

THE  
HISTORY OF  
BROADCASTING  
IN THE  
UNITED KINGDOM

COMPETITION  
1955–1974



ASA BRIGGS

# THE HISTORY OF BROADCASTING IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

*A five-volume history giving an authoritative account  
of the rise and development of broadcasting in the  
United Kingdom*

## VOLUME I

The Birth of Broadcasting  
1896–1927

## VOLUME II

The Golden Age of Wireless  
1927–1939

## VOLUME III

The War of Words  
1939–1945

## VOLUME IV

Sound and Vision  
1945–1955

## VOLUME V

Competition  
1955–1974

ISBN 0-19-215964-X



9 780192 159649

This is the last volume of an authoritative and comprehensive five-volume history which charts the development of broadcasting in the United Kingdom, by one of Britain's leading historians.

*Competition* covers a period of twenty years, from 1955 to 1974, a crisis year in British social and political history, when there were two general elections. An early chapter is devoted to another crisis year, 1956, the year of Suez and Hungary.

During these years, which saw a huge increase in the volume of news and political broadcasting, developments carefully charted in this volume, the BBC was in a competitive situation. Yet relations between the BBC and ITA changed significantly while the BBC faced the programming challenge posed by the new commercial television companies. The volume compares in detail the BBC's programmes with those of its rivals in the still controversial context of the 1960s.

A chapter on the Pilkington Committee, which has not hitherto been examined in perspective, is followed by a full account of the contribution to broadcasting of Hugh Greene, the man whom Mary Whitehouse described as being 'responsible for the moral collapse which characterized the sixties and seventies'. Greene's relationship with Charles Hill, who became Chairman of the BBC in a surprise Harold Wilson move of 1967, is examined in depth. So, too, is one of the biggest controversies within the BBC, that surrounding *Broadcasting in the Seventies*.

After chapters dealing with education, including the founding of the Open University, and technology, Asa Briggs evaluates the state of the BBC at the time of its Golden Jubilee in 1972, and ends with the first meetings of the Annan Committee, charged with determining its future.

Every person concerned with the future of broadcasting at the turn of the century will find invaluable information and arguments in this volume.

**£50.00**

RRP

**Lord Briggs** is one of the leading social and cultural historians of our day and is President of the Social History Society. From 1967 to 1976 he was Vice-Chancellor of Sussex University and from 1976 to 1991 Provost of Worcester College, Oxford. His many publications include a trilogy on Victorian England—*Victorian People* (1954), *Victorian Cities* (1963) and *Victorian Things* (1984) and *A Social History of England* which has just gone into its third edition. He is an Honorary Trustee of the International Institute of Communications and won the Marconi Medal in 1975 for his work on broadcasting history. In 1979 he published *Governing the BBC* and in 1985 *The BBC: The First Fifty Years*.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS



THE HISTORY OF BROADCASTING  
IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

VOLUME V

---

# *Competition*

---

ASA BRIGGS

Oxford New York

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press, Walton Street, Oxford ox2 6DP

Oxford New York Toronto  
Athens Auckland Bangkok Bombay  
Calcutta Cape Town Dar es Salaam Delhi  
Florence Hong Kong Istanbul Karachi  
Kuala Lumpur Madras Madrid Melbourne  
Mexico City Nairobi Paris Singapore  
Taipei Tokyo Toronto  
and associated companies in  
Berlin Ibadan

Oxford is a trade mark of Oxford University Press

© ASA BRIGGS 1995

First published by Oxford University Press 1995

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press. Within the UK, exceptions are allowed in respect of any fair dealing for the purpose of research or private study, or criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, or in the case of reprographic reproduction in accordance with the terms of the licences issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside these terms and in other countries should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the address above

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data  
Data available

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data  
Data available  
ISBN 0-19-215964-X

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3

Printed in Great Britain  
on acid-free paper by  
Bookcraft (Bath) Ltd  
Midsomer Norton, Avon

*This History is dedicated to  
the memory of*

**Michael Swann**

(1920–1990)

Chairman of the BBC

(1973–1980)

friend and colleague

# Contents

List of illustrations xi

Preface xv

- I. 1955—AND BEYOND 1
  1. Competitors 3
  2. People and Numbers 14
  3. The Remaining Monopoly 28
  4. Private and Public Reactions 43
  5. The Power of the News 61
  
- II. SUEZ 73
  1. Two Crises: Two Threats 75
  2. Suez Unfolds 77
  3. Collision Course 89
  4. Action Taken and Stopped 95
  5. The Role of the BBC 102
  6. Events in Perspective 116
  
- III. AUDIENCES AND PROGRAMMES (1955–1960) 139
  1. Bills of Fare 141
  2. In the News 152
  3. Five Programmes 161
  4. Children's Audience 175
  5. The Advent of Media Research 183
  6. Drama 190
  7. *Six-Five Special, Juke Box Jury* 198
  8. Comedy 210
  9. Sport 216
  10. Radio Reactions 220
  11. Music 227
  12. *This Is the BBC* 234
  13. Politics 237

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| IV. UNDER REVIEW: PILKINGTON                        | 257 |
| 1. The Scope of the Review                          | 259 |
| 2. The Members                                      | 267 |
| 3. Viewers' Choices                                 | 278 |
| 4. The Weight of Evidence                           | 282 |
| 5. Recommendations and Reactions                    | 294 |
| 6. Aftermath  | 303 |
| V. GREENE AND HIS CRITICS                           | 309 |
| 1. The Director-Generalship                         | 311 |
| 2. The Sense of Change                              | 325 |
| 3. The End of the Old                               | 341 |
| 4. The Shock of the New                             | 350 |
| 5. Top and Bottom                                   | 376 |
| 6. Words and Music                                  | 395 |
| 7. The Second Channel                               | 402 |
| 8. New Programmes: <i>Dr. Who</i> and <i>Z Cars</i> | 416 |
| 9. <i>Steptoe and Son: It's a Square World</i>      | 434 |
| 10. More Politics                                   | 437 |
| VI. POLITICIANS, EDUCATORS —<br>AND PIRATES         | 455 |
| 1. Capturing Culture                                | 457 |
| 2. Education  | 464 |
| 3. Towards the Open University                      | 490 |
| 4. The Pirates                                      | 502 |
| 5. The Benn Regime                                  | 515 |
| 6. The General Election of 1966                     | 546 |
| 7. After the Election                               | 558 |
| 8. Planning the Open University                     | 567 |
| 9. Radios 1, 2, 3, and 4                            | 571 |
| 10. God and Mammon                                  | 581 |
| 11. Programme Parade                                | 585 |
| 12. A New Chairman                                  | 593 |

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| VII. LOCAL, REGIONAL, NATIONAL,<br>GLOBAL      | 617 |
| 1. Basic Geopolitics                           | 619 |
| 2. The Regional and the Local                  | 623 |
| 3. BBC Local Radio                             | 639 |
| 4. BBC Regions                                 | 649 |
| 5. Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland           | 669 |
| 6. Bush House                                  | 679 |
| 7. The BBC World Service                       | 697 |
| VIII. <i>BROADCASTING IN THE<br/>SEVENTIES</i> | 719 |
| 1. The Background                              | 721 |
| 2. Internal Review                             | 729 |
| 3. BBC Reactions                               | 758 |
| 4. The Document                                | 766 |
| 5. Compromises, Conflicts, and Protests        | 775 |
| 6. Staff Relations                             | 781 |
| 7. Implementation                              | 799 |
| IX. NEW TECHNOLOGIES                           | 811 |
| 1. Connections                                 | 813 |
| 2. Transistors                                 | 818 |
| 3. Computers                                   | 820 |
| 4. Perspectives                                | 825 |
| 5. Recording                                   | 832 |
| 6. VHF   | 839 |
| 7. Satellites                                  | 843 |
| 8. Colour Television                           | 848 |
| X. THE JUBILEE — BEFORE AND AFTER              | 865 |
| 1. Taking Stock                                | 867 |
| 2. The General Election of 1970                | 868 |
| 3. The Effects on Broadcasting                 | 884 |
| 4. <i>Yesterday's Men</i>                      | 892 |

|  |      |
|--|------|
| 5. Northern Ireland  | 902  |
| 6. Royalty and Jubilee   | 916  |
| 7. Education   | 932  |
| 8. More on History   | 937  |
| 9. Other Programmes  | 947  |
| 10. Back to the Family   | 960  |
| 11. Broadcasting Personalities   | 964  |
| 12. The Entry of Swann   | 972  |
| 13. Crisis Year  | 977  |
| 14. Attack and Defence   | 993  |
| APPENDIX A: Numbers of Licences Issued   | 1005 |
| APPENDIX B: Numbers of BBC Staff   | 1006 |
| APPENDIX C: BBC Radio and Television:<br>Operating Expenditure   | 1007 |
| APPENDIX D: BBC External Services:<br>Income and Expenditure   | 1008 |
| APPENDIX E: 1969 Revision of the<br><i>Aide-Mémoire</i>  | 1009 |
| APPENDIX F: Appendix to News and Current<br>Affairs Meeting of 1 October 1971,<br>Standing Instructions on Coverage<br>of Events in Northern Ireland | 1010 |
| <i>Chronology (1955–1974)</i>  | 1013 |
| <i>Bibliographical Note</i>  | 1077 |
| <i>Index</i>   | 1091 |

## List of Illustrations

All items are reproduced by permission of the BBC unless otherwise acknowledged.

PLATES *between pages 430 and 431*

1. Sir Ian Jacob painted by Ruskin Spear  
(*Royal Academy*)
2. Behind the scenes of *Tonight*, 1957
3. *Six-Five Special*, November 1957
4. Behind the scenes of *Monitor*, February 1958
5. David Coleman introduces *Grandstand*, May 1959
6. Television Centre in April 1960
7. Hugh Greene greets Lord Reith at Grocers' Hall Dinner in November 1961
8. David Jacobs presides over *Juke Box Jury*, January 1961
9. Tony Hancock in *The Radio Ham*, June 1961
10. *Dixon of Dock Green*, November 1959
11. *Z Cars*, July 1963
12. *TW3*, September 1963
13. Monitoring Service Listening Room, July 1964
14. Relay Station on Ascension Island, 1966
15. Bush House
16. *Last Night of the Proms*, September 1967, Sir Malcolm Sargent greets the audience
17. *The Forsyte Saga*, 1966: first and last meeting of the Forsytes
18. Cover of *Radio Times*, 24–30 June 1967 advertising *Our World*
19. *Civilisation*, 1969
20. *Dad's Army*, 1970
21. Robin Day, 1970
22. *Doctor Who*, November 1972



23. Lord Hill and Charles Curran confer at a Press Conference for *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, July 1969
24. Dr Walter Perry (Vice-Chancellor) and Richmond Postgate (Controller, Educational Broadcasting) at opening of Open University production studios at Alexandra Palace, May 1970
25. *The Question of Ulster*, January 1972: Ludovic Kennedy in the chair
26. Fiftieth Anniversary Exhibition, November 1972: The Queen and Lord Hill enter the Langham to open the exhibition
27. Sir Michael Swann, January 1973
28. The Annan Committee, July 1974
29. General election, October 1974
30. Envelope with stamps originally issued for the fiftieth anniversary of the BBC in 1972, specially franked for local radio anniversary in 1974

IN TEXT

|  | <i>Pages</i> |
|--|--------------|
| 1. 'I'm not worried—we don't listen to Luxembourg no more since the commercial telly started', Sprod in <i>Punch</i> , 3 April 1957  | 55           |
| 2. Greek Tragedy, Emmwood in <i>Evening Standard</i> , 31 Jan. 1956  | 131          |
| 3. 'I suppose we could still negotiate a non-aggression pact between Malcolm Muggeridge and the Director-General of the BBC . . .', [artist not known], <i>Southern Daily Echo</i> 6 Jan. 1958                           | 145          |
| 4. 'How did people know who to vote for before they had TV, Dear?', Vicky in <i>Daily Mirror</i> , 8 Feb. 1958   | 245          |
| 5. Comment on fate of Pilkington Report in <i>Daily Mail</i> , 28 June 1962  | 298          |
| 6. 'Do, please, Sir Hengist, explain to me why, if the Government always knows best, do they go to all the trouble and expense of appointing special Commissions?', Osbert Lancaster, <i>Daily Express</i> , 3 July 1962 | 306          |

7. 'Dear, kind Sir Hugh Greene, please, please give us back our Children's Hour. Your heartbroken little friend, Toddles', Osbert Lancaster, *Daily Express*, 22 Feb. 1964 345
8. 'Stop laughing, you fool—they're taking the mickey out of people like us,' Anton in *Punch*, 20 March 1963 352
9. 'The one at the back looks like Donald Baverstock!', Jak in *Evening Standard*, 2 March 1965 423
10. 'Using the telly for *education*? Why, it'll just put dangerous ideas into the heads of youth!', Vicky in *Evening Standard*, 10 Sept. 1963. 492
11. Comment on pirate radio by Vicky, *Evening Standard*, 29 May 1964 505
12. 'Curiouser and curiouser!', Garland in *Daily Telegraph*, 25 Nov. 1966 524
13. 'We're trying to appease Wilson', Franklin in *Daily Mirror*, 5 Oct. 1965 552
14. 'And here's the four letter word that caused the biggest shock of all H-I-L-L', Whitworth in *Sheffield Morning Telegraph*, 28 July 1967 603
15. 'The next programme will follow when a few more people have paid their licence fee', Cooper in *Tribune*, 25 July 1969 774
16. 'He IS the new BBC Orchestra!', Franklin in *Daily Mirror*, 2 June 1969 777
17. 'You had nothing good to say for it until Wedgwood Benn attacked it', [unknown artist], in *Sun*, 22 Oct. 1968 788
18. 'It's not that I'm against colour television; I just feel that bloodstains in black-and-white are more suitable for child viewers', Sprod in *Punch*, 1 March 1961 849
19. Mrs Whitehouse as seen by Cole in *The Times*, 4 Feb. 1974 890
20. 'I wish he'd stop fuming about yesterday's man. . .and thank his lucky stars we're not today's men', Emmwood in *Daily Mail*, 23 June 1971 901
21. 'D'ye think it's part of the programme, Pat? Or have we been hit?' Mac in *Daily Mail*, 6 Jan. 1972 912

22. 'My client pleads not guilty, M'lud, and would prefer that his trial be held at the BBC TV Centre!', Cookson in *Evening News*, 6 Jan. 1972 915
23. 'Hate doing this to you, but we'll need a film documentary for Jan. 22 showing all the dreary stages leading up to the EEC Treaty of Accession', David Langdon in *Punch*, 12 Jan. 1972 978

*Note* All references to volumes in the *History of Broadcasting* refer to the five-volume series issued in 1995.

## Preface

This fifth volume in my *History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom* covers a longer period than any of the previous four, and draws on a far greater quantity and a far richer range and variety of source materials. Like the first four volumes, it is based primarily on a thorough examination of hitherto largely unexplored BBC archives. Like them also, it places the history of the BBC as an institution within a general historical context.

The period is of great interest to general historians, and I have sought to recapture and to interpret the prevailing attitudes, ideas, and policies of the time rather than to reflect the sometimes very different preoccupations of the present. I have not always been looking around the corner. If I had chosen to do so when I wrote my earlier volumes, my interpretations would themselves now seem out of date, even archaic. As it was, I let people of the time—and institutions—speak for themselves. In this volume I do the same. What they say is often surprising.

Attention is paid too to some people who have subsequently been forgotten. The BBC has depended upon them. None the less, those people who already figure in broadcasting history and in national history obviously have their place. It is the detail concerning them that is often the most fascinating and revealing in any attempt to recapture the past. Many of them hit the headlines during their own lifetime.

The present volume differs from the first four in that it no longer tells the whole story of what was happening. The breakup of the BBC's monopoly of television in 1955 changed the picture, although far less completely than had been anticipated. The story subsequently went through several different phases, and by the end of the period the further decision had been taken to introduce commercial radio as well as commercial television and to create local, if not national, independent radio stations. Any survey of the changing fortunes of competitive broadcasting from a BBC vantage-point must be regarded, therefore, as complementary to the four volumes of the official history of the ITA, later the IBA, the first of which appeared in 1982.<sup>1</sup> I was

<sup>1</sup> B. Sendall, *Independent Television in Britain*, Vol. 1: *Origin and Foundation, 1946–62* (1982); Vol. 2: *Expansion and Change, 1958–68* (1983); J. Potter, Vol. 3: *Politics and Control, 1968–80* (1989); and Vol. 4: *Companies and Programmes, 1968–80* (1990). These volumes were sponsored by the Independent Televi-

consulted by key figures in the IBA before these volumes appeared, and I have subsequently talked to their authors. All four volumes have been of value in telling my own story.

Like the previous volumes, it is very much my own story—a history of broadcasting rather than *the* history, a history of individual people and of individual programmes as well as of an institution. I am not the 'official' historian of the BBC, although I have often been described as such since I accepted an invitation in 1958, within the period covered in this volume, to write the BBC's history. I received it from the first Director-General mentioned in these pages, Sir Ian Jacob. Given full access to BBC archives from the start—and, alas, they remain incompletely catalogued—I have set out to provide a work of reference for people inside the BBC as well as for scholars outside it. The BBC needs a memory bank.

There is a continuing need also for a framework of the kind that I have constructed, because scholars will find it difficult, if not impossible, to write future monographs without one. Fortunately, there are more historians of broadcasting than there used to be, and I have been able in writing this fifth volume to draw on far more published monographs of high quality than I was able to do in earlier volumes. I try to point the way, however, to further monographs.

Much of the material in the volume is new, and some of it illuminates episodes in national history as well as in the history of broadcasting. The footnotes, which refer selectively to other histories as well as to sources, are an integral part of the volume. In many of my other books, including those on the Victorians, I have dispensed with them. In this volume, as in the previous four, they are indispensable. Some of them tell a story in themselves; some pick out an apposite quotation. Many of them are long and detailed.

Because of the end of the BBC's monopoly in 1955, the main theme of this fifth volume must inevitably be competition, and for this reason I have chosen *Competition* as the title. It is at least as expressive a title as the titles of my first four volumes, *The Birth of Broadcasting*, *The Golden Age of Wireless*, *The War of Words*, and *Sound and Vision*. The first of these was written in the early years of the period covered in this volume, and was published in 1961. By the time it appeared, Jacob had been succeeded by Hugh Greene, who

sion Companies Association with the agreement of the Independent Broadcasting Authority. The substitution of the initials IBA for ITA took place in 1972, when projected independent radio stations fell within its framework of reference.

had strong views of his own about the content and thrust of a history. He wanted it, above all, to be topical. Instead, while profoundly interested in what was happening at the time, as I still am when quite different things are happening inside and outside the BBC, I was careful not to relate my text to what was then the current and often bitter argument about the relationship between BBC and ITV, the argument which preoccupied the Pilkington Committee, set up in September 1960. In consequence, *The Birth of Broadcasting* (1961) was a monograph, complete in itself, that dealt with an already distant decade in time. Of course, many of its readers related the text to what was happening to the BBC at the time that they read it and not to what had happened to it during the 1920s. Doubtless the same will always be true.

The present volume cannot pretend to be complete in itself. It is best thought of as a sequel to the fourth volume, which covered the ten years from 1945 to 1955, and which introduced characters—and issues—which dominate the first chapter of Volume V. Competition was already a central theme then, and one senior BBC official, Sir George Barnes, then in charge of television, feared that it would be 'deathly'. Competition, however, was never the only theme, as the first chapter explains. Other themes in the first chapter include the shift from radio to television, a major shift in national and in world history, the transformation of news services under the influence of television, and the rise of 'professionalism' both in television and in radio. All these were discussed in Chapter VI of my one-volume history *The BBC: The First Fifty Years* (1985), which dealt briefly with the period from 1955 to 1972 under the chapter heading 'Competition'.

