

AUTUMN 1969

Dear Member,

We are sending you this extra newsletter, firstly to make amends for the long gap between the last two newsletters, and secondly because we have some pieces of news which cannot wait until the next newsletter, notably the Christmas Draw.

We do hope that you will do your very best to sell as many tickets for the Draw as possible, to your friends, family and work colleagues. The tickets will cost 6d each, and come in books of ten tickets. All counterfoils for sold tickets must be back with us by 10th December, as the Draw will take place on 15th December so that prize-winners will have their prizes by Christmas. As an added incentive, for every book out of which you can sell nine tickets, the tenth will be placed in the Draw free, in the name of that member. We are looking forward to your fullest support for the Draw; books of tickets can be obtained from the N.C.R.M., price 4/6d per book (don't forget to fill the last ticket counterfoil in with your own name) and we are ready right now for the first orders! The prizes to be won are:

- |            |                             |
|------------|-----------------------------|
| 1st Prize: | £10                         |
| 2nd Prize: | Morphy Richards Steam Iron  |
| 3rd Prize: | A bottle of Whiskey         |
| 4th Prize: | £1 Boots (chemists) voucher |
| 5th Prize: | 10/-d record token          |

#### Campaign for Better Broadcasting

Some of you may have read in the press that there is an organisation with the above name, which has set itself up to try and halt some of the changes inside the B.B.C. as proposed in the B.B.C.'s "Broadcasting in the Seventies" plan for the future. Three members of the N.C.R.M. Committee attended a meeting held by the C.B.B., in the Institute of British Architects, in Portland Place (!)

The C.B.B. are fighting hard against the drastic cutback proposed by the B.B.C. on 'minority' programmes such as drama, poetry, classical music and the arts, on Radio Three; apparently a minority is less than a quarter-million. Perhaps at this point it should be pointed out that the N.C.R.M., as well as wishing to introduce independent radio, feels that the B.B.C. should retain their public-service principles, and not bother too much about audience ratings - they really have no need to. Therefore on this point we agree with the C.B.B. A number of questions were raised from a distinguished audience of M.P.'s, Union representatives, lecturers and B.B.C. producers. Unfortunately it was not the intention of the meeting to discuss commercial radio, although the C.B.B. said perhaps a meeting on that subject should be organised in the future. If this does happen, we shall be the first to let you know!

#### Conservative Party Conference

On the same day as the C.B.B. meeting, the Conservative Party Conference was taking place in Brighton, and another N.C.R.M. Committee member was down there (we're everywhere, folks). Paul Bryan made his usual statement on the lines that when the Conservative Party returns to power they will introduce local radio, but one interesting fact emerged at this conference; Paul Bryan, who is now the Shadow Minister of Posts and Communications, said there would be a survey carried out on British radio. Let's hope they come out with some favourable findings!!

#### Pop Opinion Poll

Those of you who read "Disc & Music Echo" will have seen in a recent issue a poll they carried out, with opinions from 500 readers (including N.C.R.M. Committee members Martin Rosen and Sue Mitchell - there we are again). Well,

one thing that the poll did prove was that over 80% of the 500 taking part in the poll did not think Radio One was a good substitute for the offshore stations. Douglas Muggeridge, Controller B.B.C. Radio One and Two, said that Radio One was never meant to replace the offshore stations. He ought to read 'Hansard', which reports the goings-on in Parliament - there he will find that the then Postmaster General, Edward Short, calming the fears of listeners who would be without a pop service, said that Radio One would be coming to fill the gap, courtesy of the B.B.C. If that is not a replacement, what is? The only thing of interest Douglas Muggeridge said was that he would like to do away with 'needle time'; I think we all agree that this is a stupid restriction, because musicians would not be put out of work by increased record playing - in fact the groups or bands recording records would probably get more record sales and much more work 'live'. So how about budging then, Musicians' Union?

#### Spike Milligan

Included with this newsletter is another N.C.R.M. Exclusive Interview, with Spike Milligan. You are reading it FIRST in the N.C.R.M. newsletter - you may read it again elsewhere at a later date, but remember we were first.

#### Renewals

Just in case you have forgotten, if your membership is due for renewal, you have two months from date of expiry to renew it at only 7/6d.

#### Radio Veronica

There have been rumours circulating recently that Radio Veronica, the Dutch station on 192 metres, is closing down. Despite these rumours, the station has no intention of going off the air; we have no idea how and where such rumours began, but we're glad to say they're not true at all.

Well, that is all for now. We hope a whole lot of you will enter the draw and try to sell as many tickets as possible to your families and friends, and good luck with your own free tickets! Till about Christmas, then. Bye-e-e for now (that's familiar).

