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CENSORSHIP IN CONTEXT: THE BRITISH BOARD OF FILM CLASSIFICATION, THE CHILDREN'S FILM FOUNDATION AND TERRY ON THE FENCE

PROFESSOR ROBERT SHAIL

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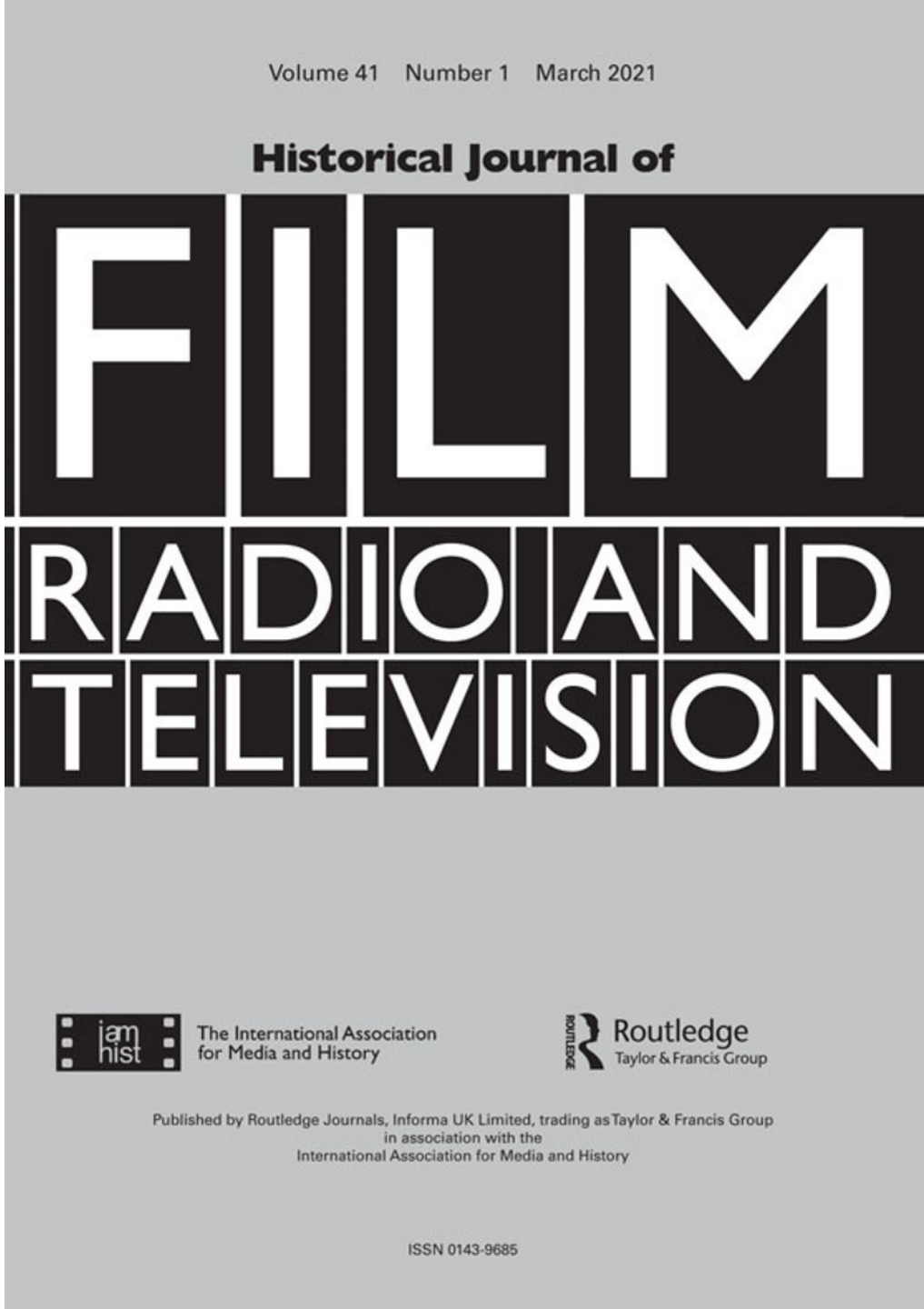

ABSTRACT

For over thirty years the Children's Film Foundation (CFF) produced a variety of shorts, travelogues, serials and features which were shown at a network of Saturday morning cinema clubs all over the UK and beyond. At their peak in the 1960s and 1970s they reached an audience in excess of half a million per week. Throughout that period their work caused barely a ripple of reaction at the offices of the British Board of Film Censors, latterly the British Board of Film Classification. That is until the submission of Terry on the Fence (1986), the very last feature to be completed by the CFF (by then renamed as the Children's Film and Television Foundation or CFTF). The film produced a reaction unique in the Foundation's history requiring alteration to its content. This article makes extensive use of the archives of the BBFC to show how Terry on the Fence touched a raw nerve in terms of its depiction of juvenile delinquency and exposed some of the same social anxieties that had fed into the so-called video nasties case. It doing so it reflects the degree to which censorship can be seen to respond to prevailing contextual factors.

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Email:
R.Shail@leedsbeckett.ac.uk

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