When I wrote that chapter, I had had only limited access to the then largely uncatalogued BBC archives of the period, so the account presented there is superseded by the account presented in this volume, written after much new evidence has become available. None the less, my one-volume history, now in the course of substantial revision, will provide a useful introduction for readers who have not studied the earlier volumes in the series. It also includes an appendix, prepared by Leonard Miall, which deals with BBC chronology up to and including 1972. This has been revised, extended, and enlarged in a new chronological appendix to the present volume which relates broadcasting history throughout the period to events in a broader political, social, and cultural context.

The organization of Volume V, like that of Volume I, is itself chronological. The bits and pieces are put together within a time

frame as they were rarely put together at the time by any one single individual, not even the Director-General or the Chairman of the Board of Governors. The first chapter starts with the effects of competition after 1955, but it does more than set the scene. It identifies central issues and relationships, some of which were to persist long after 1955, 1956, and 1957. These are taken up again in the last chapter in connection with the BBC's jubilee celebrations. By then the relationship between the BBC and the IBA was quite different from that in 1955. Indeed, they were often described as complementary rather than competitive organizations.

The second chapter, which deals with Suez, draws heavily on every kind of evidence, including Cabinet and other Government papers, and can be read as complete in itself, a monograph within a volume. It examines the crisis both within the context of the year, a dramatic year in British and in world politics, and within the history of external broadcasting as a whole. Again, the crisis looks different now from what it did at the time, a very confusing time. Yet, while we would now draw different 'lessons' from it in relation to international peacekeeping, the 'lessons' in relation to broadcasting remain the same.

The third chapter deals with BBC output, what most interested listeners and viewers, the whole *raison d'être* of broadcasting, and I have focused selectively on a number of particularly revealing programmes for historians both of 'high' and of 'popular' culture. Nineteen fifty six was the year not only of Suez and Hungary and of Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin, but of John Osborne's play *Look Back in Anger* and of James Dean's second film *Rebel Without a Cause* which was released two months after Dean's death. Across the Atlantic, Elvis Presley's appearance on Ed Sullivan's TV show in September was seen by an audience of 54 million, and in the same month on this side of the Atlantic showings of the American Bill Haley's film *Rock Around the Clock* were said to cause 'riots in cinemas all around' Britain.

This was a year when the word 'young' was acquiring a new significance. It was the year, too, when national service was abolished. The Second World War was fading into the background. By 1974, millions of people could not remember it. Perspectives changed as experience changed. In a collection of essays, *Declaration*, published in 1957, its editor, Tom Maschler, had explained how 'a number of young and widely opposed writers' had 'burst upon the scene . . . striving to change many of the values which have held



good in recent years'. They were, he insisted, consciously initiating, not mirroring. And a year after that, an anthology entitled *The Beat Generation and the Angry Young Men* was published, to be followed in 1959 by Colin MacInnes's remarkable novel *Absolute Beginners*, which introduces black immigrants into the scenario as well as angry young men and beatniks. Only the flower children had not yet appeared.

Things were not what they used to be, as was made clear when Richard Hoggart's widely reviewed book *The Uses of Literacy*, recalling an older and very different society and culture, appeared in 1957. Hoggart, who was to play a major role in the development of studies of 'culture', was to be a member of the Pilkington Committee, and already he had become increasingly interested in 'communication'; in 1960 the title of his Harvey Memorial Lecture was 'The Nature and Content of Mass Communications'. He has now looked back upon it all in the third volume of his autobiography, *An Imagined Life*.

The work of the Pilkington Committee, which was called upon to examine the future of British broadcasting, is examined in Chapter IV, which, like Chapter II, draws heavily on non-BBC sources. The BBC was then under review, but, even more, so was ITV. The Committee was inevitably preoccupied with the nature and consequences of competition, although the word 'competition' did not figure in its terms of reference. What made its controversial conclusions interesting was that they did not simply recapitulate the themes that had been debated in Parliament and in the Press in 1953 and 1954. They took into account, if somewhat one-sidedly, the experience of competition between 1955 and 1960. The Pilkington Report cheered the BBC and infuriated most of the contracting companies, and its recommendations—and the reactions to them, official and unofficial—have to be considered critically.

The fifth chapter concentrates on a controversial decade, the 1960s. It began—to many it seemed appropriately—with the appointment of Greene as Director-General. Groomed for the post, he took over from Jacob on the most memorable of days, 1 January 1960. Greene's role, much discussed at the time and since, was as significant in BBC history as Reith's role during the formative 1920s, and, like the advent of BBC-2 in 1964, it demands critical interpretation. So, indeed, does the decade itself, for a biography of Greene by itself would never be enough. He himself considered writing an autobiography, but then thought better of it when he realized that it would mean spending hours in dusty archives, including the archives of other people as well as his own.



Having myself been engrossed in the BBC archives, I am as well aware at the end of my researches as I was at the beginning that there is a social and cultural dimension to this chapter, and indeed to this volume as a whole, a dimension which, while not missing in the earlier volumes, acquired a greater depth during the 1950s and the 1960s. For at least one social historian, Arthur Marwick, the 'upheavals' of the 1960s were as great as those of the Second World War and had an 'irreversible influence on English society'. Yet the upheavals began not with the 'swinging sixties', a divided decade in itself—with the most dramatic changes coming near its end—but with the last years of the 1950s, when a 'time bomb was already ticking'. The appeal of that particular metaphor derived from the fact that there was always a 'big bomb' in the background.

Programmes of the 1960s like *That Was the Week That Was*, first broadcast in 1962, the year after the appearance of the first number of *Private Eye*, had more than immediate interest. It is not surprising, indeed, that a new generation of cultural historians has approached the history of broadcasting during the 1960s through the detailed analysis of the text and format of particular programmes, examining how they were made, as well as why they were made, and tracing meticulously and sometimes imaginatively the often contradictory contemporary reactions to them. The analysis is often far more searching than the dazzling McLuhanesque writing of the 1960s itself. We have fortunately broken away from variations on the theme of 'medium as message' and the 'inherent characteristics of television'.

The sixth chapter, which overlaps with the fifth—it is impossible to draw a firm line between them—turns to an important group of Greene's critics at the time. The politicians, who could be very critical, have to be linked with radio 'pirates' who, in the absence of commercial radio, provided their own brand of competition to the BBC's radio services. I recognize that neither group would have much liked to be so directly linked with the other. Yet, they were at the time. Considered in retrospect, both groups were concerned in their different ways with the direction of social and cultural change, even if the politicians differed more from each other in deciding how to express it than the pirates did. After all, the politicians, like the BBC, always had to cope with the public reactions of older age-groups in what was frequently thought of at the time as a 'battle of the generations'. It was a battle waged to the noisy sound of 'pop', the music that has been most in my own ears throughout the writing of this volume, despite my interest in the role of Sir William Glock and

the BBC's commitment to what was called misleadingly 'serious music'.

I have quite deliberately brought in the educators also within this context, not least because I was one of them, never far from the noise when I was in Brighton. By its Royal Charter, the BBC was required to educate as well as to inform and to entertain, and the 1960s was a decade of great importance in relation to the history of education as well as to the history of broadcasting. The decade ended with the creation of the Open University which registered its first students in 1971. The BBC—after many doubts and many trials and tribulations, which I have tried to trace—was, during the 1970s, to be associated with it in a close working partnership.

In the seventh chapter I have chosen to make other links, putting together the local, the regional, the national, and the global. At one end of the spectrum was local radio, a new feature of the 1960s and one to which great strategic importance was attached, and at the other end world radio, sometimes thought of as the jewel in the BBC's crown. I have examined both the implications of the renaming in 1965 of the BBC's General Overseas Service—it became the World Service—and of competition with other external broadcasting systems. While Leicester, Sheffield, and Merseyside local radio stations were being brought into being in 1967, the broadcasting effort of Bush House, the centre of BBC external broadcasting, was being diverted from Europe to Africa and Asia. And the Soviet Union's invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 brought it back again—with a bang—to Europe. The Monitoring Service, created at the start of the Second World War, once again proved its practical value in a time of crisis.

Financed directly by Government, independently of the BBC's licence fee, the World Service and the other external services, including the Monitoring and the Transcription Services, always had a history of their own, and were treated separately in the previous volumes; and while their separate histories cannot be understood outside the framework of world history—before and after Suez, Hungary, and Khrushchev—there was always a distinctive BBC colouring to what was provided.<sup>2</sup> Bush House was a special kind of place, by its nature more cosmopolitan than other parts of the BBC.

<sup>2</sup> See my lecture 'The BBC in World Perspective' (1977), reprinted with slight changes in *The Collected Essays of Asa Briggs* (1991), pp. 174 ff. The volume, which focuses on communications and on education, includes other essays on the BBC and related themes.

It was subject to more official reviews than Broadcasting House and Television Centre, but it came through them all, in some respects stronger in 1973, if not in 1974, than it had been in 1955.

The eighth chapter concentrates on domestic sound broadcasting. The debates on it within and outside the BBC are often more revealing than the debates on television, which seemed—and seems—to have a dynamic of its own, and which has always been allowed to express it. The title of this chapter is the title of one of the most radical and controversial internal documents in the whole history of the BBC, *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, published in 1969 before the new decade began. The chapter covers both the preparation of a document which refashioned radio and the divergent reactions to it inside and outside Broadcasting House. To understand the document, it is necessary, none the less, to look back to the debates already covered in Chapters VI and VII. In the words of the new Director-General, Charles Curran, who had to handle the document, broadcasting is a 'seamless robe'.

The subject of Chapter IX is the history of developing technologies in Britain, and in writing it I have had to use far more American material than in any other chapter. The relevant technologies—from transistors to satellites—were global in their potential and in their implications, but no two countries approached the question of how to develop them in quite the same way or even in quite the same order. In considering broadcasting there is always scope for comparative history. Everywhere, however, economic considerations, sometimes political considerations, were as significant as technological thrust, both in radio and in television. At the beginning of the period in 1956 the first VHF transmitting stations were opened; in 1972, near the end of the period, a pioneering teletext service, Ceefax, was announced after a run of successful tests. The first live television transmission from the United States by Telstar had taken place in 1962. The new colour television service of 1967 was the first regular television service in Europe. In 1966 regular stereophonic sound transmissions had begun, a sign of a revolution in the recording and reception of music. Recording of sound and pictures had been transformed by 1974.

After the event, technologies appear to have evolved in logical sequences, as indeed did local radio, but the history of technology is never at any stage self-contained. In practice, economics and politics determine if and when sequences begin and end and at what rate they move forward. Moreover, at any stage in the sequence there are

always options. It is only much later that sharp contrasts loom large between different periods in the history of technology. 'The golden age of wireless' looked to be of one piece only in the golden age of television, and the golden age of television now looks to be of one piece only in the age of video cassettes and VCRs. Things were seldom still, and there was often controversy. In 1974, however, there was a somewhat dangerous sense, not universally shared, that technology would not shape the immediate future.

Within the general context of the history of broadcasting, the last chapter, Chapter X, seems to be devoted less to consensus than to controversy. The BBC has always liked anniversaries—much broadcasting is devoted to them—and even now, in the light of everything that has happened since, the BBC's fiftieth anniversary in 1972 stands out as a great occasion of 'Jubilee'. When all the evidence is assembled, however, it is plain that there were many problems facing the BBC in 1972, some of which went back even before the period covered in this volume, and some of which, particularly the financial problems, loomed even larger by the end of 1974. They were to loom even larger in the future.

By 1972 there were new men in office. Charles Hill (from 1963 Lord Hill of Luton), the wartime 'Radio Doctor', who figures prominently in earlier chapters of the volume as Postmaster-General and as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and in later chapters as Chairman of the Independent Television Authority, had become Chairman of the Governors in 1967. His arrival at Broadcasting House from Brompton Road, the headquarters of the Independent Television Authority, was described at the time by the acting Chairman of the Governors, Sir Robert Lusty, as possibly 'the most shattering day' the BBC had 'endured in its history'. Ironically, however, Hill found himself in more than one confrontation with the man who had appointed him, Harold Wilson, before and after Wilson ceased to be Prime Minister in 1970. Hill now stands out as one of the most effective defenders of the BBC's independence.

From 1969 Hill, who, like Reith, kept a diary, had been working with a new Director-General, Curran, the first Director-General of the BBC since Reith to publish his own thoughts about broadcasting. Completely different by temperament from Greene, Curran, who was 47 years old when he became Director-General, immediately found himself defending the image of a BBC which was not of his own making. He was still Director-General in 1974. Hill, however, had been succeeded a year earlier by Sir Michael (later Lord) Swann,

straight from Edinburgh University. Meanwhile, there had been a change in Ministerial responsibility for broadcasting. Until 1969 the Postmaster-General had been the Minister responsible, but when in that year the Post Office became a nationalized industry, responsibility passed to a new Minister of Posts and Telecommunications. In 1974 this new post was abolished, and the oversight of broadcasting was assumed by the Home Secretary.

In fuller perspective, the years from 1970 to 1974—with the jubilee standing out merely as an interlude—provide a prelude not only to the Annan Committee's Report on the future of broadcasting, but to all the subsequent history of the BBC. The Annan Committee met for the first time on 18 July 1974, and by the end of 1974, the terminal date which it had initially set for the collection of evidence, it had received what it called a 'pleasurable deluge' of opinions about broadcasting both from institutions and from individual viewers and listeners. The flow was to continue after the end of 1974 almost to the last days of the Committee's work, which ended with the presentation of the Annan Report to Parliament in March 1977. Its contents and its reception will make up an interesting chapter in any Volume VI, although there will be still more interesting chapters to follow.

When the Annan Committee first met, BBC staff numbers (23,897) had risen by nearly two-thirds since the year when this volume begins, and BBC income from licence fees (£136,939,000) had risen more than six times. (The radio only licence had been abolished in 1971, a year when the total income derived from licence fees fell.) Questions both of size and of finance had long been major questions, and were to remain deeply disturbing. The licence fee had been increased in 1965 and 1969, and was increased again in 1971 but by the time of the next modest increase in 1975 Britain had experienced the sharpest increase in prices in any one year since the Corporation was founded. Had it not been for new income from colour licences, the BBC would have been in even deeper trouble.

Still more disturbing was the change in what the Annan Committee called 'the climate of opinion', and what one of its most active members, the Labour MP Phillip Whitehead, had called in 1972 'the fracturing of an everlasting consensus arranged around the centre'. Five years before that, Oliver Whitley, Chief Assistant to the Director-General and son of a former Chairman of Governors, had put it even more tersely: 'The nation divided always has the BBC on the rack.' He made this point in drafting a report made for the Govern-

ors, which on publication was entitled *Broadcasting and the Public Mood*. Its last paragraph began: 'There are no guaranteed remedies to the discomforts of the BBC's role as a national scapegoat.'

The Committee treated the 1960s as a great divide. Before that British broadcasting, it suggested, had been able 'successfully to create, without alienating Government or the public, interesting and exciting popular network programmes from the world of reality as well as the world of fantasy—programmes on the arts and the sciences, international reportage, political controversy, social enquiry, local investigation'. By the mid-1970s however, many of its programmes, it claimed rightly, had begun to stir up 'resentment and hostility, and protests against their political and social overtones'.

The programmes of the 1960s had created the first stir, but several of the programmes which were broadcast under Curran's Director-Generalship proved just as controversial as those broadcast under that of Greene. Among them were *Yesterday's Men*, a television documentary about the impact on members of the Labour Party of the loss of office in 1970, and *A Question of Ulster*, which offended the Conservative Government just as much as *Yesterday's Men* had offended the Opposition. The issue of Northern Ireland was to affect future relations between BBC and Government more than any other issue. Whole monographs could be written about it. One interesting one by Rex Cathcart already has. The issue is necessarily dealt with only briefly here.

Whether or not people actually saw a particular television programme, by the early 1970s they were often prepared to condemn it; and this made both managing and governing the BBC a far more difficult task than it had been during the early 1950s when Jacob took over. I dealt with some of the implications of the tasks of Governors in a monograph which I wrote in 1979 at the invitation of the then Chairman of the Governors, Sir Michael Swann, a colleague before he moved to the BBC and a personal friend. It was called *Governing the BBC*. I have dedicated this volume to Michael's memory. *Governing the BBC* is now in urgent need of updating in the light of what has happened since 1979. In institutional history the past can never be ignored with impunity.

In writing Volume V I have been given immense help, as I was in writing my first four volumes, by a very large number of people inside and outside the BBC, too many of them to count or to list. I am particularly indebted, however, to John Cain and Pat Spencer,



who have been at my side throughout the whole protracted period of research and in Pat Spencer's case throughout months of writing and rewriting. She had been involved also in the same way in the preparation of Volume IV. The support of both of them has been indispensable. So too have their knowledge, their experience, and, not least, their diligence. Until 1992 the three of us constituted a small but active BBC History of Broadcasting Unit, given its ambitious name in 1979. The Unit, which sadly disappeared in 1992, not only made possible the whole enterprise of preparing a standard history of the BBC. It also carried out other important historical tasks for a Corporation that changed greatly between 1979 and 1991.

The three of us who worked together within the Unit are deeply grateful also to the library staff of the BBC, always helpful; to Jacqueline Kavanagh, who has directed the Written Archives Centre of the BBC at Caversham since 1974, and to her busy and co-operative staff; to Pam Edwards and Ray Wootten, who carried out essential work on the cataloguing of materials, some of which have still not made their way to Caversham; to Susan Hard, who has checked a bunch of awkward references; to David Lee, who has prepared the index; and to Frank Gillard, whose oral history interviews with former members of the staff of the BBC are, and will remain, an invaluable historical source. I would like also to thank the co-operative staffs of the ITC Library and the London Library; Lord Hill's daughter, Mrs Fairbairn, who provided me with private papers; the late Lady Curran and her daughter Philippa, who did the same; Graham Greene, who showed me the full manuscript of Michael Tracey's biography of his father; David Butler, who lent me fascinating materials on political broadcasting; Colin Shaw and Ian McIntyre, with whom I discussed particular episodes; Tony Hearn, who provided me with old ABS *Bulletins*; Sydney Newman, who described memorably to me his BBC experiences; and, above all, Leonard Miall, Gerry Mansell, Sir James Redmond, and Tony Bridgewater, who have read early drafts of particular chapters. Sections of the proofs have been read by Barry Supple, who also read the proofs of Volume IV 'diligently and with scrupulous detachment'.

I would like in conclusion to thank Oxford University Press— and Simon Mason in particular. It too has changed at least as much as the BBC since the first volume of this *History* appeared a generation ago in 1961.

ASA BRIGGS

Lewes, Sussex, August 1993

## 1955—And Beyond

The introduction of commercial television under the auspices of the Independent Television Authority in September 1955 did not, in the Corporation's opinion, alter in any way the BBC's obligations to the public. It has, however, had a material effect on the BBC's operations, chiefly in the form of additional costs.

*BBC Handbook, 1957*

I see no reason why we should pour out money just to be better than the BBC at something which ought, in any case, to be the BBC's prime responsibility!

CAPTAIN TOM BROWNRIGG, Associated-Rediffusion, 1958

In many ways the Corporation has shown that it is by no means so established in its ways as not to be able to learn and follow the example set by Independent Television, just as ITV has continued and developed the reputable standards set by the Corporation in the past.