The Committee

1969

- M.R. Spike, can I have your views on independent radio - would you like to see it established in this country?
- Spike Yes, I would like independent radio; I enjoyed it very much when it was going, and I was a bit horrified when the B.B.C. took over lock stock and barrel, the whole set-up, once it had been closed down by the Postmaster General.
- M.R. Actually, the B.B.C. never wanted to put on this pop service - they were instructed to do so by the Government.
- Spike Well, having closed down all the pop 'pirate' stations, this was the least they could do. They said they could give us the same thing, provided they used the original people and the original idea.
- M.R. Do you have any idea why the B.B.C.'s Radio One has not been a success with teenagers?
- Spike Radio One? Well, it was originally a success before the B.B.C. took it over but once that happened, well .... all the hard work had been done for them, they just copied the formula: free of charge, gratis, that's piracy!
- M.R. Do you think there's still a need for commercial radio to provide pop music and other forms of entertainment?
- Spike Well, unless the B.B.C. have competition they have no yardstick - they would still have had "Housewives Choice" as the big record programme of the day had it not been for the style introduced by the pop 'pirate' radio stations.
- M.R. If there were more stations, independent stations, set up now, would you say it could improve the B.B.C. even further?
- Spike Of course it would! Don't forget what made B.B.C. television come alive was independent television; until then it was a very soggy sort of thing, all right, but the standard was all shot up. Now they are doing things which are in art form, almost.
- M.R. One of the things said against commercial radio is that it would drop to the lowest level of broadcasting; do you have any views on that?
- Spike Of course, we take the "Daily Mirror" as the lowest level of newspaper standards of reading to reach the largest audience; this isn't a crime, this is commerce. We live in a capitalist society, so we went this way. I don't listen entirely to pop all day, I like also classical music, Bulgarian music, I like jazz, basic jazz, and so on.
- M.R. Did you ever listen to the "sweet music" that Radio 390 used to play?
- Spike I did! I liked it very much. I liked it because it proved that a station that didn't beam out just pop could also be successful on commercial radio, which destroys the argument that all commercial radio will be is entirely one line of pop. Of course, you get a majority, 98% of the people selling pop records all the time, but it is up to the people who run the station. There are more than just teenagers in England, you can attract people from the age of 30 up to 60 and more.
- M.R. In our Broadcasting Study, which you have got, we do say that we envisage a number of stations per region, a number that is technically possible, and commercially viable. Now if there were a whole lot of pop stations, obviously they would not all be able to survive; therefore we propose one pop station, another "sweet music" station, and they could also run in competition with each other ....
- Spike Great, yes!
- M.R. What we wouldn't like to see, though, is something set up on similar lines to the Independent Television Authority, where there is one station per region, and that one station has its own monopoly. Do you agree on that?
- Spike Yes, I don't like monopolies. I'd rather have small distinct units, like, as you suggest, regional, within a certain region having two pop programmes and one "sweet", one news set-up, and as well you can have comedy, drama, and pop.

/continued



- M.R. Have you experienced radio abroad?
- Spike Yes, Australia mostly. They run stations all over the place, and they do it successfully, and they compete with the Australian Broadcasting Commission.
- M.R. And they survive quite well?
- Spike They do survive well, yes. They push the A.B.C. What happens is that commercial stations push, and the A.B.C. have got to compete, can't lie back because the independents keep it on its toes.
- M.R. What are your views on the B.B.C. - that they should stay more to their public-service broadcasting (the Radio Three set-up), would you rather the B.B.C. stayed to this, and left the commercial aspect to the commercial stations?
- Spike Well, it was like that, but they have to compete, I suppose, otherwise they'd feel rather left out of it. Pop is the thing, and they've got to have their pop station; what I'm saying is have their pop stations, but compete with other commercial pop stations, which will keep them on their toes, and I like to think that as the B.B.C. is public-sponsored, it should have stations that are educational; we should not ignore education, but this is where the B.B.C. could thrive, no competition at all. I must admit I've learned a lot from the B.B.C. in music and art and suchlike. I've never learned anything from the commercial stations, but then I didn't switch to commercial stations to get education. The B.B.C.'s Schools Broadcasts are marvellous - there is no need for them to compete, they can make the running on their own, on three or four wavelengths, but if they want to compete with pop as they do, well good luck to them, but I think there ought to be some competition.
- M.R. You did tell me that you would like independent radio established to help open up religion to everybody - what exactly are your views on this?
- Spike I think there ought to be religious broadcasts, but not like this gloomy atmosphere of the "Epilogue". I'd like it interjected between records, like say to one of the groups - "What do you think of religion, has it ever happened for you, do you feel you would like to have religion, are you agin it?" Let them talk, not just "How-are-you-what-is-your-latest-record-what-is-the-latest-number-in-the-pop-charts-what-yer-got-coming-up-are-you-going-for-a-tour-of-the-States" and all this same rubbish. All pop groups are human beings, very much so.
- M.R. But I presume you wouldn't like to see something like Garner Ted Armstrong over here, would you? Did you ever hear him, it was an American thing.
- Spike Oh, Americans - forget it! What makes me very uptight about the B.B.C. is this - I write to them, and say I would like to do "Housewives Choice", I'd like to do it because literally everybody in the profession has done it; they say I'm unsuitable. Now that is what makes me very frightened of the B.B.C., when it becomes more of a monopoly, it shouldn't be like that. I wrote back to them asking them to explain why I'm unsuitable, they've got no reason at all. I said I'm married, I've got four children, I'm a reasonably good Christian, I'm a respected citizen, I've never been to prison, and they won't answer. Frank Gillard wrote a grey letter saying that my particular talents might not be suitable, suitable for putting a gramophone record on? What talent is this? The least talented job in the world!
- M.R. Perhaps they're frightened you might say something they would be embarrassed about?
- Spike That's it, yes.
- M.R. Well, if there were other stations, all the other stations would probably be wanting to have your services, and then the B.B.C. would want you.
- Spike On the B.B.C. I'd try harder to be a better disc-jockey, because of that. If I got a job on one of the stations for one hour in the mornings, I think I'd make a good job of it. They said I was suitable for a children's programme!
- M.R. Do you have any views on the B.B.C. banning, or refusing to play, records, such as 'Je t'aime - moi non plus', even when it was Number One?
- Spike It is a grotty, grotty record - not pop, just sex - I don't think I want to listen to this on a record. I heard the equivalent twelve years ago, some chap saying "Marsha, marsha - John, John .." I don't know if they ought to ban it - I don't want to hear it myself. It just bores me to death.