

Draft programme:

PUBLISHING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

“Fighting with words against inequality, injustice, poverty and war.”

The Buckley Building, Oxford Brookes University, Headington, Oxford OX3 0BP.
Thursday March 12th 2009

:: registration and coffee, from 9:00 am ::

1st session (9:30-11:00):

"A DEBATE ABOUT THE 'PUBLIC DEBATE'" - What passes for 'public debate' bypasses large parts of the public - increasingly, if election turnouts are anything to go by. And the world's most vulnerable people barely have any voice at all. We examine the difficulties (and dangers) of publishing that challenges power and injustice. How can social change groups reach beyond the already-converted to a wider public, and expand debate beyond what's offered by mainstream media, and the interests that dominate them?

- *Sigrid Rausing* - publisher and philanthropist; co-founder of Portobello Books.
- *Sarah Sexton/Larry Lohman* - The Corner House research group.
- *Rahila Gupta* - activist; author of *'Enslaved: the new British slavery'*

:: coffee ::

2nd session (11:20-13:00):

"HOW WE PUBLISH AND HOW WE MIGHT PUBLISH" In recent years rapid changes in publishing technology, in the economy of publishing, and in the social/political milieu have radically altered the landscape in which charities and campaign groups operate. Our speakers describe how they have coped with or benefited from these changes, and what they expect to be the major issues in the near future.

- *Anne Beech* - Managing Director of radical UK publishers, Pluto Books.
- *Chris Brazier* - co-editor of The New Internationalist
- *Rob Cornford* - Communications Manager, Oxfam GB's Policy and Practice Communications Team.
- *Firoze Manji* - founding Director of Fahamu, the pan-African human rights information network

:: lunch ::

3rd session (13:45-15:00) **CHOICE OF 2 DISCUSSION WORKSHOPS:**

A: "REFORM, REVOLUTION, OR WHAT?"

What kind of "social change" do we all want? To what extent is there a common agenda shared by the many, issue-based, campaigning groups? If so how might we promote it? Then: how does change happen? Is it worth trying to influence government policy, or is grassroots activism more likely to lead to change?

B: "NEW MEDIA, OLD MEDIA AND THE STATUS QUO."

Is the internet opening up public debate and breaking the dominance of the established, mainstream media? Or is it just leading to greater fragmentation of political life? Or is that just a false dichotomy and, if so, what are the real questions (and answers!)?

BOTH groups to consider, in addition, *what if anything would be an appropriate and useful next step on from this conference.*

:: tea break ::

4th and final session

(15:30-16:00) Report back from the workshops.

(16:00-17:30)

"BEYOND MEDIA"; At what point, and how, do the ideas we develop and debate get turned into action?

- *Alice Cutler* - the Trapeze popular education collective
- *Ian Legett* - People and Planet
- *Hamish Campbell and Richard Hering* - Undercurrents and Vision On TV

:: conference ends ::

AFTERWARDS: a rare chance to see ICE AND FIRE THEATRE'S "*THE ILLEGALS*", at Ruskin College Hall, Walton Street, at 7 pm. Tickets cost £6 (£3 concessions) and can be bought in advance from 01865 558145, or on the door. All proceeds will go towards campaigns against immigration detention in Oxfordshire (to which further donations will be welcome). For information on the play itself see:

<http://www.iceandfire.co.uk/afhr/productions.html#Illegals>