NORMAN COLLINS, 1959

It is a delusion to think that the programmes transmitted by either brand of TV are significantly different in their character and composition from those in the main radio services of the BBC, to suppose, in fact, that TV is nothing but a continuous flow of vulgar and degrading popular entertainment. BBC/TV is governed by much the same rules as apply on the radio side of the corporation, and the same effect is produced by the system of control in force in ITV. Certainly [however] TV has some special sorts of rubbish of its own.

AMQ [ANTHONY (later LORD) QUINTON] in the *Oxford Magazine*, 7 March 1957





---

## 1. Competitors

The debates about whether or not to break the BBC's television monopoly had been protracted and bitter, and they were not forgotten on ITV's glittering opening night, 22 September 1955. The Chairman of the BBC's Governors, Sir Alexander Cadogan, the Director-General, Sir Ian Jacob, and the Director of Television Broadcasting, Sir George Barnes, all initially declined invitations to a celebratory white-tie Guildhall banquet given by the new Independent Television Authority; and Cadogan and Jacob changed their minds only after the Chairman had received a personal letter from Sir Kenneth (later Lord) Clark, first Chairman of the ITA and a well-known BBC broadcaster, urging them to accept.<sup>1</sup> Even then, Jacob was uneasy, considering that the banquet, complete with trumpeters, was a 'great beano' at which 'half the people' present were 'simply in there for the money . . . and were going to make a fortune out of it'.<sup>2</sup>

Clark was, of course, strictly right in terms of the constitution when he pointed out in his letter to Cadogan that while there had to be competition in day-to-day programmes between BBC and programme contractors, this in itself could not justify 'an affront to the Authority'. The ITA was a public body set up under Act of Parliament to ensure that 'commercial television' would discharge its functions with 'a due sense of responsibility'.<sup>3</sup> The distinction between ITA and ITV was to assume special importance during and after the preparation of the Pilkington Committee's Report on the future of broadcasting which appeared seven years later.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Clark had been a member of the *Brains Trust*, and until 2 Sept. 1955 was a member of the BBC's General Advisory Council. In 1969 he was to present *Civilisation*, one of the best-remembered major BBC television series. See below, pp. 612–4. For his own account of these years in his life, see the second part of his autobiography, *The Other Half: A Self-Portrait* (1977).

<sup>2</sup> \*Jacob interviewed by Frank Gillard for the BBC Oral History Project, 6 Oct. 1976. The Guildhall banquet with 500 guests was not the only 'beano'. Nine hundred guests, mainly from the world of show business and the arts, were entertained at the Mayfair Hotel, and another group, including sales staff, at ITA's new Kensington headquarters at 14 Princes Gate.

<sup>3</sup> \*K. Clark to Sir Alexander Cadogan, 15 Sept. 1955 (WAC file R78/D7R5–8).

<sup>4</sup> See below, pp. 294–5, 300–4.

As far as the constitution of the ITA was concerned, the language of the Act of Parliament of 1954 that created the new Authority was borrowed language that had related previously to the BBC. It obliged the Authority to 'inform' and to 'educate' as well as to 'entertain'.<sup>5</sup> And much was to be made of this language later, for example, by George Wedell, who served as Secretary of the ITA between 1961 and 1964. It was he who noted in 1968 that if you were to put the documents governing the conduct of the BBC and the ITA side by side, you would be 'struck forcibly by the essentially *unitary* character of the broadcasting system of the United Kingdom'. Differences, Wedell went on, were less significant than 'the common basic assumptions on which both systems were grounded'.<sup>6</sup>

This was not the view of Jacob in 1955. Nor, at least until the 1970s, after he had left the BBC, was it ever the view of his successor, (Sir) Hugh Greene, who persistently refused to use the word 'independent' to describe companies that for him could only correctly be described as 'commercial'.<sup>7</sup> He was irritated when in 1958 the collective body on which the companies were represented, the Television Programme Contractors' Association, renamed itself the Independent Television Companies Association, ITCA.<sup>8</sup> 'The root of any system of broadcasting which is financed by advertising revenue', Greene told a German audience in 1959, is 'the constant striving to reach the largest possible audience for everything.' That, indeed, was the 'frightening characteristic' of any such system, inevitable 'however much you hedge it round with television acts and other safeguards'.<sup>9</sup> 'If we [the BBC] once went in for advertising', he told his first General Liaison Meeting after being appointed Director-General, 'the more successful we were in the commercial field the more dangerous it would be . . . Our independence must be based on the rock of our licence revenue.'<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The charter in question, the fourth in the BBC's history, had been granted on 1 July 1952.

<sup>6</sup> E. G. Wedell, *Broadcasting and Public Policy* (1968), p. 51. See also P. Abrams, 'Radio and Television', in D. Thompson (ed.), *Discrimination and Culture* (1964).

<sup>7</sup> M. Tracey, *A Variety of Lives: A Biography of Sir Hugh Greene* (1983), p. 165. The companies were, of course, 'independent' of the BBC.

<sup>8</sup> At first sight it is surprising that Jacob took the chair at one of the meetings of the Association only eight days after opening night. It was a joint meeting, however, to discuss issues like the use of BBC coaxial lines, copyright in television, and labour relations. Another topic raised was 'royal occasions'.

<sup>9</sup> Greene, 'Two Threats to Broadcasting: Political and Commercial Control', Speech made to the *Wirtschaftsring*, an association of German businessmen in Bad Schwalbach, 18 April 1959, and published in translation as a supplement to *Ariel*, May 1959.

<sup>10</sup> \*WAC microfilm copy of Notes of DG's General Liaison Meeting, 30 March 1960.

Greene was not alone in this view. 'What we must scrutinize in the coming years', wrote Sir William Emrys Williams, in an article in *The Times* in 1957, 'is not the merits of competition or the advantages of variety, but rather the values [that lie] behind the two systems of television. One is based on public service, the other on selling goods.' Williams had been a pioneer of wartime educational and educative broadcasting, and was Secretary-General of the Arts Council from 1951 to 1963. His article appeared in a supplement on radio and television, timed to coincide with the opening of the National Radio Show. Its frontispiece was an aerial photograph of the 700-foot-high television mast at the Crystal Palace, placed beside Williams's article, but, as in all supplements, whatever subject they covered, selling goods was the major object. Its first advertisement was for a new Ekco 'tele-gram', a TV receiver, a radio, and a 4-speed record player, 'a whole world of entertainment in itself', for only 118 guineas.<sup>11</sup> The cheapest Ferguson 17" television receiver then cost £72. 9s., including purchase tax.<sup>12</sup>

Unlike the BBC, the ITA was not itself a programme maker; and it was the contracting companies that provided the competition which the BBC had to face during the late 1950s. Yet, even leaving on one side the regulatory powers that the ITA could exercise over the companies, what was offered to viewers in 1955 was not completely free competition. Instead, monopoly had given way to duopoly. For reasons not originally foreseen, the new companies were organized on a regional, not a national, basis, each enjoying sole rights in its region. The London franchise was split between two different companies, enjoying sole rights on weekdays or at weekends.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the various companies were competing with themselves to only a limited extent in the supply of programmes. Networking between them was soon introduced.<sup>14</sup>

All the companies were alike in the one basic respect that Greene identified. They relied on advertising for their income and for their profit, a necessary feature of their operations. There was genuine

<sup>11</sup> *The Times*, 28 Aug. 1957.

<sup>12</sup> By 1960 the price had fallen to £60. 18s., including 50% purchase tax (*Electrical and Radio Trading* price lists). The prices were recommended prices only. There was already an established television rental system, and in 1956 many hire-purchase firms turned to television rental to supplement what, because of purchase tax, was depleted sales turnover (*The Economist*, 25 Feb. 1956).

<sup>13</sup> For the origins of the arrangement, see B. Sendall, *Independent Television in Britain*, vol. 1 (1982), pp. 64 ff.

<sup>14</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 65–7.

competition, therefore, between their sales managers. Greene rightly believed that the big break with the past on 22 September came not with the first competitive programme but with the first advertisement, an advertisement for toothpaste in ITV's first 'natural break'. The toothpaste was described as 'tingling fresh', and was shown embedded in a block of ice. By 1965, Anthony Sampson, anatomist of a changing Britain—his first *Anatomy of Britain* appeared in 1962—could claim that it was 'hard to recall what Britain was like before the first television toothpaste advertisement'.<sup>15</sup>

The historical pattern of events was less neat, of course, than it seemed at first sight. Television advertising was a completely new phenomenon in Britain. (The adjective 'new' was one of its favourite labels.) Yet the word 'admass' had already been used by 1954, the year when meat rationing, the last remaining item of wartime food rationing, was abolished, and the pressure to introduce advertising into broadcasting, which had built up during the early 1950s, was changing society before broadcast advertising began.<sup>16</sup> Television sets were themselves part of the complex, along with two of the most highly advertised domestic products that were changing life in the home—the refrigerator and the washing machine.<sup>17</sup> What television advertising did was to speed up the process, increasing the already evident 'vitality and range of the advertising medium as a whole', and serving to further 'crystallise public attitudes to advertising itself'.<sup>18</sup> As for the first toothpaste advertisement, Brian Parker, who wrote it, admitted later that it was 'not a very television sort of ad. It was an adaptation of a press ad.' 'I look at it now', he was to say twenty years later, as an 'illustrated lecture'.<sup>19</sup>

There were many such links with the past during the late 1950s and even during the 'swinging sixties'. Indeed, there were as many links

<sup>15</sup> A. Sampson, *Anatomy of Britain Today* (1965), p. 671.

<sup>16</sup> For 'admass', a word coined by J. B. Priestley on a visit to the USA, see his travel book *Journey down a Rainbow* (1955), esp. p. 51. Advertising expenditure rose by 13% during the early 1950s. For the shift, see V. Bogdanor and R. Skidelsky (eds.), *Age of Affluence, 1951–1964* (1970).

<sup>17</sup> The proportion of the population using refrigerators rose from 6% to 16% between 1955 and 1960, and those using washing machines from 25% to 44%. By 1959, expenditure on television advertising had more than quadrupled, and exceeded the total revenue of all the London and national newspapers, and this itself had reached a record (Briggs, 'TV Advertising and the Social Revolution', in B. Henry (ed.), *British Television Advertising: The First Thirty Years* (1986), p. 350). Cars were part of the same complex. Petrol rationing was abolished in 1950, and the number of cars registered rose by more than 1 m. between 1950 and 1955 (see H. Perkin, *The Age of the Automobile* (1976), p. 206).

<sup>18</sup> Henry, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in D. Bernstein, 'The Television Commercial: An Essay', in *ibid.*, p. 259.

as there were breaks. There were links, too, in programmes. Some television programmes had their origins in radio programmes, while many of the favourite BBC television programmes in the competitive age of the late 1950s, like *What's My Line?*, had been launched before 1955. In 1960 they were still thought of as 'fixtures': they continued to make the headlines. One of the best-known performers, Gilbert Harding, who had first appeared on a television screen in 1948, remained a 'television personality' in 1960, praising the BBC for 'aiming at training viewers to be choosy—training us painlessly, so that we are unaware of what is going on'.<sup>20</sup>

An internal BBC publication called *The Competitor*, first produced in February 1955, before the first television advertisement appeared, was already dealing with the implications of choice. So too was Audience Research which in the early summer of 1955 produced for BBC Television's Programme Board, a body first set up in January 1951, a regular service of graphs to illustrate statistics of audience size and appreciation.<sup>21</sup> Robert Silvey, Head of Audience Research since 1936, had already pointed out to the Board facts of life that competition was to underline—for example, the fact that 'weekly series' of programmes had 'more impact' than fortnightly or monthly series and sequences of separate programmes.<sup>22</sup>

The concept of 'peak programmes' had been formulated before the concept of 'peak hours': Jacob called them 'sledge-hammers'.<sup>23</sup> In 1953, Cecil McGivern, Controller, Programmes, Television, had told Television's Programme Board that 'a really big show was needed every so often', and it was agreed in 1954 that a 'peak programme' with minority interest—the word 'highbrow' was not used—should never be put on in an evening when there was no 'one certain

<sup>20</sup> G. Harding, 'Who Cares about the Top Ten?', in K. Baily, *The Television Annual for 1960*, pp. 130–1. For Harding, see his books *Along My Line* (1956) and *Master of News* (1948). There is a biography of him written during the period, R. Storey, *Gilbert Harding* (1961). See also below, p. 170, and S. Grenfell (ed.), *Gilbert Harding by his Friends* (1961), and A. Medhurst, 'Every Wart and Pustule: Gilbert Harding and Television Stardom', in J. Corner (ed.), *Popular Television in Britain* (1991), a valuable collection of essays. For a frank account of what being a 'television personality' or 'celebrity' meant during the 1950s, see Marghanita Laski, 'I was a TV personality', *Twentieth Century*, Nov. 1959.

<sup>21</sup> \*Television Programme Board, *Minutes*, 7 April 1955. See Briggs, *Sound and Vision* (1979), p. 900. In 1955 it was decided to divide the work of the Programme Board between 'editorial' and 'administrative' sessions, with the divided meetings taking place in alternate weeks. For audience research, see R. Silvey, *Who's Listening?* (1974), particularly chs. 10 and 11: 'Television: The Last Years of Monopoly' and 'Enter ITV'.

<sup>22</sup> \*Television Programme Board, *Minutes*, 4 Nov. 1954.

<sup>23</sup> See Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 900–1.

popular show (preferably light entertainment)' to balance it.<sup>24</sup> The use of the term 'balance' was as tricky as the use of the word 'competition'. Both could mean different things. Meanwhile, the term 'peak viewing time' began to be used in the BBC's Programme Board before advertisers, guided by market research, were dazzled by its attractions as the most choice of booking times.

*The Competitor*, first edited by Richmond Postgate, Assistant Head of Secretariat and a future Controller of Educational Broadcasting, was quick to catch what could be gleaned by way of gossip concerning the build-up and plans of the new companies—including both their advertising and their peak and non-peak hour programme plans—and, just as interesting, the way that the ITA seemed to be handling them. It is crammed with often colourful information that has long been forgotten.<sup>25</sup> Thus, in June 1955 it reported that Harry Alan Towers, Programme Director of ATV, was in New York negotiating—in parallel—for the rights to televise *I Love Lucy* and the evangelist Billy Graham.<sup>26</sup>

One of the most interesting articles quoted in the *Competitor* at the beginning of 1956, by which time competition was well advanced, was written by Norman Collins, who six years earlier had resigned from the BBC to become one of its most intelligent, talented, determined, and deeply detested adversaries. He is said to have invented the phrase 'independent television'. Whereas other critics contrasted BBC and ITV programmes, Collins had been disappointed by the 'overall sameness between the two services', and regarded it as 'the one disappointing feature of ITV'. 'If ITV is to justify itself, programmes on every day of the week during 1956 had to make a viewer sit up and say not merely "This never happened before" but "this couldn't have happened before".'<sup>27</sup>

What seemed to be the homespun 'philosophy' of some of the contracting companies, whether articulated or not, was certainly

<sup>24</sup> \*Programme Board, *Minutes*, 4 June 1953, 28 Oct. 1954.

<sup>25</sup> The advertising information could be specific. Of those who could view ITV, 3% bought 'Sun Fresh' orangeade. Two months later, the figure was 14%. The figures for those who could not watch ITV increased only from 3% to 5% (\**The Competitor*, 17–24 Feb. 1956). Some of the business information made its way by a different route into a book by Clive Jenkins, *The Power Behind the Screen* (1961). *The Competitor* changed its name in March 1956 to *Commercial Television Notes*. Later it was called *Commercial Broadcasting Notes*.

<sup>26</sup> \**Competitor*, 3–9 June, 17–24 June 1955. For *I Love Lucy*, see also below, p. 21.

<sup>27</sup> *Competitor*, 23 Dec. 1955–6 Jan. 1956, quoting an article by Collins in *TV Times*. For Collins's stance after Pilkington, see below, p. 300. He was already turning his attention to a campaign for commercial radio.



completely different from that of the BBC, but, homespun or not, it was often associated with a shrewd business acumen that hitherto had been missing from the BBC. The institutional image of the BBC was as off-putting to some ITV spokesmen as their own commercial image was to spokesmen of the BBC. It was an image, too, that put off some of the BBC's 'friends'. Thus, J. B. Priestley, who had been one of the BBC's great wartime broadcasters, complained that whenever he entered a BBC television studio to perform, he always felt that the Archbishop of Canterbury or royalty were in the next room waiting to be interviewed by Richard Dimbleby.<sup>28</sup> A. J. P. Taylor, the historian, never a friend of royalty, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Richard Dimbleby, or the BBC, always felt the same way.

On 'the other side', the methods that some of the companies employed and, indeed, the objectives that their 'moguls' proclaimed could even shock people in the ITA as well as people in the BBC—or people outside both. And this was so before the companies had survived what was a shaky, and for some of them a calamitous, financial start, and before they had begun to make the huge profits that shocked many people outside and inside the BBC even more.<sup>29</sup> 'We give the public what it wants,' Roland Gillett, first Programme Controller of Associated-Rediffusion, explained near the beginning in November 1955, when he defended a decision to move a Hallé Orchestra programme from a time slot of 8.30 to 9.30 p.m. once a fortnight to a time slot of only half an hour at 10 p.m. instead.<sup>30</sup>

For his action, if not for his candour, Gillett was reproved by Sir Robert Fraser, Director-General of ITA, a committed advocate of what he called 'people's television': 'A television company must have a policy of its own and that policy must be something more than "giving the people what it wants" unless we are prepared to say that we no more respond to the social significance of television than to the social significance of toffee.'<sup>31</sup> Fraser did not add that the

<sup>28</sup> J. B. Priestley, *Margin Released* (1962), p. 223. For Richard Dimbleby and his role, see L. Miall (ed.), *Richard Dimbleby, Broadcaster* (1966), and J. Dimbleby, *Richard Dimbleby* (1975).

<sup>29</sup> Associated-Rediffusion had lost more than £2m. by the end of 1955; ATV lost nearly £3m. in its first year of trading. See Sendall, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, ch. 33, pp. 310 ff., for the attitudes of the Authority to company finance. Postmaster-Generals could be shocked too, and in 1963, following tense discussion, a levy was introduced. See *ibid.*, vol. 2, chs. 22 and 25.

<sup>30</sup> Gillett had been a leading television producer in the USA before joining AR. He soon left AR—on 27 Jan. 1956. The Hallé programmes had led to a shift of audience to the BBC. Before the programme the BBC's share of the London audience was 13%. After the start of the programme it rose to 77% (P. Black, *The Mirror in the Corner* (1972), p. 109). Black notes also, however (*ibid.*, p. 110), that when the BBC's *La Bohème* was shown in parallel with *Val Parnell's Star Time*, its audience share fell to 2%.

<sup>31</sup> Quoted in Sendall, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 139.



economic, if not the social, significance of toffee—and those who made it—was considerable in an age of television advertising.

Fraser, then 50 years old, was an Australian by birth and a graduate of the London School of Economics; before the Second World War he had been a leader writer on the *Daily Herald*. He had also been a pre-war Labour Party candidate. Rightly described by Sendall as ‘the architect of independent television’, he would have preferred a system different from that which was so quickly established. There would have been competition not only between the BBC and ITV, but also between different companies in each area of the country.<sup>32</sup>

Clark, his Chairman, was two years older than Fraser, and came from a very different social background (Winchester, Oxford, and *via* the Ashmolean Museum to the directorship of the National Gallery). Yet the two men had worked together in the war-time Ministry of Information, and it was Clark who persuaded Fraser to take up the post of Director-General, a post for which he had not applied.<sup>33</sup> Clark was particularly anxious to treat as a test case of programming responsibility the televising of the Hallé Orchestra, which had played on ITV’s opening night, but which for its regular performances had acquired a London rating of only 10 per cent.<sup>34</sup> He failed, however, to secure a government subsidy of £750,000, which would have enabled the ITA to back ‘serious programmes’ of this kind, programmes that otherwise would not, he believed, be broadcast by the companies.<sup>35</sup> Instead, he was compelled to argue that programmes would improve after the companies had got through an initial loss-making phase which put a premium on sheer survival. ‘You’ve got to get the public first. *Then* you

<sup>32</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 64–6.

