apply for a reduced rate at the Board's discretion) for works which are not to be distributed for private gain is £1.15 per minute. Trailers and shorts up to ten minutes will cost a blanket fee of £11.50 (the full rate is £4.60 per minute for the first two hours, £3.45 per minute thereafter).

In August, 1985, the Home Office Minister confirmed in writing to Lord Houghton that suppliers were not required to seek authorisation that a work was exempt from the Board. It is the responsibility of the supplier to decide whether or not the work is exempt. The Board will not declare a work to be exempt.

This now leads us to the second major argument for saying works do not need to be submitted by independent distributors, namely that most tapes fall into the category of 'exempt supply'.

- 1) The supply, i.e. distribution of a video recording is exempt in the following circumstances. Where the supply is not for reward or in the course or furtherance of a business;
2. Supplying a video recording to someone who runs a video facility business (e.g. copying, post production) will be exempt provided (a) there is no intention of further supplying the recording or (b) if there is such an intention, the copies are to be returned to the original supplier, or in any event it is not intended to supply them to the public;
3. Supplying a video work designed to provide a record of an event for those who took part in it, or are connected to people involved in it, is exempt, provided that the content does not depict to a significant extent sexual activity, violence or nudity referred to in the qualification of 'exempt works'. Nor can the supply be for reward. It appears that such 'family home tapes' distributed to relatives would be an exempt supply;



4. Supplying video recordings for public exhibition in premises licensed under Sections 2 or 7 of the Cinematographic Act 1909 or Section 5 of C>A> 1952 (e.g. showing videos in cinemas, video-theques but normally nightclubs, ad hoc venues like community halls, etc., would not have such licenses, so supply to such venues would not be automatically exempt under this rule;

5. Supplying a video recording for use in, or in connection with, broadcasting (BBC, IBA) or a licensed cable service (under Sections 5 and 8 of Telecom Act, 1984) is exempt;

6. Supplying a video recording to the BBFC for classification is exempt;

7. Supplying a video recording for use in training or carrying out medical or related occupations for services under the National Health Act 1977 is exempt. (Occupations requiring registration under Medicine Act 1960, Nurses, Midwives, Health Visitors Act 1979 and Medical Act, 1983).

to clarify the relationship between "exempt works" and "exempt supplies" - if the recording is an "exempt work", then the question of how it was supplied is irrelevant. It can be supplied in any way and it will be exempt from the requirements of the Act. Where a recording is not an "exempt work", and has not been classified, it can still be distributed in any of the ways set out above as "exempt supplies" and be safe from the penalties of the Act. For example, a tape which contains explicit sex or gross violence, and has also not been classified, can be distributed, not for reward or in the course of business, or to a post-production house for copying, or to those who took part in the recording as a record of an event etc., etc., without contravening the Act. They would be "exempt supplies".

Two points arise from the above exemptions. Firstly, the question whether independent distributors 'supply videos not for reward or furtherance of a business'. If they are a charity or non-profit-making organisation or workshop - are they still 'running a business'? The term is not clarified in the Act, but in the regulations (as referred to above on the question on the cost of submitting tapes for certification). The reduced fees apply to 'charities and non-profit-making organisations supplying works to be distributed NOT FOR PRIVATE GAIN'. It is thus arguable that where a group distributes tapes on a non-profit-making basis, not for private gain (i.e. gain by private individuals or a dividend-giving private company) that group is NOT running a business, nor supplying for reward, and thus comes under 'exempt supplies' rule 1.

Remember, no matter what the content of the work, if the supply is exempt under one of the above rules, the work does not need a certificate. Thus, distributors have two lines of possible defence to supplying tapes without a certificate; first, that the content makes it an 'exempt work', and second, as an alternative, that in any case the supply was exempt.

The second point to consider is the question whether independent distributors are affected by the Act because they rarely distribute direct to individuals to watch in the home. Again, this is a grey area, and of course some indies do - from Doublevision's music tapes to THAP's community tapes hired from public libraries. In general, it is advisable to assume that where tapes are offered to the public in catalogues, lists, etc. (even if primarily intended for group viewing as part of campaign, educational course, etc.) the possibility of an individual hiring or buying it to watch at home still exists, so that point will not, per se, dismiss out of hand the application of the Act to independent distributors. In my view, there are enough other, specific, reasons in the legislation to make independent tapes exempt works or supplies.

All the arguments above clearly put the risk of prosecution, such as it is, on the distributor. Offences, triable only in the magistrates' court, will cover supplying a video without a certificate which is not exempt, possessing for the purpose of supplying; supplying a version of the work different from the classified version; supplying an R18 certified tape outside of a licensed sex shop; supplying with or without incorrect label or certificate. The defence of exempt works or supply, where relevant, will be available against any of these charges. Fines will be imposed as penalties.

The magistrate may issue a warrant authorising a police officer to enter and search premises within one month from the issue of the warrant, where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting an offence has been or is being committed or evidence of such an offence exists on the premises in question.

The officer may use reasonable force when entering and may seize any article in evidence (on reasonable grounds) of the offence. The police have power to arrest any person on the premises suspected of committing an offence who refuses to give his name and address, or the officer suspects the name and address is false.

