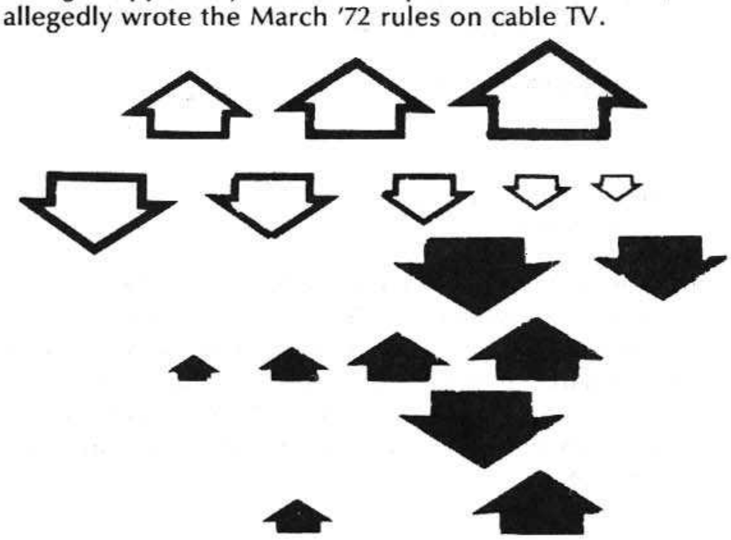
tions and arrangements which guarantee open communication. In a monopoly situation, we cannot take democracy for granted.

What we ask is a commitment to certain institutions and formal arrangements which establish opportunities for decommunications, for the kinds of communications essential to a free and democratic society — free expression and public debate, education and journalism, the flow of information vital to human beings.

At the meeting, four basic needs were presented: minority ownership, minority employment, public access and leased access channels. The last point proved to be most controversial. Professor Jacklin, Allan Frederiksen, and the Committee for Open Media have been working on the concept of a non-profit organization leasing a channel on a low cost, long-term basis. This could provide various community groups a vehicle for regularly scheduled programming, plus a chance to generate on-going production costs through the means of occasional sponsorship spots (unlike the public access channels). However, cable companies had never thought of the leased channels in anything but profit terms. Even broadcasters may consider leasing channels in the future — it would probably be cheaper than broadcasting on-the-air and they could then forego the FCC 3 year license renewal rule for broadcasters.

A Cox lawyer stated that he felt there would be problems with tariff laws — would it be "legal" to discriminate against competitors for the channel market according to what they can pay (regardless of profit vs. non-profit orientation)? The issue needs to be resolved soon.

Rumor has it that after the '73 elections, the FCC will waiver its cross-ownership rules as it has already waivered many of the March '72 rules regarding what a cable operator must now do in order to obtain a certificate of compliance to enable him to import distant signals, etc. Seems also that the Office of Telecommunications Policy, the Nixon Administration's designed and appointed mouthpiece, is gradually building up to replace the FCC. (And remember, folks, '73 is the year Nicolas Johnson's term is up in the FCC.) The OTP, though supposedly without the power to create laws, allegedly wrote the March '72 rules on cable TV.



However, the OTP and FCC have usually been no great friend of cable. In fact, it was the OTP and broadcasters who largely wrote the copyright rules requiring cable payment for specific off-air rights. The OTP is also in the second draft of a proposal to make the whole cable industry common carrier. This would essentially destroy its profit-making potential — sort of making it a closer cousin to the phone company. They would be unable to initiate any programming but would act only as an available carrier of signals. So why will the FCC soon be abolishing its cross-ownership rules? Because one-third of the cable systems are presently owned by broadcasters.

The merger between ATC and Cox should be interesting. Cox has been around longer and is more tied to the broadcasting past. ATC, because it is only four

years old and was never a child of broadcast TV, seems to be aware of its need to be more responsive to public interests. They have been conducting a public access experiment in Reading, Pennsylvania, for over a year and are soon to initiate them in Orlando, Florida, Charleston, West Virginia, and Beloit, Wisconsin. The merger will be a fifty-fifty deal. Monroe Rifkin of ATC will be Chief Executive of Cox-American, while the President of Cox will be the Chairman of the Board. They have already petitioned the FCC to transfer their microwave and radio licenses and have asked for a waiver of cross-ownership rules.

Hearing this, Kline and his community coalition asked that another meeting be held the beginning of November with representatives of both Cox and ATC. In it, the rights of the public will be presented, including: An agreement not to pre-empt public service programs or spots coming in from a broadcaster whose signal is usually carried; an agreement to require commercial lessees to carry public service spots, including Free Speech Messages, at regular intervals and as 5 percent of all messages carried or one minute in twenty; an agreement to make available free or nominal cost leased channels for non-profit organizations representing various special interests, communities unified by race or idea, political parties, constituencies, etc.; an