<sup>33</sup> See Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 140. He worked in close confidence with Fraser, whose room was next to his own. There had been over 300 applicants for the post.

<sup>34</sup> The *Daily Mirror* had described ITV’s opening night’s programmes as ‘boring’. ‘It was BAD SHOWMANSHIP to waste so much time instead of getting on with the job in hand—the job that ITV has been brought in to do—TO ENTERTAIN’ (23 Sept. 1955).

<sup>35</sup> Sendall, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, ch. 27: ‘£750,000: the Gift Horse that Bolted’. The *Spectator*, 21 July 1956, gave an excellent account of the ‘complex and curious’ history of the attempt to secure a grant, which was possible under the terms of the 1954 Television Act, but which raised difficulties of principle both inside and outside ITV and Parliament. In Nov. 1956 the Postmaster-General, then Charles (later Lord) Hill (see below, p. 124 n.), under Treasury pressure, offered a far smaller sum, £100,000, as ‘a purely temporary device . . . for procuring the inclusion in programmes of items which in its opinion are necessary for improving the balance of the subject matter of the programmes’. The companies objected, however, to any subsidy for such a purpose, and Hill very circumspectly did not press the case. Clark, who saw the grant as analogous to an Arts Council grant, almost resigned on the issue. See *Spectator*, 10 Aug. 1956; *The Times*, 29 Nov. 1956.

can build up programmes of lasting value.<sup>36</sup> Clark remarked also that he did not object to an element of what he called 'vulgarity' in programming. It was a sign of vitality.<sup>37</sup>

Vulgarity remained, although it was never the only element in the mix, as the financial resources available to the contracting companies changed dramatically during the early years of competition. They won over their own viewing public with little difficulty, by offering viewers more hours of entertainment than the BBC was offering and far more informal modes of presentation not only of entertainment but of all types of programme, including religion. *The Economist* observed correctly in September 1956 that 'the strong card of the ITA has been the smooth and steady way its audience has grown'.<sup>38</sup> Thanks to the advertising boom, the companies moved to profitability in the second year and to lavish returns in the third year, when the average profit before tax of all the companies then broadcasting was 130 per cent.<sup>39</sup> Independent television had become a 'goldmine'.<sup>40</sup>

By then, in one of the most memorable phrases of the 1950s, Roy (later Lord) Thomson had described the award of a television franchise as 'a licence to print your own money', an even more memorable phrase than the title of what soon became a Top Ten ITV programme, *Double Your Money*, with Hughie Green, not to be confused with Hugh Greene.<sup>41</sup> Thomson, an energetic Canadian who

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Tom Driberg in the *New Statesman*, 14 Jan. 1956. Fraser defended the balance more positively in *The Times*, 23 Jan. 1956. Clark totally rejected a suggestion of ATV's Prince Littler, who had entered the world of television from theatre and music-hall management, that 'the BBC should concentrate on serious programmes and leave entertainment to the ITA'. Logical though that sounded, it was 'not what the Act meant'.

<sup>37</sup> Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 139. He stated his views clearly in his autobiography, describing how he enjoyed his years with ITA and did not enjoy his years with the Arts Council, which he chaired from 1953 to 1960.

<sup>38</sup> *The Economist*, 22 Sept. 1956.

<sup>39</sup> B. Paulu, *British Broadcasting in Transition* (1961), p. 66. The *Financial Times* and *The Economist* are the best sources for detailed comparative company figures. By July 1956, AR's losses were £2,700,000, and Associated Newspapers was to reduce its holding later in the summer. Meanwhile, ATV, which produced weekend programmes, was facing a financial crisis both in London and in Birmingham. There was reluctance then and later to disclose the full facts of company finance. By Jan. 1957, however, a detached observer, David Stone, could claim that 'the omens for commercial TV are all favourable' (*Spectator*, 25 Jan. 1957). In 1958 an original shilling share in ATV was worth £11.

<sup>40</sup> G. McLachlan, 'The Gold Mine of Commercial Television', *Twentieth Century*, Nov. 1959.

<sup>41</sup> The remark has made its way into N. Rees, *A Dictionary of Twentieth Century Quotations* (1987), p. 427, but, like many such quotations, it is difficult to date it precisely. The comment was apparently made to a neighbour at a social function in Edinburgh, and was repeated soon afterwards to a *Time* magazine interviewer. See R. Braddon, *Roy Thomson of Fleet* (1965), p. 240. Thomson obviously liked the phrase as well as the money. He used it himself as the title of the third chapter of his book *After I Was Sixty* (1975), where he tells his own story.

had first made his way in life selling radio sets, washing machines, and refrigerators before turning to newspapers, had arrived in Edinburgh in January 1954 to take over the ownership of the *Scotsman*. His Scottish television company, STV, had had difficulty at first in attracting bank support, but it was already minting money from advance sales before it began transmitting in August 1957.

Meanwhile, by contrast, another new company, Granada, which began to serve northern viewers on 3 May 1956, had proclaimed a quite different message, stating in the summer of that year that it was showing 'items of unusual or topical interest and special programmes of intellectual or cultural value'. It had opened without a banquet: 'I can assure you,' its Chairman, Sidney (later Lord) Bernstein, told reporters, 'there will be nothing boring.'<sup>42</sup> At the end of its first year it produced a high-quality hardback book, *Year One*, a series of essays that were quite deliberately not offered as 'history'. The essays were introduced by Kenneth Clark, who wrote that he had not foreseen how much Granada would develop a character 'which distinguishes it most markedly from the other programme companies and the BBC'.<sup>43</sup>

Bernstein added in 1956 that the introduction of new networking arrangements between the regional contracting companies—and they were to be further tightened and formalized later—would not condemn northern viewers to 'rigorously repetitive entertainment'.<sup>44</sup> He was clearly and rightly concerned about the effects of networking, for it was the evolving networking system, opening up access to a national audience, that was substantially to determine the weekly pattern and timing of ITV programmes. In time, it was to generate grievance, sometimes acrimoniously expressed, amongst some of the smaller contracting companies who found difficulty in getting their programmes on to the national screen.<sup>45</sup> Its immediate effect, however, was to ease the problem of filling fifty hours of transmission time each week.<sup>46</sup> It also produced unlikely juxtapositions. Granada's

<sup>42</sup> \**Commercial Television News*, 13 Jan. 1956. The Bernstein family, who held 80% of the equity, were accused by Peterborough in the *Daily Telegraph* (29 Dec. 1956) of supporting 'undisguised socialist propaganda'. It had been evident, he said, in the previous evening's programme in their *Under Fire* series. Granada announced that it would stage the programme again on 4 Jan. with the same MPs, chairman, and audience.

<sup>43</sup> *Year One* (1958), p. 3. It was dedicated to 'the men and women of the BBC who had inaugurated television in this country at Alexandra Palace in 1936'.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in \**Competitor*, 17 Aug. 1956.

<sup>45</sup> For a sharp criticism of networking, see the brochure *Prospects for Television*, published in 1958 by the well-established independent research organization Political and Economic Planning.

<sup>46</sup> *The Economist*, 6 Oct. 1956: it noted a 'shortage of talent', and talked of 'the

Ibsen play *The Enemy of the People* was 'hammocked', a verb with a vogue, between *Double Your Money* and the *Carroll Levis Show*.<sup>47</sup>

From the very beginning of competitive television, Jacob, backed by the Governors, had been in no doubt that the BBC would have to compete for audiences, and that this would require courage and determination as well as imagination. Yet, after Cadogan and Jacob had found it necessary to explain to the Board why they had attended the inaugural banquet of the ITA, one of the Governors, Lord Macdonald, National Governor for Wales, took the opportunity of restating the importance of the BBC maintaining its standards in face of competition.<sup>48</sup>

By the time the Governors next discussed competition in some detail in January 1956 they were aware of the fact that the programmes of the first contracting companies were under bitter attack in the Press. The *Spectator*, for example, denounced independent broadcasting as 'a monument to fraud and a daily reminder of the worthlessness of political promises'. The *Daily Express*, which in one of its Public Opinion Polls in February 1956 revealed a 52 : 22 preference for ITV (with twenty-six don't knows), none the less carried a leader in the previous month concluding that the only sensible thing to do was 'to write ITV off as an experiment that went wrong' and 'hand the wavelength over to the BBC before it got completely out of control'.<sup>49</sup>

The most vehement criticism came from Bernard Levin, still in his late twenties. Writing in the *Manchester Guardian* after six months of independent television output, he allotted 160 minutes of ITV programming to Category X—'neutral' (for example, weather forecasts and the national anthem), 320 minutes to Category A ('programmes which people of intelligence and taste might be able to watch for two hours a week without actually feeling ill'), 345 minutes

demoralizing atmosphere of the television studio'. See also Sendall, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, ch. 23: 'The Network Carve-Up'.

<sup>47</sup> Black, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

<sup>48</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 29 Sept. 1955. For Macdonald, see also below, pp. 671–2. There were then two influential and experienced women Governors: Professor Barbara (later Lady) Wootton, appointed in 1950, and Lady Rhys Williams, appointed in 1953. The average age of Governors in 1955 was 60.7; in 1956, 62; in 1957, 60.1; and in 1958, 60.3. BBC staff retired at 60. In 1955 Cadogan was 70, and Jacob 56.

<sup>49</sup> *Spectator*, 20 Jan. 1956; *Daily Express*, 28 Feb., 21 Jan. 1956. The Secretary of the Popular Television Committee, a body which had lobbied for commercial television, refused to agree that 'programme standards were any lower than those of the BBC', adding, however, that 'it will be much easier to judge when the service is more widely established' (*Spectator*, 27 Jan. 1956).

to Category B ('ordinary trash'), and 1,195 minutes to Category C ('not fit to be fed to the cat').<sup>50</sup> Levin had brushed with Fraser earlier in the year, and after the opening in February of commercial television in the Midlands, preceded by a substantial Press build-up, he had written that 'the old foolish hope of a really independent approach to television, a hope rekindled by the opening of the second TV station has been well and truly dashed'.<sup>51</sup>

After the first year of ITV programming, comment was more varied. The *Daily Herald*, a Labour Party newspaper, claimed that ITV had been characterized by no new stars; the *Manchester Guardian*, still edited and published in Manchester, complained that it offered no alternative; the *Sunday Dispatch*, a popular newspaper with a circulation of nearly 2½ million, stated confidently that it had won the approval both of the public and of the advertisers.<sup>52</sup> There was general agreement that the ITN news bulletins were fresher.<sup>53</sup> For the *Birmingham Post*, a conservative journal, the 'real impediment to the raising of programme standards' was not the programming policies of the companies, but the 'lack of resolution on the part of those responsible for the ultimate control of the services'. 'It may be too much to expect that another Reith will be forthcoming to serve the ITA... but it would be something for the authority to keep that example before it and live up to it.'<sup>54</sup>

## 2. People and Numbers

At that time, Reith was just as much out of fashion in BBC Television's Lime Grove, 'a rabbit warren of studios and offices connected by tortuous corridors and filthy fire escapes', as he was at ITA's

<sup>50</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 7 April 1956.

<sup>51</sup> \**Competitor*, 24 Feb.–2 March 1956. Levin was particularly scathing about rating statistics. 'What does Sir Robert think he has proven if he shows that more people watch ITA than the BBC? Does he know how many people watched the last public execution to take place in this country? No? Well neither do I, but it was an awful lot' (*Manchester Guardian*, 28 Jan. 1956). For Levin's later BBC role, see below, 355–7.

<sup>52</sup> *Daily Herald*, 22 Sept. 1956; *Manchester Guardian*, 2 Oct. 1956; *Sunday Dispatch*, 23 Sept. 1956.

<sup>53</sup> For ITN, see below, pp. 64–7.

<sup>54</sup> *Birmingham Post*, 25 Sept. 1956, commenting on the *Second Annual Report* of the ITA. The *Third Annual Report*, published in Nov. 1957, noted that during the year the contracting companies had produced plays by Ibsen, Chekhov, Shaw, Strindberg, and Graham Greene, Hugh's brother—as well as by John Osborne—and that there had been notable current affairs programmes.

elegant South Kensington headquarters, a former residence of American ambassadors.<sup>1</sup> Significant changes had taken place in the management structure of BBC Television in the first year of competition. A new Director, Gerald (later Sir Gerald) Beadle, had taken over from Sir George Barnes in July 1956—he had joined the BBC in 1923, and for the previous thirteen years had been Controller of the West Region—and Kenneth Adam, a former Director of Publicity and Controller of the Light Programme, was appointed Controller of Television Programmes in February 1957.<sup>2</sup>

The new regime—for that is how Beadle thought of it—had its problems, however. The previous Controller, Cecil McGivern, a rival for the directorship, had played a key role in monopoly television broadcasting before 1955, and the Governors, having seen both him and Beadle, considered him 'the outstanding candidate'.<sup>3</sup> In deferring to the strongly expressed views of Jacob, they asked for McGivern to be called Deputy Director (under Beadle), and not Assistant Director, and for his salary to be increased. They also pressed for 'a serious study of the organisation of the Television Service to be undertaken, especially so as to provide the means of bringing on senior staff on the programme side. They felt that there was no doubt that the service at present depended too much on one man.'<sup>4</sup>

In fact, a quite different way forward was to be discovered by the introduction of a number of young men, ambitious and determined, who found television exciting, offering the most exhilarating of all

<sup>1</sup> This accurate description of Lime Grove was given by Sue Summers in an article in the *Daily Telegraph Magazine* (26 July 1991) written for the closure of Lime Grove. On 26 Aug. 1991 BBC-2 devoted a programme to the subject of the programmes made and transmitted there. See also *Ariel*, 10 July 1991, 'The Lime Grove Story'.

<sup>2</sup> Barnes, who had been granted grace leave in April and May 1956, left the BBC in July 1956. Beadle had figured in the first number of the *Radio Times* as a named announcer before announcers became anonymous. Before moving to Bristol, he had spent six years as Controller, Northern Ireland. He was the same age as Jacob. Adam, nine years younger, had worked early in his career on the editorial staff of the *Manchester Guardian* (1930–4), and he had later moved in and out of the BBC. Between 1955 and 1957 he had been Joint General Manager of the Hulton Press. He was a candidate for the post of Editor of ITN in 1956. (See G. Cox, *See It Happen: The Making of ITN* (1983), p. 22.)

<sup>3</sup> For McGivern's important and highly creative role before 1955, see Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 205–6, 244–5, 914. He had joined the BBC in Manchester in 1936, and from 1940 to 1945 he had been a Features Producer in London. He became Television Programme Director in 1948 and Controller in 1950.

<sup>4</sup> \*Board of Governors, Note of a Discussion, 12 April 1956. A third man already inside the BBC was interviewed for the top post. Robert McCall, who since 1952 had been Assistant Director, was given a consolation prize. He was placed in charge of BBC Television during Barnes's grace leave visit to the USA and became Controller, Northern Ireland, in July 1956. See below, pp. 672, 677.



opportunities, and who were prepared to devote themselves exclusively to it. Meanwhile, McGivern, who had little administrative experience, continued to take a detailed interest in programme making for years to come. He was said at the time to have treated ITV's opening night as 'just a normal Thursday evening';<sup>5</sup> and as its pattern of programming took shape, he was highly critical of what he called its 'addiction to wobble dances, give-aways, panels and light entertainment'.<sup>6</sup> Since he could be equally critical of items in the BBC's own output, his views could never be brushed aside. 'Glued to the screen', he was television's most knowledgeable viewer.<sup>7</sup>

Beadle and Adam, invested with authority, could not ignore the question of relative size of audience. If they did not consciously compete, Jacob explained, the BBC's share would 'diminish beyond that level at which the Corporation could continue to claim that it was "the national broadcasting authority"'.<sup>8</sup> With his background in publicity, Adam had no difficulty in accepting this proposition, and Jacob must have put it to Beadle also before pressing the case for his appointment. It was a proposition that would have worried Barnes, however, had he not by then moved far away to the University College of North Staffordshire at Keele, where he was appointed Principal, the first move from a post in the BBC to such an academic position. Barnes, who had stepped into the shoes of Lord Lindsay, former Master of Balliol, maintained a correspondence with Jacob's predecessor, Haley, in the course of which they agreed that it was a mistake 'to seek success in popularity alone'. 'Mass without mind has always come a cropper'.<sup>9</sup>

One of Barnes's associates at Lime Grove, the formidable Grace Wyndham Goldie, since 1954 Assistant Head of Television Talks—with the experienced Leonard Miall as Head<sup>10</sup>—refused to put it that

<sup>5</sup> *Yorkshire Post*, 23 Sept. 1955. The comment was untrue. The BBC arranged for Prince Massimo and his film star wife Dawn Addams to appear in *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral*, normally a challenge to identify artefacts between a museum and a team of archaeologists, among them Sir Mortimer Wheeler.

<sup>6</sup> 'Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report by the Deputy Director of Television Broadcasting, 1st Jan.–31st March 1957'. McGivern was particularly scathing about *Opportunity Knocks*.

<sup>7</sup> In 1954 he had said with characteristic bluntness that he would like to take Heads of Department away from Operations meetings so that they could devote more time to programme matters ('Television Programme Board, *Minutes*, 13 Apr. 1954, quoted in Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, p. 898).

<sup>8</sup> Sir Ian Jacob, 'Television in the Public Service', *Public Administration*, Winter 1958, p. 313.

<sup>9</sup> Barnes Papers.

<sup>10</sup> Miall, born in 1914, had joined the BBC in 1939 just before the outbreak of the Second World War. He had been Chief Correspondent in Washington, and knew

way. Instead, she pointed to the dangers of the BBC 'ignoring audience figures' and paying most attention to minority interests. 'We, who were in the business' (a revealing phrase), she wrote later, 'realised bitterly that if we did so we should rapidly become a small specialised channel which would not be supported by the mass public and would not therefore be entitled to a licence fee paid by the public.'<sup>11</sup>

Beadle himself drew a distinction between the 'average audience' and audiences in the plural; and in an address to the Radio Industries Club in October 1957 he argued that while the task of the contracting companies was 'to present a programme to the public which will secure a steady predictable audience—an audience which a client can buy in advance with confidence', the BBC was under no such obligation. It did not have to sell an average audience to anyone. 'Our audiences are not steady. They are variable. Some are quite astonishingly greater than we at first expected, some the other way around . . . We earn our living by direct payments from our customers with no intermediaries whose business interests have to be served.'<sup>12</sup>

In his book *Television, a Critical Review* (1963) Beadle was to claim that if the BBC had demonstrated its 'full competitive strength' during the first two years of competition, critical years, and had concentrated exclusively on providing entertainment between 7 p.m. and 10.30 p.m.—he did not use the phrase 'peak hours'—it could have put ITV out of business. The victory would have been Pyrrhic, however, since the employment of 'the one big strategic weapon, the hydrogen bomb of television competition' (a phrase used also by Grace Wyndham Goldie<sup>13</sup>), would have destroyed the BBC itself. To have lowered 'the proportion of intelligent programmes below the level of one's competitor' would have opened up a 'vast wasteland' from which it would have been impossible thereafter to recover.<sup>14</sup>

American television at first hand. He became Head of Talks, Television, in 1954. Goldie, fourteen years older than Miall, had been a pre-war television critic and a BBC Talks Producer in Sound (1944) before moving to Television in 1948. She became Assistant Head of Talks, Television, in 1954. She retired from the BBC in 1965.