Evidence as to the existence of a classification certificate and the terms of it, relating to a video work will be produced in court, signed by an officer of the BBFC, and such evidence will be conclusive.

Although not a legal point, one can foresee a practical problem for distributors planning to distribute tapes without certificates, believing that they are exempt works and/or supplies. And that is where distributors make arrangements with 'retailers', rather than directly distributing (say, by mail order) themselves. The more 'mainstream' retailers may well be reluctant to stock non-certificated works, whatever the view of the distributor that it's 'exempt'. Further, such retailers are as much liable under the Act and all the offences, as the distributor. A commercial retailer who carries on a business for gain, will not be able to argue that the supply of the independent tapes which he stocks is exempt. It follows that where independent distributors envisage video sales or rentals from commercial outlets, they may well find practical and business (if not legal) pressures to get the tape certified, irrespective of its content.

~~It is also worth noting that an Appeals procedure exists to challenge the decision of the Board, if the distributor disagrees with the category of classification granted by the Board for a submitted tape, or where a classification has been refused.~~

### Copyright Clearance for Independent Producers.

A video tape may well contain every element of original creative work protected by copyright from literary and dramatic, artistic and musical works, to use of pre-existing footage or broadcast sound and visual recordings, to 'synchronisation rights' or incorporating original or recorded music in the soundtrack, to broadcast and cable diffusion rights and rights attaching to public performance of videogrammes, such as in nightclubs and video jukeboxes.

It is clearly not possible to pursue these questions in detail here and so, to indicate the principal organisations who control copyright permissions, a list is provided below, indicating their relevance.

For detailed and specific legal advice on these matters, the Independent Film and Video Makers Association has set up a Legal Advice service for independent producers, and details are set out below.

1. Mechanical Copyright Protection Society Ltd. (MCPS)  
380 Streatham High Road  
London SW16 Tel 769 4400

Licenses the recording of its members' (composers and music publishers) musical works and will also negotiate clearance of commercial sound recordings (record companies) in most cases;

2. Phonographic Performance Ltd (PPL)  
Ganton House,  
14-22 Ganton Street  
London, W1 Tel 437 0311

Represents record companies and licenses premises or broadcasters where their members' sound recordings will be publicly performed. (PPL has now set up Video Performers Ltd. to license use of record companies' music videos. Contact VPL at same address).

3. Performing Rights Society Ltd (PRS)  
29 Berners Street,  
London W1 Tel 580 5544

PRS also licenses premises and broadcasters on behalf of composers and music publishers for the public performance of their members' works.

4. British Videogram Association  
10 Maddox Street  
London W 499 3131

The professional association for video distributors, will give general advice on copyright questions.

5. Musicians Union,  
National Office - 29 Catherine Place

London Swl 582 5566  
Provides standard agreements for use of musicians' performances in video recordings.



---

6. Equity (Actors' Union)  
8 Harley Street  
London W1 Tel 636 6367

7. Composers Guild of Great Britain  
10 Stratford Place  
London W1 Tel 499 4795  
Represents composers and gives advice on commissioning original work.

IFVA LEGAL ADVICE SERVICE (Sponsored by Channel 4)

Advice sessions are held on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons at the IFVA office, 79 Wardour Street, (entrance Tisbury Court) London, W1 (tel. 439 0460). Booking is advisable.

A useful resource of legal texts, model agreements, industry collective agreements, etc. has been assembled, and IFVA members are welcome to use it.

Advice sessions requiring detailed analysis and help, and for those working on budgeted and workshop productions, etc., are asked to pay a nominal fee of £5. Unfunded producers, etc. can still seek advice and the fee is negotiable. Regrettably, the service cannot be wholly free at this stage, as only part funding has been received from Channel 4.

The service will particularly be able to help on any of the following problems -

1. Legal aspects of production funding - the Workshop Declaration, Regional Arts Association's Code of Practice, BFI Production Board Code.
2. Advice on cassette distribution contracts, contracts with film|video distributors, acquisition and sales to broadcast, cable and satellite TV (UK and abroad), contracts|agreements with exhibitors.
3. Production agreements with local authorities, campaigning and educational organisations, trade unions.
4. Advice on group structures, co-operative and company formation, terms of employment.
5. Music and visual copyright, clearances, residuals.
6. Video Recordings Act, 1985.

The service is not intended to directly represent members in specific negotiations or cases, but will be able to refer those who feel they need on-going representation to sympathetic and experienced firms of solicitors.



The Service will not be providing advice on those agreements| matters handled by the IPPA|BFTPA Joint Industrial Relations Service, nor - for the time being - on general issues of finance| budgetting|tax questions. Those seeking advice on these areas will be referred on to appropriate agencies.

Research - as the Service gets under way, it will be mapping out a programme of research work|publication on recurrent topics; for example on copyright clearance, negotiating sponsorship agreements, etc. This will then be made available in the form of information packs and guides. The Service will also be building up a collection of the various contracts| terms used in the sector, with a view to drafting model documents.