<sup>11</sup> G. Wyndham Goldie, *Facing the Nation* (1977), p. 111.

<sup>12</sup> \*Speech to RIC, 29 Oct. 1957 (WAC file T23/72/2). Beadle chose the twenty-first anniversary of BBC television to make this statement.

<sup>13</sup> The phrase was used by Goldie in her section on television in *Made for Millions* (Contact Publications, 1947). She referred back to it in her article 'The Slow Assassination of Public Service Broadcasting', *Contemporary Review*, Sept. 1980.

<sup>14</sup> G. Beadle, *Television, a Critical Review* (1963), pp. 73–7. The phrase 'vast wasteland' was another of the most memorable phrases of the period. It was first used in the USA



There was, however, a different and more practical issue for the BBC to consider in the light of competition: how to deal with 'the impression created by extensive advertising of independent television viewing figures' that artists would do better if they were to leave the BBC. They might be disturbed and possibly 'lured away'—'desert' was the word sometimes used—from the BBC by ITV 'propaganda' that suggested that ITV programmes had far larger audiences than BBC.<sup>15</sup> In his last report to the Board in July 1956, Barnes had estimated that during a six-month period a quarter of his staff had already moved over to 'the competitor'—500 out of 2,000. Only the development of BBC training schemes, he added, had enabled BBC television to survive the loss.<sup>16</sup>

Technical staff were prominent among the men who moved.<sup>17</sup> Some of them were to move back. In retrospect, this was seen as giving people working in television a new sense of freedom. At the time, however, it increased wages and salaries, and—at a far greater rate—both the fees to television performers and the sums paid to outside bodies for television rights. As a result, programme costs per hour, set out in the BBC's annual *Handbooks*, more than doubled between 1954–5 and 1957–8, and were to reach a new peak in 1959–60.<sup>18</sup>

The word 'competition' was mentioned only twice in the *Handbook* for 1957, and not at all in the *Handbook* for 1958. One of the 1957 references has been quoted at the beginning of this chapter. The other, more specific, is also revealing: 'It is not the Corporation's wish to seek exclusive coverage rights in any sporting events,' we read in the brief account of sport. 'However, it was sometimes necessary to

by Newton N. Minow, in an address to the National Association of Broadcasters on 9 May 1961. See below, p. 325.

<sup>15</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 14 Feb. 1957.

<sup>16</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report by the Director of Television Broadcasting, 1 April–30 June 1956'. At a meeting of Heads of Department, held in 1953, the majority of producers forecast that on financial grounds alone 'practically every producer who was offered higher wages by commercial television would be forced to leave the BBC'. The greater creative freedom and higher standards of the BBC would not be enough, it was believed, to hold them. The same would be true of designers, secretaries, and writers (\*Television Programme Board, *Minutes*, 18 June 1953). See Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, p. 858.

<sup>17</sup> Harry Watt, working for Granada films, explained why (*Daily Express*, 8 March 1955): 'I have to get hold of men who are with the BBC. They had the monopoly of technicians.' See also \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 7 March 1955: 'In all categories, the BBC was the main, and sometimes the sole source, of good staff . . . To cripple the television programmes by denuding the BBC of its best staff would be a great assistance in ensuring the success of commercial television.'

<sup>18</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1955, p. 168; 1958, p. 222; 1959, p. 216; 1960, p. 213.

do so in face of competition.<sup>19</sup> Jacob had been particularly concerned that ITV might 'corner sport', 'one of the great attractions we were developing', and he took special pains to ensure that Peter Dimmock, 'the man who ran all our sporting activities and did our negotiations with the sporting promoters', stayed with the BBC on 'special arrangements'.<sup>20</sup> This was only one of a number of 'special arrangements' approved of by Jacob, but it was the most shrewd of them.<sup>21</sup>

In a revealing report to the Governors in March 1957, McGivern, presenting it in Beadle's absence in the United States, described ITV competition as 'the sternest fact of life'. McGivern did not like it. In what he called 'this so-called competitive situation', 'the spokesmen of ITA [sic]' seemed to him 'not content simply to praise the output, aims and plans of ITA, which would be legitimate'. They also were determined to criticize the BBC, 'giving the impression' that the BBC's very existence was an irritation and that they would be happy 'only if the BBC ceased to exist'.<sup>22</sup> He pointed to an address given by Collins to the Radio Industries Club on 26 March: he had forecast the BBC 'grinding its way to a halt' by the time the Charter and Licence expired in 1962.<sup>23</sup>

The effects of competition on the BBC's staff, McGivern went on, were difficult to assess, but some effects were beyond doubt 'not welcome'. Overall, morale was still high, but there were 'moments of wonder if not of worry'. There was evidence also that some members

<sup>19</sup> *BBC Handbook, 1957*, pp. 112–13, 122.

<sup>20</sup> 'Jacob interviewed by Gillard, 6 Oct. 1976. For sport, see below, pp. 216–20.

<sup>21</sup> Another 'special arrangement' was made for A. Berkeley Smith, Dimmock's right-hand man, although he was to join Southern Television in 1958 ('S. G. Williams, Assistant Controller, Staff Administration, to Leslie Page, Establishment Officer, Television, 'Retention of Staff in the Face of Competition', 4 May 1955; Staff Administration File E36-6-4 Part 1). In relation to newer BBC recruits Williams pointed out ('Williams to C. Pennethorne Hughes, Head of Staff Training, 'Television Training', 29 April 1955 (same file)) that the approval of J. H. Arkell, Controller, Staff Administration, was necessary 'before intimations or offers of special treatment of any kind are made'. The Director-General himself explained the policy to Regional Controllers on 5 May 1955. See also 'Television Management Meeting, *Minutes*, 14 July 1955. This meeting was held in the BBC's Television Centre, then in the process of being built (see below, p. 31).

<sup>22</sup> 'Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report by the Deputy Director of Television, 1 Jan–31 March 1957'.

<sup>23</sup> One senior member of the RIC, McGivern added, had at that point walked out. For a longer report on the speech, see a paper, 'Independent Broadcasting Services Ltd', quoted in '*Commercial Television Notes*, 29 March 1957. One main point in the speech was the need for broadcasters to press the case for 'independent radio' and not to leave it to businessmen. Any such change would depend on Parliamentary approval, as Collins himself recognized. The Board of Governors minuted that the speech was 'scurrilous'. There was likely to be great pressure from the advertising world for commercial sound broadcasting, and it would be wise to find out privately what the views of Ministers and Opposition leaders were ('*Minutes*, 28 March 1957).

of the BBC's senior staff, those represented on the Television Programme Board, were beginning to believe that 'serious and intelligent programmes' would be moved to the end of the evening, 'irrespective of the fact that from 10.00 p.m. audiences begin to fall off sharply'. Meanwhile, other 'very senior officials' would include hardly any minority subjects if they were given the choice. For their part, producers were 'demanding bigger programme allocations, more facilities, etc.'<sup>24</sup> Against this comment, Jacob is recorded as saying: 'No amount of money will ever suffice to satisfy demand.'

McGivern also told the Board—and this was what must have registered with them most—that in 'a fluctuating situation' there had been one week when ITV's audience share in those parts of the country where viewers had a choice had been BBC 29, ITV 71. The ratio got worse as the year went by, although Beadle did not mention statistics in his Report to the Governors on 18 July, concentrating instead on 'programmes of distinction' and on his visit to the United States. He had discovered there that 'the hostility' between BBC and ITV during the first eighteen months of their joint existence did not 'impress' Americans. 'To them British Television is BBC and ITA [sic] and when we publicly score points off each other the Americans feel there must be something wrong.'<sup>25</sup>

The low point as far as the BBC's audience share was concerned—and it was mentioned by Beadle in his report at the end of the year—came in the third quarter of 1957, when ITV, on the BBC's own calculations, achieved a 72 per cent share of the viewing public wherever there was choice. By then, too, after an early transmitter crisis had been overcome, the geographical spread of ITV viewing had increased to include the Midlands in January 1956, Lancashire in May 1956, Yorkshire in November 1956, and Scotland in August 1957.<sup>26</sup> 'Who is not now bored with competitive crowing over audience figures?' asked Fraser in November 1957. 'But what do you do? What is the answer to myth and fable except fact and figure?'<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> \*Report by the Deputy Director of Television, 1 Jan.–31 March 1957'.

<sup>25</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report by the Director of Television, 1 April–30 June 1957'. In a speech in Oct. 1957 Beadle reported that on his visit to the USA many Americans had told him that they wished they had 'something like the BBC', 'at least one channel devoted to the interests of the American people as human beings and not merely as buyers of deodorants and canned beer' (\*Speech to RIC, 29 Oct. 1957). See also \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Commercial Television—The First Year', 20 Sept. 1956. For a critical conspectus of American broadcasting at this time see S. W. Head, *Broadcasting in America* (1956).

<sup>26</sup> Sendall, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 92–4.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in *New Statesman*, 'Rateable Values', 23 Nov. 1957.

The BBC's calculations of audience size, based on individual interviews in which people were asked what they had seen 'yesterday', were differently constructed from those of the ITV's TAM (Television Audience Measurement), which were based on households, not on individuals, and on meter readings, not on interviews. TAM had started measuring on ITV's opening night, when it noted that 105,000 homes had seen the first television advertisement, and had become ITV's official ratings contractor in April 1956; and it gave a still higher figure of 80 per cent for the ITV share later in 1957.<sup>28</sup>

By adapting itself to the need to survey audiences area by area in order to compare its findings with TAM and Nielsen figures that related to the programmes of the regional companies, BBC Audience Research kept in pace during the first period of competition. Indeed, during this period the BBC survey's audience figures were bought by the ITA, the contractors, and some of the advertisers. The buying stopped when ITV spread nationwide, but the BBC retained a long-term advantage in being able to judge audience reaction as well as audience size.

Audience Research, with a full-time professional staff of twenty-five, was located in the old Langham Hotel opposite Broadcasting House in 'rooms which Ouida once filled with romantic parties and tropical flowers'.<sup>29</sup> The romance had not totally disappeared, but the last occasion during the 1950s when the BBC had a programme to head the Top Ten among viewers able to switch on both channels was in October 1955 when *Ask Pickles*, heir to a radio show, beat ITV's *I Love Lucy*, which was to have as prosperous a British future as it already had an American past. By February 1956 *Ask Pickles* was the only BBC programme challenging top ITV ratings.

It was in the light of statistics, however they were measured, that BBC programming policies changed—through a deliberate and well-planned counter-attack on the part of the BBC. Jacob, in particular,

<sup>28</sup> Sendall, *op. cit.*, vol. 1 pp. 133 ff. TAM's Chairman, Bedford Attwood, writing after ten years of TAM, described his system as 'unequaled'. There is also a Telepulse Report on the London ITV area covering the period 15–22 Jan. 1956. TAM's main rival in 1955 was the American-controlled organization Nielsen, which had invented the audimeter and which was to be used by Granada, Southern Television, and others. In 1968 AGB took over from TAM. There was no joint BBC/ITV measurement until 1981. For the history see Silvey, *op. cit.*, and Henry, *op. cit.*, pp. 335 ff.

<sup>29</sup> F. Littman, 'The Service is Twenty-One', *Ariel*, Dec. 1960. The American historian Burton Paulu described the organization in 1961 as 'probably the largest department of its type maintained by any broadcasting organisation in the world'. It maintained a corps of 1,200 part-time field interviewers, supported by 6,000 unpaid volunteers (*British Broadcasting in Transition*, p. 170).

saw the figures as 'one of the stern facts of the competitive situation which confronts the Corporation', and sought for at least a 40/45 per cent BBC share. He knew that the BBC had a wider transmitter coverage than ITV and enjoyed a lead both in sports television and in outside broadcasts. *Grandstand* was to consolidate this in 1958.<sup>30</sup> New programmes designed to appeal to a young audience were being introduced, if not on his initiative, like *Six-Five Special* in 1957.<sup>31</sup> None the less, Jacob insisted, as Beadle was doing and as the Governors did in their annual report to Parliament in 1957, that success in a battle for audience ratings should not be 'the sole aim' of the BBC.

Within the limits of a single service, a full and fair provision must be made for the exploitation of what is best and most suited to the medium without sole regard to size of audience. A true balance must be kept. The service must not be planned to an inflexible fixed pattern, week by week, with big-scale 'give-away' and other types of programmes of a kind which represents the line of least resistance for the great majority of those who turn to television for distraction.<sup>32</sup>

The word 'distraction' was pejorative. Television in the considered view of the BBC should not be 'trivialized'. In an address to the Director-General's General Liaison Meeting in October 1957 Jacob put similar points somewhat differently. 'Competition was a serious factor. We all wanted our programmes to be at once the best and the most popular, a combination that could only sometimes be achieved.' Future television, he maintained, would have to widen its range if it were 'to benefit this country'. This had always been BBC policy in Sound and Television. There also had to be a continuing insistence on quality. 'The more we could widen the gap in the minds of thinking people between the BBC's Television Service and our rivals the better. On this our future would depend.'<sup>33</sup>

In the Governors' Report for 1957 it is not the word 'distraction' that stands out in retrospect, but the phrase 'within the limits of a single service'. As the Report went on to explain, the BBC was actively developing and publicizing its case for a second television channel, a case that it had first put forward before the ITA came into existence.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> See below, pp. 216–20.

<sup>31</sup> See below, pp. 198–206.

<sup>32</sup> Cmnd. 267 (1957), *Annual Report and Accounts of the British Broadcasting Corporation, 1956–57*, p. 8.

<sup>33</sup> *Ariel*, Nov. 1957.

<sup>34</sup> Cmnd. 9533 (1955), *The British Broadcasting Corporation Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1954–55*, pp. 7–9; Cmnd. 9803 (1956), *ibid.*, 1955–56, pp. 8–9. See also Briggs,

Now, as earlier, it was seeking to manage its own approach to competition. Above all else, it insisted, internal competition would be planned in such a way that it would offer viewers 'true alternatives'.<sup>35</sup> This was the only point made about competition in the *Handbook* for 1958, although even then the word was not used. 'All who are concerned to see an imaginative and intelligent development of this medium must look forward to the time when two alternative programme services, centrally planned, can be offered to the public for their choice.'<sup>36</sup> For the time being, however, as in the past, the Government firmly ruled out this well-canvassed solution. The Postmaster-General, Charles Hill, told Parliament in February 1956 that in 'the light of the general economic situation' any consideration of a third television channel had to be deferred.<sup>37</sup> A year later, he indicated that there would be no second programme for either the BBC or the ITA until the ITA's coverage equalled that of the BBC, and that only then would there be a reconsideration of the whole situation.<sup>38</sup>

The range, balance, and quality of television programmes provided during the first years of competition from 1955 to 1960—and the audiences that chose to watch them—provide the topic of the third chapter in this volume. Yet competition was not the only underlying theme in the history of television during these early years of coexistence after 1955. Another was the impact of television of all kinds, BBC or ITV, 'serious' or 'trivial', on people, particularly children and young people, an impact that concerned both parents and teachers.

The subject lent itself to rhetorical generalization on the part of very different commentators, with the dangers of television being dwelt upon just as luridly by theatrical managers and brewers as they were by archbishops. And this was at a time when families of almost every income group were rushing to buy or to hire television sets in bigger numbers than had been predicted.<sup>39</sup> The new invention could

*Sound and Vision*, pp. 813–4. The case for a second channel had not been put to the Beveridge Committee, but it was always prominent in Jacob's mind. A future critic of the BBC, Ian (later Lord) Orr-Ewing, had raised the matter with him in April 1953.

<sup>35</sup> Jacob, 'Television in the Public Service', *Public Administration*, vol. 36 (1958).

<sup>36</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1958, p. 140.

<sup>37</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 549, written answer, col. 46, 22 Feb. 1956; \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 1 March 1956.

<sup>38</sup> Address to Television Critics, quoted in \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report by the Deputy Director of Television Broadcasting, 1 Jan.–31 March 1957'. See also \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 19 Dec. 1957, when Jacob reported that the Post Office was recommending to the Government that the matter should be deferred for two years.

<sup>39</sup> Between 1954 and 1960 monthly rental instalments increased more than twenty times.



not simply be shrugged off, therefore, as 'a vulgar or ephemeral craze'.<sup>40</sup> When the Vicar of Bognor Regis publicly blessed a television and radio shop on the day of its opening, crowds are said to have stood around bareheaded and joined in the prayers.<sup>41</sup>

Another very different theme in these early days of television was the increasing stress on 'professionalism', a word that became fashionable among broadcasters only during the 1950s, when they began to relate it both to their practical skills and to their shared group values. 'I am leaving you in the hands of the best professional in the business', Barnes is said to have remarked of McGivern when he left the BBC.<sup>42</sup> Significantly, 'professionalism' was a word used in both BBC and ITV circles; and, equally significantly, it was used in relation both to news broadcasting and to light entertainment. It was also applied to both producers and performers. 'Professionalism' could never, however, be taken for granted.<sup>43</sup> 'In spite of the great and continuing improvement in the professionalism and authority of light entertainment producers', wrote Ronald Waldman, Head of Light Entertainment (Television) in 1955, 'there is still the occasional violent lapse in quality.'<sup>44</sup>

The sense of 'professionalism' was undoubtedly enhanced as staff moved from BBC to ITV and later from ITV to BBC; and McGivern, whose BBC background made him conceive of the BBC's 'mission' in terms of 'public service', described Granada with professional 'respect' when he listed for the BBC's Governors what he called 'programmes of distinction' being produced in Britain. 'Granada TV and its fellow northern ITA company ABC' had been producing a number of 'interesting and intelligent programmes'. Yet McGivern somewhat qualified this tribute by underlining one word—the word 'impression'—in the next sentence of his report. 'Publicity . . . has emphasized and spot-lit them [the programmes] and the *impression* on the public that ITA [sic] is becoming just the same as the BBC must be slowly but steadily gaining ground on the general public as

<sup>40</sup> *New Statesman*, 9 June 1956.

<sup>41</sup> J. Montgomery, *The Fifties* (1961), p. 127.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in Black, op. cit., p. 145.

<sup>43</sup> Professionalism was to be a major theme of T. Burns, *The BBC: Public Institution, Private World* (1977), which deals with the early 1960s. (See below, pp. 380–1). Ch. 2 is called 'From Public Service to Professionalism'. One of Burns's critics was Anthony Howard. 'The answer [is not] to return the BBC to the rule of the saints,' he wrote in a review. 'I'd rather be in the hands of the professionals' ('Inside the Goldfish Bowl', *New Statesman*, 2 Sept. 1977).

<sup>44</sup> \*R. Waldman to C. McGivern, Controller, Programmes, Television, 'April–June Quarter 1955: Notes on Light Entertainment Dept. Programmes', undated (T16/91/2).

we are informed it has done in the North.<sup>45</sup> Ironically, McGivern, who left the BBC in 1961, was to end his days, sad days of decline, working for Granada.<sup>46</sup>

'Professionals' were interested in the qualities of their own programmes and in those programmes of the 'competitor' that they could compare or contrast with their own. Critics who were not involved in the broadcasting process—and most critics at that time knew little and cared little about just how television programmes were made—talked in more general terms of 'quality' and of the social impact of television. 'Communications research', particularly university-based research, developed slowly in Britain, even after 'market research' had become highly sophisticated.<sup>47</sup> Not surprisingly, the research started not with adults but with children, the most vulnerable of all groups to television; Hilde Himmelweit's influential *Television and the Child* appeared late in 1958.<sup>48</sup> Not surprisingly either, the BBC and the ITA were to co-operate, not compete, in this research.

In 1959 their collaboration was evident in the setting up of a joint committee, financed by the Nuffield Foundation and chaired by May O'Connor, to consider the implication for each of them of the Himmelweit study. While both the BBC and the ITA found the Report of the Committee 'thoughtful' and 'stimulating', neither of them accepted a key proposal made by the Committee that new

<sup>45</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report by the Director of Television Programmes, 1 April–30 June 1957' (section on programmes by McGivern).

<sup>46</sup> 'Cecil was dead when we bought him', Bernstein is reputed to have said. McGivern died after a tragic accident in 1963. See Black, *op. cit.*, pp. 145–6.

<sup>47</sup> There are only brief historical references to the early history of communications research in Britain in E. Katz, *Social Research on Broadcasting: Proposals for Further Development* (1977). A full study would examine the pioneering role of William Belson, whose book *The Impact of Television* (1967) discusses BBC research during this period, and of Mark Abrams, who from 1946 to 1970 was Managing Director, then Chairman, of Research Services Ltd. Katz was right, however, to point out that while in the USA 'academics and broadcasters tend to belong to different social networks', 'by contrast, British researchers—even those with commitments to radical perspectives—feel much closer to broadcasting' (p. 36). As the years went by, Abrams was interested less in the reactions of children than in those of the old. See his book *Beyond Three Score Years and Ten* (1979), published by Age Concern. See also his *Education and Elderly People* (1983). These should be compared with his early paper *The Teenage Consumer* (1959), published by the London Press Exchange.

<sup>48</sup> Dr. Himmelweit's research was supported by the Nuffield Foundation, which had taken up the subject in Dec. 1953 ('Silvey to Wellington, 'Nuffield Foundation Enquiry', 15 Dec. 1953 (T16/303)). Before the coming of ITV, the BBC reported that among the 5 to 7 age-group 85% of children in families with television sets watched daily. For teachers' and parents' protests about children's programmes, a reply by Fraser, and replies to Fraser, see *The Times*, 27 Nov., 7, 11 Dec. 1957. Violence was a main theme. See, e.g., a headline in the *Birmingham Post*, 25 Feb. 1958: 'Noise, Guns and Blood on TV: Major "Astonished" to hear it was Children's Hour'.



specialist machinery should be set up; it would, they both said, be 'neither practicable nor desirable'. Moreover, while agreeing that the period from 6 to 9 p.m. was 'family viewing time', they both stressed that the 'needs of children' could not 'be allowed to determine the nature of all television output up to 9 p.m. Parental responsibility was essential.<sup>49</sup> The ITA had had a Children's Advisory Committee imposed on it by statute (after the passing of an amendment to the original bill of 1954), and in March 1960 the BBC issued a television code of practice dealing with children's programmes.<sup>50</sup>

Far more surprising than this outcome was the fact that nearly three years earlier, in December 1956, the BBC's Governors had been thoroughly uncooperative when the ITA's Children's Advisory Committee had considered proposals by Paul Adorian of Associated-Rediffusion to launch a group of ITV broadcasts to schools. 'Their object in starting these broadcasts', a Governors' Minute reads, 'was clearly to take advantage of the outlet provided by the equipment of 200 schools to receive the BBC's school broadcasts.'<sup>51</sup> The Vice-Chairman of the Governors, Sir Philip Morris, Vice-Chancellor of Bristol University, even went so far as to say that 'sooner or later' there would be strong reaction against the ITV plans 'from the education authorities'.<sup>52</sup> Regular BBC television broadcasts to schools had not then started, although there had been limited experiments as early as 1952, and AR seemed to be beating the pistol.

The Governor who raised the question, Mrs. Thelma Cazalet-Keir, had joined the Board in 1956, and she continued to ask awkward questions about possible co-operation between the BBC and the ITA. The mood remained unfavourable to co-operation, however, even in religious broadcasting which, BBC or ITV, was supervised by one body, the Central Religious Advisory Committee, founded in 1926. Under the spur of genuine competition between different contracting companies, there were new initiatives in religious broadcasting, including ATV's *About Religion*, the first regular weekly religious television programme to be produced in Britain.<sup>53</sup> Sendall is right to

<sup>49</sup> Foreword to the report *Television and the Child*, 28 June 1960 (R34/1156). Dr. Himmelweit and Silvey were among the witnesses to the Committee.

<sup>50</sup> Sendall, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 44–5.

<sup>51</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 31 Jan. 1957.

<sup>52</sup> School broadcasting, the pride of the BBC, had been planned since 1929 through a Central Council for School Broadcasting, which in 1947 had become the School Broadcasting Council. (See below, p. 182.)

<sup>53</sup> The first programme on 8 Jan. 1956 was a discussion on 'aspects of religion in relation to everyday life, and especially to the colour question'.

conclude that 'when it came to the point, the majestic and in some respects Reithian Central Religious Advisory Committee took a puckish delight in treating Independent Television as of equal standing and importance with the BBC'.<sup>54</sup>

In April 1959 the Chairman of AR, John Spencer Wills, raised with Jacob the possibility of 'collaboration between the BBC and the main television companies with a view to avoiding programme clashes and the provision in this way of better alternatives for the public', and the Board of Governors, after discussion, asked Jacob to produce a paper on the subject.<sup>55</sup> The result was a memorandum, accepted by the Governors, which set out the BBC's considered attitudes. It is historically important in that it preceded any public enquiry into the future of broadcasting.

There was no 'legal bar under the Charter or the Licence' to such collaboration, Jacob argued, and Wills had been right to direct attention to clashes. In practice, however, it was the companies that would be likely to be prevented by 'economic pressure' from allowing themselves to be accommodating. 'Their livelihood would be involved.' 'Would it not be the BBC which, more often than not, [would be] expected to be accommodating?' Furthermore, any co-operation would be ineffective without machinery for joint planning, and such machinery would not be likely to work. The companies were supervised by a 'higher authority'; the BBC was in the hands of the Board of Governors. Both the Board of Management and the Board of Governors concurred with him.

The only example of possible co-operation, Jacob concluded, was the televising of world events in sport, like the Olympic Games or the World Cup, where it was absurd 'that individual broadcasts should be offered simultaneously by BBC and ITV'. That possibility of co-operation should be pursued.<sup>56</sup> In his note there was no reference to money or to differences in outlook that were to be sharpened in the lead-up period to public enquiry into the future of broadcasting. It is memorable, however, that an agreement had been reached in 1956 that neither BBC nor ITA would seek exclusive rights in the coverage of six national sporting events: the Test Matches, the

<sup>54</sup> Sendall, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 104. For the origins and development of CRAC, which began in 1923 as the Sunday Committee, see K. Wolfe, *The Churches and the British Broadcasting Corporation, 1922-1956* (1984), pp. 5-6, p. 18.

<sup>55</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 2 April 1959.

<sup>56</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Relations with Independent Television: Note by the Director-General', 9 April 1959; *Minutes*, 16 April 1959.

FA Cup Final, the Boat Race, Wimbledon, the Derby, and the Grand National.<sup>57</sup>

Differences between the approach of BBC and ITV to competition were sharpened, as they had been in 1953 and 1954, whenever British and American television were compared with each other. Despite the essential 'Britishness' of the ITA, commercial television continued in many minds to be identified with 'Americanization'. 'You're about twenty years behind us now,' Frederick Wakeman, author of *The Hucksters*, told a BBC interviewer, 'but you know with these TV cameras twenty years can be traversed in a single year.'<sup>58</sup> When the apocalyptic question was asked, as it often was—'Where will it all end?'—it already seemed possible before the first satellite went into orbit that 'one obvious development, perhaps as pregnant with good or evil as the original invention itself—would be trans-atlantic TV'.<sup>59</sup> And there was little that seemed British about that.

### 3. The Remaining Monopoly

Television and the technological thrust that propelled it, including the much discussed quest for colour television, encouraged more prophecy than analysis.<sup>1</sup> Sound broadcasting, well established as it was, encouraged neither. Yet, on the first night of commercial television, there had been more listeners than viewers. No fewer than 9,400,000 of them had heard of Grace Archer's death in that day's episode of a popular radio serial that was to retain a substantial audience when the audience for many other popular radio programmes had dwindled.<sup>2</sup> It was certainly Grace's death, therefore, not the inaugural speeches at the ITA's gala opening in the Guildhall or the BBC's television programmes that night, which stole the

<sup>57</sup> By the terms of the 1954 Act, the Postmaster-General was empowered to make regulations in relation to 'sporting or other events of national interest with a view to preventing the making of exclusive arrangements for the broadcasting of them to a restricted audience'. Hill preferred, however, to encourage voluntary agreement, and this was announced in Feb. 1956 (*Hansard*, vol. 548, col. 269, written answer, 15 Feb. 1956).

<sup>58</sup> Quoted in H. Hopkins, *The New Look: A Social History of the Forties and Fifties in Britain* (1963), p. 399.

<sup>59</sup> *New Statesman*, 9 June 1956.

<sup>1</sup> See below, pp. 848–55.

<sup>2</sup> According to BBC Audience Research barometers, other evening audiences were around 5½ m. The highest BBC TV audience that evening was 7m. for the play *The Hole in the Wall*.

newspaper headlines on 23 September 1955. 'Radio Fans wept as Grace Archer died', the *Daily Mirror* reported. More profoundly, the *News Chronicle*, which itself was soon to disappear, headed its report 'Why did Grace have to die?'<sup>3</sup> *The Times* included a short note, not on its obituary page. A new BBC television programme, *Highlight*, first broadcast on that day, included an interview with the two script-writers who had 'killed Grace'. Their announcer introduced them with the words 'Let us consider a slight case of murder'.<sup>4</sup>

The relative emphasis in 1955 on sound broadcasting and television in the Press and other 'media', as they were somewhat slowly coming to be called, was not surprising given the total number and distribution of listeners and viewers. In 1955 there were more than twice as many licences for sound reception only as there were combined radio and television licences; and while by 1956 the number of combined radio and television licence-holders had increased by more than a million from 4,503,766 to 5,739,593, the number of licence-holders paying to receive sound only remained as high as 8,459,213.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, in 1955-6 it had fallen less sharply than the total for combined licences had increased.<sup>6</sup> Almost the same number of new radio sets was being sold during the last months of 1955 as television sets, and the trend continued.<sup>7</sup>

In retrospect, therefore, changes in attitudes preceded changes accomplished, which soon began to be thought of as 'social trends', many of which could be traced statistically.<sup>8</sup> Thus, inside Broad-

<sup>3</sup> *Daily Mirror*, *News Chronicle*, 23 Sept. 1955. A full account of the episode is given in Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 922-5. *The Archers*, devised by Godfrey Baseley, had first been broadcast as a Regional offering from Birmingham in 1950 (*ibid.*, p. 108), but it did not become known nationally until 1951, when it was transferred to the Light Programme. In 1967 it was transferred from the Light Programme to the Home Service (see below, p. 578). In 1955 BBC television had shown *The Donald Duck Story* while ITV was broadcasting the Guildhall speeches.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in C. Michelmore and J. Metcalfe, *Two-Way Story* (1986), p. 129. See also below, p. 222, for the sequel.

<sup>5</sup> There were credit restrictions in 1956 which affected sales and to a larger extent rental agreements. The hire-purchase deposit had been raised from 33⅓% to 50% in Feb. 1956 (*The Economist*, 25 Feb., 25 Aug. 1956).

<sup>6</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1957, p. 198. The figures were set out as at 31 March. The geographical breakdown varied substantially (*ibid.*, p. 199). In the London region, with a total estimated population of over 15m., there were already 1,874,958 combined licences, as against 2,541,863 licences for sound alone. In Scotland, with a population of 5m. there were only 348,152 combined licences, as against 945,293 licences for sound alone. The comparable figures for Northern Ireland were 42,206 and 205,451.

<sup>7</sup> *The Economist*, 14 Jan. 1956.

<sup>8</sup> *Social Trends* was to be the title of an official publication which first appeared in 1970. There was only one reference to television in it, however, a table on television viewing which covered the years 1967-70. See also A. H. Halsey, *Trends in British Society since 1900* (1972).

casting House, which remained the great citadel of sound—and of the BBC's administration—there was an increasing recognition by 1957, the twenty-first anniversary of BBC Television, that television had already 'developed so successfully', as the BBC's *Annual Report* for 1956–7 put it, 'that we must soon begin to look upon it as playing the major part in the general task of broadcasting for the home audience'.<sup>9</sup>

BBC television's coverage in 1956–7 was already over 96 per cent of all 15 million homes, while ITV's was significantly increasing (from 1 million homes in 1956 to 5¼ million in 1958 and 9¾ million in 1960).<sup>10</sup> And while there were still around 17½ million listeners who depended exclusively on sound programmes, the BBC estimated that in 1962, at the end of the span of its current Charter, there would be as few as 3 million 'sound only' listeners as compared with 'possibly twelve million combined licences'.<sup>11</sup> The estimate proved remarkably accurate, although the 12 million figure had not quite been reached in time.

The turning point came in the years 1957–9. In March 1957 the number of joint radio and television licences was still fewer than the number of licences for radio only, but in March 1958 this was no longer true. Just as revealing was the crucial change in the allotment of BBC resources. In 1955–6 BBC spending on radio had amounted to £10,930,584 as against expenditure on television of only £7,033,044; but in 1958–9 the balance tilted in the opposite direction for the first time—£11,441,818 as against £13,988,812. As far as 'the competitor' was concerned, this was a year when television advertising rose by more than 50 per cent.<sup>12</sup> And this was one year after Sir Edward Benthall, accountant by profession, had told his fellow BBC Governors that the revenue from television advertising now exceeded the income available to the BBC television service and could be expected to rise substantially during the next few years.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Cmnd. 267 (1957), p. 5. In a supplement on the twenty-first anniversary in *Ariel* (Nov. 1957) George Campey, the BBC's Television Publicity Officer, called BBC Television 'The Adventurous Network'. There is also a retrospective article in it by Douglas Birkinshaw, Superintendent Engineer, Television, 'The First Twenty-One Years'.

<sup>10</sup> Census figures identify 14,481,000 households in 1951 and 16,189,000 in 1961. The figure for 1971 was 18,317,000.

<sup>11</sup> Cmnd. 267 (1957), p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> Henry, *op. cit.*, p. 67. A Media Records estimate for 1958 was £48,671,000, far more than the BBC's combined expenditure on sound and television broadcasting.

<sup>13</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 12 Sept. 1957. Benthall, born in 1893, became a Governor on 1 Aug. 1955. He replaced I. A. R. Stedeford. He remained on the Board until 1960.

Inside Lime Grove there was little concern about rising ITV revenues. Instead, Goldie concentrated on the 'pleasure' felt there as a result of 'the increased power of television vis-à-vis Broadcasting House'. 'We could always say and often did in relation to some new idea which was a departure from BBC precedent, "Well, if we don't do it, they will."' <sup>14</sup> And she knew that a new purpose-built Television Centre was already in the making out at White City, scheduled to cost more than £9 million. <sup>15</sup> Beadle himself conceived of it not as a set of offices and studios, but as 'the world's largest television factory'. <sup>16</sup> It was also thought of, however, as a showpiece, occupying, as it did, a 13½ acre site. The main block covered 3½ acres, proudly described as being nearly twice the size covered by St Paul's Cathedral. For those who believed that television was becoming a new religion the comparison with St Paul's was strictly apposite. <sup>17</sup>

Television Centre was not to open until June 1960, but during the early years of competition BBC engineers were using the Riverside Studios at Hammersmith, acquired in 1954, as 'trial grounds for its planning', <sup>18</sup> while Lime Grove, a more informal place than either, was to remain in use long after the Centre was opened. Formerly a studio centre of the Rank organization, the building had been acquired in 1949. During the mid-1950s queues used to gather at night to watch the entrances and exits of 'television celebrities'—and many others who made no claim to such a title.

When complete, the Television Centre was to be deemed as potent a symbol of the time as Broadcasting House had been in the 1930s. M. T. Tudsbury, the BBC's Consulting Civil Engineer, had been involved in both building projects, but no one could ever have suggested that Broadcasting House bore any resemblance to a factory. <sup>19</sup> Instead, according to the rhetoric of the 1930s, it had been a

<sup>14</sup> Goldie, *Facing the Nation*, p. 112.

<sup>15</sup> The BBC had agreed to purchase the White City site in 1949, and had acquired it in 1950. Stage 1 was completed in 1954, and Stage 2 in 1960.

<sup>16</sup> Beadle spoke on the occasion of the first visit of the Press to Television Centre in June 1960. 'First Night' was on 29 June. A special show was introduced by David Nixon. Leslie Mitchell and Richard Hearne contributed an item 'Things are not what they were'. Arthur Askey took part in the 'postscript'. The show was produced by Graeme Muir.

<sup>17</sup> "The BBC Television Centre', June 1960 (part of a Press pack). There were other associations, though none with 'showbiz'. The site had been used for the Franco-British Exhibition of 1908.

<sup>18</sup> E. Pawley, *BBC Engineering, 1922-1972* (1972), p. 361.

<sup>19</sup> The architect of the Centre was Graham Dawbarn. He worked to a Television Centre Development Committee. A joint statement, "The BBC Television Centre: The Buildings', June 1960 (part of a Press pack), began with the sentence. 'A building is only a means to an end to be planned and constructed to satisfy the particular requirements of those who will use it.' The BBC had begun by preparing a fifty-page brief for the architects.



Temple of the Muses. By the mid-1950s such rhetoric was out of date. Indeed, for some of the people employed in BBC Television at Lime Grove—or at Alexandra Palace—Broadcasting House was now associated less with a temple than with corridors of power.

When she had first moved into BBC Television in 1948, Goldie, who certainly perceived Broadcasting House in terms of power, had asked herself, none the less, whether she had been wise to exchange 'the civilised decorum of Broadcasting House' for those 'interminable dark corridors' of a very different kind in Alexandra Palace, 'where you needed an escort carrying an electric torch to keep off the rats'.<sup>20</sup> It was one of her few tributes to Broadcasting House.

The Governors, who held most of their fortnightly meetings at Broadcasting House, even after Television Centre was opened,<sup>21</sup> recognized some of the implications of the growth of television on sound broadcasting, 'which remained a BBC monopoly to which they were deeply committed. They noted in 1957, however, that the fall in the amount of listening from its wartime and immediate post-war level had not been due entirely to television. It had been caused, Robert Silvey told them, by other factors, including 'changes in social habits', not specified, and 'the growth of other distractions', not listed.<sup>22</sup> 'Even if television had not been invented and even if Luxembourg [the other and older competitor] had not broadcast any programmes to this country, the volume of listening would almost certainly have fallen considerably since 1948.'<sup>23</sup>

Backed by such research, the Governors concluded resolutely, as they might have done without it, that 'sound radio' would continue to have a 'vital part to play in an age of television broadcasting',<sup>24</sup> but paradoxically, perhaps, they seemed at times to be as much concerned about future competition in sound as they were about present competition in television. They watched carefully, therefore, for all signs of pressure to launch commercial radio at the local or national level, pressure that would, of course, require legislation for it to become effective.<sup>25</sup> They went on eventually to approve of far more

<sup>20</sup> Goldie, *Facing the Nation*, p. 50.

<sup>21</sup> They held their first meeting at Television Centre on 19 May 1960, before it was officially opened. Occasionally they held their meetings in the regions. Broadcasting House remained their usual location.

<sup>22</sup> Cmnd. 267 (1957), p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> \*Silvey, 'The Trend of Listening since the War', 4 Jan. 1957 (Evidence to the Working Party on the Future of Sound Broadcasting (R34/1022/3)).

<sup>24</sup> Cmnd. 267 (1957), p. 8.

<sup>25</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 12, 25 Sept. 1957.

drastic changes in the organization of sound broadcasting than they had agreed to in relation to the administration of television and this was not the last time that they did so.

Since 1945 the pattern of sound broadcasting had remained largely unchanged while television had advanced. It bore the stamp of Sir William Haley, who had been Director-General from 1944 to 1952, when he left the BBC, still a monopoly, to become Editor of *The Times*. There were still three alternative national programmes—the Home, the Light, and the Third—each with its own Controller, Andrew Stewart, (Hector) Rooney Pelletier, and John Morris. For Haley, and for those inside the BBC who still thought like him, there was a cultural spectrum. Even Light Programme listeners were capable of being attracted not only to the Home Service but to the Third Programme, Britain's unique contribution to cultural broadcasting, which Haley had initiated, and which had been introduced to the sound of trumpets in 1946. The Home Service was, however, central to the structure.

The three Controllers were very different in temperament and experience. Stewart, born in 1907, had worked his way through a remarkable range of jobs since joining the BBC in 1926, including Controller, Northern Ireland, and during the early years of the war he had been seconded to the Ministry of Information. By instinct he was cautious. He also had a strong sense of hierarchy. According to one of his colleagues, he treated Reith's currency, his 'scrip', as 'still the only legal tender'.<sup>26</sup> Pelletier, born in 1911, had worked for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation before joining the BBC in 1938, and had returned to it as a war reporter in 1941. He was a lively character with many interests, including Victorian ephemera, and in years of change he was prepared, even anxious, to stand back and survey his own life and work in perspective.<sup>27</sup> Morris, born in 1895, was a Cambridge graduate (King's) with a diploma in anthropology, and after a varied army career in the First World War had taken part in two Mount Everest expeditions. In a later phase of his life, while serving as a Professor of English Literature in Japan, he had served for four years, from 1938 to 1942, as an adviser to the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On leaving Japan, he became a Talks Producer in the BBC's Far Eastern Service, and from 1943 to 1952 he had been its Director.

<sup>26</sup> D. G. Bridson, *Prospero and Ariel* (1971), p. 227.

<sup>27</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 227–8. He commissioned Bridson to write a satire on the Light Programme called *Wilfred's Pilgrim's Progress*, starring Wilfred Pickles in all its fourteen male parts.



In their different ways the three Controllers represented a BBC which drew heavily on the past. Morris was near the end of his BBC career; Pelletier was to be further promoted, but was to lose influence; Stewart was soon to return to Glasgow, where his BBC career had begun, becoming Controller, Scotland, in 1957. He was the only member of the trio with regional experience at a time when regional broadcasting was relatively strong, and when he returned to Scotland, listeners there still outnumbered viewers by three to one.<sup>28</sup> Scotland and Wales were both described as 'National Regions', and each was represented, as was Northern Ireland, on the Board of Governors. There was in 1958 a substantial regional output from the BBC's six Regions, where one-seventh of the BBC's staff were employed.<sup>29</sup>

Jacob, who had arrived at Broadcasting House via Bush House, turned more willingly to the future than to the past. More important, when he was concerned with policy making, he thought in practical, not in philosophical, terms. Convinced, unlike Haley, that television development should be speeded up, he was equally convinced, unlike Haley, that television development could be speeded up, given necessary institutional changes. It was 'the one item on which the pressure of events made it impossible for the BBC to effect economies'.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, there was a good prospect of reducing expenditure on sound. The crucial point, Jacob believed—and he used military terms—was the maintenance of the morale of people working in sound inside Broadcasting House; and it was in military terms that he had told the staff at a Director-General's Liaison Meeting in October 1955 that sound broadcasting was not 'a spent force'. The Corporation had to be 'strong on both wings'. Given the 'intense concentration on television', some of them, he went on, would be wondering whether they would soon be 'a forgotten army'. They would, he assured them, never be so. 'Sound must hold its own in a world from which it was very far from being eliminated.' There was a continuing 'real challenge', backed by the needs of 9 million homes.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> *BBC Handbook, 1957*, p. 124. For his role in Scotland, see below, p. 675.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* 1958, p. 37. Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 88–93, 367–76. Both the regional and the tripartite service system were taken for granted in the article about the current state of broadcasting, written by Sir William Emrys Williams (*The Times*, 25 Aug. 1957), that sharply differentiated between BBC television and ITV television. For later developments, see below, pp. 649–79, 806–8.

<sup>30</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 25 Oct. 1956.

<sup>31</sup> *Ariel*, Winter 1955; \*DG's Liaison Meeting, *Minutes*, 5 Oct. 1955.

Several days later, Lindsay (later Sir Lindsay) Wellington, the Director of Sound Broadcasting, addressed another meeting, this time of representative BBC staff concerned only with radio, 'to meet people and have a stock-taking about sound broadcasting'. He chose different language from that of Jacob, the language not of duty but of competition, suggesting that it was in the light of competition from television that BBC sound had 'to look critically and afresh at what we are doing'. Much sound broadcasting was very good indeed. But there was too much 'self-sufficiency and separation in planning'. Talks did not always 'grip attention'. Features were less enterprising than they had been. 'Our sports reporting is like a rush mat of platted clichés.' There was room for experiment in presenting music programmes.<sup>32</sup>

To secure a new look, Wellington announced that a new Sound Co-ordinating Committee, chaired by Frank Gillard, his Chief Assistant, would meet regularly each Wednesday afternoon to collect information and to exchange ideas. Gillard, who had been a schoolmaster and freelance broadcaster before the war, had gone on to become a brilliant BBC war correspondent in the field, and after the war ended he had been selected by Beadle to be Head of Programmes in Bristol. Secure in his native region, he had successfully moved sound broadcasting into what became exciting new fields, like natural history, and had been associated with the introduction and development of what became one of the best-known of radio programmes, *Any Questions?*<sup>33</sup> In 1955 he became Wellington's Chief Assistant. Although he was of Controller rank, Gillard preferred Bristol to London, and in 1956, after considerable argument, he returned to Bristol as Controller when Beadle moved back to London to become Director of Television. That was not to be the end of the story, however, for, in 1963, he returned to London to succeed Wellington, and he was to play the key role in the making of sound policy and, above all, in the launching of BBC local radio.<sup>34</sup>

There was no talk of BBC local radio in 1955 when the new sound Co-ordinating Committee first met. Nor was there any in the discussion that followed Wellington's 1955 address. Instead, there were frequent references to the only form of competition that BBC sound broadcasting then faced—that from Radio Luxembourg—and there were several people present in the room who felt, as did Val Gielgud,

<sup>32</sup> \*Report of a Meeting, 18 Oct. 1955 (R34/874/4).

<sup>33</sup> For the earlier history of the programme and Gillard's role in it, see Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 103 ff.

<sup>34</sup> See below, pp. 620 n., 627 ff.

then Head of Drama, that the BBC should totally ignore it.<sup>35</sup> Not everyone, however, was of that opinion. Nor was everyone who was working in the BBC outside London. Earlier in the year, Wellington had been in correspondence with staff in the Midland Region who believed that such competition could not and should not be ignored. At a conference of Women's Institutes one member of the audience had asked the question 'Why should the intellectual have an alternative to the Third Programme whereas, generally speaking, we of lesser tastes can only turn to symphony concerts, recitals and heavy discussion programmes if we don't like some variety show?'; and when another person had remarked that Radio Luxembourg was the obvious alternative, there had been a chorus of approval.<sup>36</sup>

Against this background, Denis Morris, the Head of Midland Regional Programmes, then in his late forties, had written to Wellington suggesting that they had their sights trained on the wrong enemy. 'We have spent hours and hours in thinking about programmes to compete with Television, to wean people away from Television, to blindfold them so that they are unable to see Television and so on. Is it not possible that we have, in fact, two enemies—one the enemy within our midst and the other across the English Channel?'<sup>37</sup> Whether the Light Programme was being too 'serious'—and Morris thought that it was '10, 15 or 20 per cent more serious' than it had been in 1947—was a question that was being taken more seriously in Birmingham than in Bristol. It was from Birmingham that he reported that another woman listener had been identified who only tuned into the Home Service for the Ted Ray Show, featuring one of the country's best-known comedians, and the 6 o'clock news. 'Everywhere, of course,' he added, 'there was praise for "The Archers".'<sup>38</sup>

In a polite, but pertinent, reply to Morris, who in 1960 was to become Controller, Light Programme, Wellington asked him directly, 'Would you willingly give up the small audience programmes in [the] Light Programme which give an opportunity to Luxembourg to

<sup>35</sup> For the views and experience of Val Gielgud, John Gielgud's brother, see *Years in a Mirror* (1965).

<sup>36</sup> \*Kenneth Bird, Midland Region Information Officer, to H. J. Dunkerley, Controller, Midland Region, 'Lectures', 23 Feb. 1955 (R34/422/2).

<sup>37</sup> \*D. Morris, Head of Midland Regional Programmes, to Wellington, 'Brow Level', 22 Feb. 1955 (R34/422/2). In 1957 and 1958 the Midland Region was to include a higher proportion of television licences to sound licences than any other part of the country, and its television studio was the largest television studio outside London. See below, p. 625.

<sup>38</sup> \*Report by Bird, loc. cit.

grab some majority audiences? Put in another way, what BBC programmes would you offer to draw audiences of a certain type away from Luxembourg's give-away and "candid microphone" efforts? Morris replied equally directly:

You ask what small audience programmes I would give up in order to stop Luxembourg gripping some of our majority audiences. I would sooner—as it is not my problem—confine myself to saying that I believe there is an extremely large audience to be won from Luxembourg between 4 to 6 p.m. and between 10 and 11 p.m. A pointer to this is that *Mrs. Dale's Diary* can average around 9 per cent audiences, but that the audiences thereafter drop to 5's and 2's until *The Archers* comes along to revivify the Light Programme again.<sup>39</sup>

These revealing comments had nothing 'Reithian' about them. Nor, indeed, did they have anything which would have backed a Haley-like approach to sound broadcasting, an approach which Wellington, a loyal servant of the BBC, shared.<sup>40</sup> An old-timer, who had joined the BBC in 1924, Wellington had taken up that key post in 1952 after having been Head of the Home Service (he was later called Controller) since 1945. None the less, as his address to his staff in October 1955 revealed, he now saw BBC Television as 'the great challenger to help show what Sound Radio can still do usefully and still do best and what fresh fields it can conquer in a Television Age'.<sup>41</sup>

Wellington was a cultivated and approachable man who used such language naturally. Although his approach to BBC problems and

<sup>39</sup> \*Wellington to Morris, 'Brow Level', 24 Feb. 1955; Morris to Wellington, 'Brow Level', 3 March 1955 (R34/422/2). *Mrs. Dale's Diary*, first broadcast in Jan. 1948, had already gone through several changes. It was anathema to Gielgud, who once again was on the opposite side to many of his BBC colleagues. For him it was socially corrupting from the very start, by its 'monstrous flattery of the ego of the "common man"', and was 'soul-destroying to the actors, authors and producers concerned' ('Considerations Relevant to Broadcast Drama Based upon Experience in the Years 1929 to 1948', 19 June 1948 (R19/276)). Gielgud did his best to get the programme axed (op. cit., pp. 84–5), yet on 27 Sept. 1955 Rooney Pelletier confirmed that the programme would continue for at least two years. More than 5m. people were then listening to it. When the programme celebrated its 2,000th edition on 14 Nov. 1955, the producer and cast of *The Archers* sent a telegram of congratulations. In 1961 (at a meeting chaired by Denis Morris) there were proposals to kill Mrs. Dale as Grace Archer had been killed, but the programme lasted until 1969, when its admirers threatened Parliamentary action to preserve it. See also below, p. 335.

<sup>40</sup> Morris's interests were wide. He had been Midland Public Relations Officer from 1938 to 1939, and from 1940 to 1942 was Director of the Ministry of Information, Midland Region. In 1949 he had published *Poultry Keeping for Profit*, and in 1958 he published *The French Vineyards*.

<sup>41</sup> *Ariel*, Aug. 1963. This article was written on his retirement. For an assessment of his contribution to radio in what the author described as 'agonizing years', see Wellington's obituary in *The Times*, 11 Jan. 1985.

personalities remained essentially conservative, he welcomed correspondence of the kind he had with Morris, and tried hard to assemble a variety of views. His Chief Assistant, R. D'A. Marriott, whose wartime career with the BBC had been controversial, was far less supportive of the Haley system,<sup>42</sup> and it was after talking to him that he wrote a memorandum to Jacob in October 1956 asking for his 'endorsement for an important shift of emphasis in the whole output of Sound Broadcasting'. The BBC would have to abandon both 'its traditional belief' that it could 'compel listeners to attend to "better things"' and 'any pretence of competition between the three Sound programmes'.<sup>43</sup>

Marriott had proposed setting up something very different from a Sound Co-ordinating Committee—a Working Party to 'examine the present Sound Broadcasting service and to make recommendations about its future shape and policy'. Moreover, he was well prepared to consider big changes, suggesting explicitly that programmes in future should be 'less weighted in favour of the highly educated and serious minded'.<sup>44</sup> Marriott had no sense of reverence.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, when the Third Programme had celebrated its tenth anniversary in September 1956 he had attributed the absence of 'low-brow' attacks on that occasion—and there had been many attacks before—to 'a general national characteristic of approving cultural monuments which have no connection with our own lives'.<sup>46</sup> Marriott's was not the only warning voice. There were rumours inside and outside the BBC that the Third Programme might be absorbed in the Home Service. 'Sooner rather than later', wrote the *Daily Mail*, 'radio services in this country will have to retreat to consolidated positions' (another military metaphor). 'If the Third persists in congratulating itself on

<sup>42</sup> For Marriott's wartime career see Briggs, *The War of Words*, pp. 330–1. Marriott returned to the BBC in 1946 as head of the European Liaison Office. From 1953 to 1956 he had been Controller, Northern Ireland.

<sup>43</sup> \*Wellington, 'Memorandum to Director General: Future of Sound Broadcasting', 18 Oct. 1956 (R34/1022/2). This was a 'tougher and tighter document' than an earlier draft (\*Notes, 5 Oct. 1956).

<sup>44</sup> \*Marriott's paper was dated Oct. 1956. Marriott also wrote a note in July 1956 (R34/1022/2).

<sup>45</sup> Clearly the Controller of the Home Service had. When asked in Aug. 1955 what were the best things in sound broadcasting, he had picked out first those occasions when 'a great work is matched by a great performance and the listener gets a stellar quality of exultation and wonder' (\*Stewart to Wellington, 'Six of the Best', 2 Aug. 1955 (R34/422/2)).

<sup>46</sup> \*Marriott, 'Press Opinions on Third Programme Tenth Anniversary', n.d. (R34/1022/4). For the occasion Morris edited what might have been considered a monumental book, *From the Third Programme: A Ten Years Anthology* (1956).

the small number of listeners . . . the next birthday may well be its last.<sup>47</sup>

Knowing in October 1956 how Marriott felt, Wellington not only accepted his proposal for a Working Party, but invited him to chair it. Gillard, Michael Standing, Controller, Entertainment, Sound, and Mungo Dewar, Head of Sound Broadcasting, were the other members and Richmond Postgate was its Secretary. It worked fast, and after twenty-five meetings and forty-four interviews with senior administrative and programme staff, including Regional staff, it produced a far-reaching report which ran to 33 pages and 106 paragraphs.<sup>48</sup>

It was the content of the Report, not its length, which most distinguished it. Like most Television Reports of the same period, it began with facts—first, the facts concerning the relative pull of sound and television and, second, the facts concerning the spread of the average evening audience for sound between the three Programmes then being provided. The latter had remained more or less constant during the previous eight years. Out of every hundred people listening, sixty-five listened to the Light Programme, thirty-four to the Home Service, and one to the Third Programme. Yet, the numbers of listeners to each of those Programmes had fallen, and there had been little turning of the switch from one Programme to another, as Haley had hoped.<sup>49</sup> Leaving on one side the influence of television<sup>50</sup>—and here the Working Party passed from facts to interpretation—it seemed that ‘the effort to improve public taste’ had

<sup>47</sup> *Daily Mail*, 28 Sept. 1956.

<sup>48</sup> The preparation of the Report, dated Jan. 1957, is documented in six policy files, ‘The Future of Sound Broadcasting in the Domestic Services, 1957’. Another file contains the Report, and a further file is concerned with programme planning. Evidence submitted by Regional Controllers was of considerable importance, as it had been in all discussions leading up to the setting up of the Working Party. E.g., Tom Chalmers, Controller, North Region, wrote at length of a ‘popular programme’, while stressing the necessity both of freeing ‘a large amount of BBC resources for TV’ and preserving the BBC ‘as a British, and not a London, Broadcasting Service’ (\*Chalmers to Wellington, ‘A New Plan for Sound Broadcasting’, 30 Nov. 1956 (R34/1022/3)).

<sup>49</sup> The original target figures envisaged for the three Programmes had been Home, 30%; Light, 60%; Third, 10% (\*‘The Future of Sound Broadcasting in the Domestic Services: Report of the Working Party set up by D. B. S. on 9th November 1956’, Jan. 1957, para. 22 (R34/1021)). Factual information had been printed for the Working Party in a paper by Robert Silvey, ‘The Trend of Listening since the War’, 4 Jan. 1957 (R34/1022/3).

<sup>50</sup> Silvey, who had compared the size and composition of average evening audiences in 1948 and 1956, had concluded that audiences in 1956 were ‘rather less than half as big’ as they were in 1948. ‘Where 100 people were listening to BBC sound in 1948, 46 were listening in 1956; if there had been no TV the number listening in 1956 would probably have been about 73’ (\*Silvey, loc. cit.).



been 'made in such a way' that 'the public' had 'been given indigestion' and had 'turned away'.

For this reason, the Working Party concluded—as Marriott and Wellington had already concluded before it met—that the time was a ripe to modify current policy substantially. While the BBC should continue to maintain 'the best [note the word] professional standards of composition, production and performance and the highest standards of integrity and impartiality', in future it should 'seek to cater for the needs and tastes of its audiences without seeking, as it perhaps had done too much in the past to alter and improve them'. In particular, 'entertainment should not be undervalued', as it had 'perhaps been somewhat undervalued in the past [the double use of the word 'perhaps' is also revealing], or regarded merely as a stepping stone to more serious things'. In future, less emphasis should be placed on the spoken word, and more attention should be paid to those 'who look to radio for relaxation and diversion'. In no longer referring, except in one place, to the Spoken Word in capital letters, the Report stripped away what had once been a BBC aura.<sup>51</sup> Significantly, too, it stripped it away after discussions with senior BBC staff who believed that 'the present programme policy was out of touch with contemporary feeling'.

After the Second World War, Marriott and his colleagues reported, there had been 'a profound change of mood in the country, particularly among its younger members, which made the paternalistic flavour of the 1945 policy progressively less acceptable'. It was a policy, they considered, that in itself had gone some way to creating 'a kind of dumb resentment, or at the least, a disappointed resignation which smoothed the way for the introduction of commercial broadcasting'.<sup>52</sup> And, by 1957, as far as television was concerned, commercial broadcasting, the Working Party recognized, had come to stay. 'Examination of the writing of the more serious critics of broadcasting' showed that 'the existence of commercial television is

<sup>51</sup> The one place was para. 29(c)(ii). The BBC had 'over-valued Spoken Word material at all levels'. For the earlier aura, see Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 111, 114. The post of Director of the Spoken Word, Haley had argued in 1947, 'was the one post' without which there could be no 'reorganisation'. The Working Party found it necessary to refer to Haley's Lewis Fry Lectures of 1948, which reflected his whole philosophy of broadcasting, and to the Beveridge Report (Cmd. 8116), from which it diverged, sometimes sharply, as its major framework document.

<sup>52</sup> \*Report of the Working Party, para. 25.

no longer questioned by the critics, and it is unlikely that many would be found to recommend the restoration of the monopoly'.<sup>53</sup>

Taking the three existing Programmes together—and the Working Party reached the conclusion that three programmes were still necessary—the recommendation was that an 'element of competition' which had hitherto existed between the Light and Home Programmes should now be removed, and that arrangements should be made to plan the two services as a whole. 'Awkward clashes' should be avoided, but there should be choice. 'Integration' was a key word.<sup>54</sup> The names 'Light' and 'Home' should stay, although the Home Service was 'no more directed to the home than any other' (a curious observation).<sup>55</sup> Meanwhile, the Third Programme, unique in conception and functioning, had a 'prestige value', and should be planned separately under its own Controller. It should be allowed 10 per cent of the whole sound broadcast output, even though this meant that its audiences would 'be getting ten times as much time on the air' as their numbers merited.

The Working Party added, first, that it had considered whether or not the Third Programme should be dropped altogether on financial grounds, and, second, that its proposals had the full support of John Morris, the Controller, Third Programme, who had told the Working Party that while the BBC had 'a moral duty to improve taste and disseminate culture', listeners should have 'a free choice' to choose 'either culture or entertainment'. 'The BBC must be in a position to offer programmes to the majority at least as attractive as anything that could be provided by commercial radio, if it ever came into existence.' As far as the Third Programme was concerned, it was a 'valuable property as an idea', but 'if it was to go on, it was very necessary to know more about who it was for'.<sup>56</sup>

For historians, the volumes of evidence collected by the Working Party present a comprehensive picture of sound broadcasting at the time of the rise of television, or rather, a comprehensive picture of sound broadcasting as it was seen by those people who were then in charge of its policy making and administration. People being inter-

<sup>53</sup> \*Ibid. 'It is important to realise', the Working Party added, 'that the success of commercial television is not to be written off simply as the attraction of the second-rate for the feeble minded.'

<sup>54</sup> It had been used earlier in discussions concerning the agenda for meetings of the Sound Co-ordinating Committee, on 15 and 29 Feb. 1956. Regional representatives were present at the first of these.

<sup>55</sup> \*Report of the Working Party, para. 57, 'Terminology'.

<sup>56</sup> \*Working Party, *Minutes*, 4th Meeting, 9 Nov. 1956 (R34/1022/5).



viewed often raised more interesting points about the longer-term future than the Working Party took up. For example, considerable emphasis was placed by some of them on early morning listening. Almost the largest BBC audience of the day that was available for sound was that between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m., not a time of day when television would ever have an advantage over sound radio 'even if the hours of Television were to be extended ultimately so as to cover this time of the day'. 'This morning audience should be served by both the Home Service and the Light Programme,' a witness suggested; one of them 'would give background music, thus freeing the other to provide news and information, weather, market reports, food news, press reviews, medical talks, cooking talks, household hints, etc.'<sup>57</sup>

There were echoes of wartime broadcasting in all this, of *Kitchen Front* and of the homely health guidance once given by a Radio Doctor who had now become a politician and a Minister and who would one day become Chairman of the BBC. Yet there were also intimations—if not of breakfast television—at least of sound's *Today*.<sup>58</sup> It had been taken for granted that the Light Programme did not start until 9 a.m.—8 a.m. on Sundays—although the Home Service started at 6.25 a.m. during the week and 7.50 a.m. on Sunday. After the Report, the Light Programme began at 7 a.m. on weekdays and (strangely) at 9 a.m., one hour later, on Sundays.

In each of the interviews which the Working Party arranged, questions about British society and culture were being raised implicitly or explicitly; and within this context two witnesses to the Working Party, in particular, neither of them mentioned in the Report, made far more positive statements about the Third Programme than Morris. One, Howard Newby, who was to succeed Morris as Controller, argued that 'the future of Sound lay with the Third Programme'. Another, Christopher Holme, Chief Assistant, Third Programme, stated that 'the birth of the Third Programme was one of the most enlightened acts of the century' and warned that it would be 'a national disaster' if it disappeared.<sup>59</sup> Holme, however,

<sup>57</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'The Future of Sound Broadcasting in the Domestic Services: Note by the Director-General', 7 March 1957.

<sup>58</sup> *Today*, broadcast at 7.15 a.m. and 8.15 a.m., with a magazine-type format, was first launched on 28 Oct. 1957. See below, pp. 222–3. For Jack de Manio, the broadcaster who established its first identity, long since lost, see J. de Manio, *To Auntie with Love* (1967).

<sup>59</sup> \*Working Party, *Minutes*, 6th Meeting, 14 Nov. 1956; 8th Meeting, 19 Nov. 1956. Newby was then Chief Assistant, Talks (Sound).

also produced a written memorandum which stated categorically that 'the loyalty and interest of a popular audience must be put first'.<sup>60</sup>

The Marriott Report stands out not only in the history of programming, but because it was the first in a long line of BBC internal reports that were to be as much concerned with the economics as with the philosophy of broadcasting, and with cuts as well as with initiatives. The Beveridge Committee had praised the BBC for its financial management—in the words of the Working Party, it had given it a 'good chit'—but more would have to be done, the Marriott Report urged, by way of introducing 'a realistic costing system which took into account all the controllable factors entering into the cost of a programme'. 'Planners' would be informed thereby of the 'full financial implications of the programmes they were considering', and would be able to regulate their budgets accordingly.<sup>61</sup> The Working Party even referred *en passant* to 'the terminology of industry' and to 'routine' which was 'normal in commerce'.<sup>62</sup>

There was a brief reference also to BBC orchestras, the future of which—for financial reasons—was itself to figure prominently in later reports.<sup>63</sup> A further study inside the BBC should be made quickly, it was proposed, in order to consider the use of staff orchestras, some of which might be 're-designed to suit new programme needs and yet be smaller'.<sup>64</sup> The Report did not pick up a point made in evidence by the Head of Music Programmes (Sound), Maurice Johnstone. He assumed, he told the Working Party, that 'music will be more than ever the king-post of sound broadcasting'.<sup>65</sup>

#### 4. Private and Public Reactions

Among the many proposals made in the Report, some were bound to be highly controversial, both inside and outside Broadcasting House, if only because the remit that Marriott had been given had been

<sup>60</sup> \*C. Holme, 'The Future of Sound Broadcasting: Some First Reflections', Nov. 1956 (R34/1022/3).

<sup>61</sup> \*Report of the Working Party, para. 80.

<sup>62</sup> \*Ibid., paras. 80, 78.

<sup>63</sup> See below, pp. 230, 759.

<sup>64</sup> \*Report of the Working Party, para. 90(c).

<sup>65</sup> \*Johnstone to Marriott, 'The Future of Sound Broadcasting', 20 Nov. 1956 (R34/1022/3). For the future of BBC music and Johnstone's role, see below, p. 233.

influenced by economics as much as by philosophy. Before they started their work, Marriott and his Working Party had been advised that they had to find ways of significantly cutting expenditure on sound, and that to achieve this target no proposals were barred.<sup>1</sup>

It was because of their remit that the Working Party did not ask all the key questions. Had the Third Programme fulfilled Haley's expectations? Had the 'culture' that it had provided—and was providing—been 'the right culture'? The Programme had frequently been dismissed in the popular Press as 'precious' and 'obscure', 'an intellectual freak'—the word 'élitist' had not yet been invented.<sup>2</sup> What was the BBC's reply to the charge? Holme would have 'scaled down' music, which offered the possibility of 'the greatest economies'. 'Serious investigation' of 'the economics of house orchestras' was necessary. They had absorbed 3.96 per cent of total revenue expenditure in 1955. It should be added, however, that Holme also asked under one brief heading 'News': 'Are BBC correspondents really needed?' Some person, unidentified, wrote in ink against this, 'Perhaps'. Surprisingly, Laurence Gilliam, the talented and experienced Head of Features Department, in his evidence to the Working Party, talked of the Third Programme as appealing only to 'desiccated dons' and to 'the fag end of Bloomsbury'.<sup>3</sup>

There had been a touch of satire in William Salter's comments in the *New Statesman* at the time of the Third Programme's tenth anniversary, when, in asking for more controversy in the Programme, he described how the BBC had put all its 'goods in the shop-window' for the occasion: 'Forster, Nicolson, Graves, Sassoon, Auden, Spender, Plomer, Cocteau, Sacheverell Sitwell, Beerbohm speaking from beyond the tomb. All it lacked was a few well-chosen words by Mr. Eliot.'<sup>4</sup> Salter

<sup>1</sup> Wellington had asked for an overall saving of 5%, in the total cost of sound broadcasting, 2% of which should be on staff ('Wellington, 'Sound Broadcasting Future Policy and Practice', 30 Oct. 1956 (R34/1022/6)). Jacob had mentioned 10% ('Address to staff, 8 April 1956 (R34/1022/6)'). The Report itself stated that 'we had not been given, and did not set ourselves, any particular target of financial saving, though we were at all times fully alive to the continuous need to discover sources of economy' (para. 5).

<sup>2</sup> Cassandra, who used the last phrase in the *Daily Mirror* (7 May 1951), had many allies in the *Daily Express* and the *Sunday Express*. The crowning insult for the *Express* papers was to compare Third Programme activities with 'Arts Council tea parties' (*Sunday Express*, 22 Feb. 1953).

<sup>3</sup> Working Party, *Minutes*, 7th Meeting, 16 Nov. 1956 (R34/1022/5). See also below, pp. 579–80.

<sup>4</sup> *New Statesman*, 13 Oct. 1956. The items had included Aristophanes' comedy *The Frogs*, a dramatization of James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, an adaptation of Lowes Dickinson's *A Modern Symposium*, a serial by Angus Wilson and Christopher Sykes, and the first of four feature programmes on Gandhi.

kept music out of his picture except for a brief reference to different Mahler recordings, contrasted recently in a *Composer and the Interpreter* series.

Questions of a social and cultural kind had been asked about the Light Programme too in the course of the collection of evidence, and these also might have lent themselves to satire. But they did not. Too much was taken for granted. Stewart stated categorically that the Programme should 'never expose listeners to anything more serious than the news bulletin', and that it should 'never take a risk with anything which might lose listeners'.<sup>5</sup> Pelletier, who had dictated a curious note in September 1955 attacking commercial television—and had quoted Haley's words 'the robots are on the march'<sup>6</sup>—now felt that 'competition was here to stay', and that the major job of the BBC was 'to be successful at the popular level'. 'Charter requirements' within this context 'could become a serious handicap in the battle for survival.' 'We cannot stop commercial Sound from coming, but the BBC ought to absorb it. It should make good its previous error about television by taking over for itself the responsibility for commercial radio.'<sup>7</sup>

The BBC, Pelletier went on, 'might well study the experience of Commonwealth countries [like Canada and Australia] where Public Service and Commercial systems have existed side by side'.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, the Programme for which he was responsible should not be 'trammelled by any obligations of uplift', as if 'uplift' was all that was at stake.<sup>9</sup> The Head of Religious Broadcasting, the Revd Roy McKay, concurred. He was happy to agree that five minutes should be the maximum limit for any religious item in Pelletier's Light Programme.<sup>10</sup>

Only Ronald Lewin, in the Planning Section of the Home Service, John Green, Controller, Talks (Sound), and John Scupham, Head of Educational Broadcasting, in any way challenged the assumptions behind the version of public taste which Marriott himself pressed on his witnesses at almost every meeting. Lewin affirmed that he was

<sup>5</sup> \*Working Party, *Minutes*, 3rd Meeting, 9 Nov. 1956. Most other witnesses talked not of news bulletins on the Light Programme, but of news flashes.

<sup>6</sup> \*Pelletier to Wellington, 'Thoughts about "Ingredients"', 28 Sept. 1955 (R34/1022/3).

<sup>7</sup> In 1958 Pelletier was to turn down a suggestion from the poet Louis MacNeice for a programme on advertising, on the grounds that it 'was out of step with a wide body of public opinion' (quoted in B. Coulton, *Louis MacNeice in the BBC* (1980), p. 158).

<sup>8</sup> \*Working Party, *Minutes*, 3rd Meeting, 9 Nov. 1956. Pelletier made it clear that he considered competition to 'be the major factor involved in this investigation'.

<sup>9</sup> \*Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> \*Ibid., 13th Meeting, 6 Dec. 1956.

in favour of 'the aspiring pyramid idea', and felt that the Home Service should have 'a definite and recognisable character'. He also considered that the BBC had 'a duty to supply the Third Programme's audience'.<sup>11</sup> Green mentioned as necessary ingredients in the Light Programme 'sport, reminiscences, travel, history and "personalities"' and emphasized how important it was that in the Third Programme, freed from 'the tyranny of *Radio Times* billings', there should be 'talk which makes no concessions, as it allows for the existence of a cultural aristocracy of thought'.<sup>12</sup> Scupham's criticism was fundamental. 'It was a fatal mistake', he said, 'to underestimate the number and strength of other interests besides those of mere entertainment.' If for financial reasons there had to be only two BBC sound programmes, one should be 'middle and off' and the other 'middle and leg'.<sup>13</sup>

In turning to cricket, Scupham, who stressed the importance not of levels of sophistication but of levels of education, was the only person playing that particular game in 1956.<sup>14</sup> There was, however, much talk, often confused, of what the word 'middle' meant in other contexts, particularly 'middle-brow' and 'middle class'. Marriott himself spoke somewhat patronizingly of three social groups which the BBC had to consider, while conceding that this was only a 'rough generalisation'—the serious-minded, 'possibly University educated, interested in current affairs, the arts, history, music, good books etc., say 10 per cent'; 'the great middle section—not necessarily middle-class, though probably predominantly so, more middle-aged and elderly than young, not at all interested in culture or intellect, but equally not frivolous or gay, liking plays which are not what they would call either morbid or silly, preferring light music to either symphony music or jazz, reading circulating libraries' fiction, etc., say 45 per cent', and 'the remainder—working class mostly perhaps, but including the young of all classes, liking dance music, variety, pops, etc. . . . say 45 per cent'.<sup>15</sup>

This classification provided Marriott with the 'assumptions' on which the conclusions of the Working Party were based. Yet, at one point in his thinking, he made a far more penetrating analysis.

<sup>11</sup> \*Ibid., 5th Meeting, 13 Nov. 1956.

<sup>12</sup> \*Ibid., 16th Meeting, 18 Dec. 1956.

<sup>13</sup> \*Ibid., 9th Meeting, 20 Nov. 1956.

<sup>14</sup> \*J. Scupham, 'Broadcasting and Educational Levels', 19 Nov. 1956 (R34/1022/3).

<sup>15</sup> Unsent memorandum, \*Marriott to Wellington, 'Future of Sound Broadcasting', 4 Oct. 1956 (R34/1022/2).

Instead of stratifying the population, he asked whether or not broadcasting could match 'the different moods and interests of the same man' at different times. 'No sensible person wants a diet of the same thing the whole time.' 'The more intelligent a person is the wider his interests are likely to be.' 'People who like to concentrate on a serious discussion also like background music when they are washing up.' 'There is a whole group of programmes such as sport and religion that cannot easily be categorised.' 'You cannot categorise every programme; its value and weight depend upon what goes before and after and what is happening on other programmes at the same time; also, above all, on the way it is treated. A talk on Archaeology or Foreign Affairs can be made suitable for medium or serious; so can a recital or a symphony concert.'<sup>16</sup>

Had the Working Party pursued this line of thought, its conclusions might have been different. Instead, it concluded that a reformed Light Programme should appeal to a 'regular audience', with a tilting towards the young more than the old and towards those with elementary education rather than grammar school or university education, 'i.e. the majority of the population'. In consequence, it concluded, the Programme should be devoted consistently to 'the art of light entertainment', with music as the 'basic ingredient', the whole range of music from 'pop music from dance band combinations [already dropping out of fashion with young listeners<sup>17</sup>] to the lighter part of light music'.

It added, however, that the Programme should also include 'the greater part of what is called Variety' and 'comedy thrillers, detective plays, science fiction serials, etc., at a length never exceeding 30 minutes'. Talks 'of a popular nature' should be included, but they would have to be restricted to a length of five minutes. *Topic for Tonight*, which had reached its 1,000th edition in January 1955, ought to be retained as a regular feature, but most talks ought to be included on their merits as 'part of the entertainment'.<sup>18</sup> News should be included, but it would have to be presented more briefly and in 'easily assimilable form'. Religious broadcasting should be of 'the *Five to Ten*, *Praising My Saviour*, *Silver Chords* and *Sunday Half-hour*' type.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> \*Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> See below, pp. 198–209.

<sup>18</sup> *Topic for Tonight*, first broadcast in Feb. 1949, was the progenitor of hundreds of a.m. and p.m. programmes dedicated to the day (Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 532–3). It was to continue until 26 Sept. 1957.

<sup>19</sup> \*Report of the Working Party, paras. 38–40.



A more 'popular', but at the same time 'stronger', Home Service would still be required, the Working Party also concluded, in order to serve 'the broad middle section of the community and the range of taste and interest falling between high-brow and low-brow'. Not surprisingly, however, Marriott and his colleagues found it 'hard to define' what its content should be. They deemed that in music it should range from *Grand Hotel* and Gilbert and Sullivan to 'prom-type symphony music' and in drama from *Wednesday Matinée* to Ibsen and Shaw. The new Programme, they went on, should have a 'higher music content than at present', but it should also include 'the main news and information services of the BBC', with both full-length news bulletins and current affairs programmes like *At Home and Abroad* and *Radio Newsreel*.<sup>20</sup> *Any Questions?* should be moved to the Home Service from the Light Programme. So should *Curtain-up*.

The conclusions of the Working Party Report, including the changes in the Third Programme, were accepted, albeit toned down a little, at the Board of Management's meeting on 25 February 1957. A paper, subsequently prepared for the Governors to consider, using language different from that of Marriott, emphasized that, whatever the changes, the BBC's sense of 'mission' should not be lost, and that it should retain its care 'for the nation as a whole, including minorities', and for 'the standards and style of behaviour of civilised people'.<sup>21</sup> The Board of Management chose, however, as the Working Party had done, to treat the Light Programme first and the Home Service second, and this in itself was a significant reordering of the agenda for BBC radio.

As far as the Third Programme was concerned, the Board accepted the proposal from the Working Party that it should retain its 'flexibility' and its 'freedom from fixed points and timing'. None the less, its overall length was to be shortened. In place of the existing forty-hour week the Board proposed that there should be a twenty-one-hour week—longer than the seventeen and a half-hour week that the Working Party had recommended—with one 'prestige radio programme of the day' each evening. The Programme should seek to

<sup>20</sup> *At Home and Abroad* was first broadcast on the Home Service in Jan. 1954, and *Radio Newsreel* on the General Overseas Service during the Second World War; it had later been moved to the Light Programme. *Newsreel* was produced by the BBC's News Division.

<sup>21</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 25 Feb. 1957. The Working Party Report had spoken of 'the almost oppressive weight of social responsibility the monopoly induced'. That for Reith had been its most important and challenging attraction.



reach an audience of nearly 2 million people, 5 per cent of the population—‘those people who read the political and literary pages of the *Observer* and *Sunday Times* and the more serious weeklies such as the *Spectator*, *The Economist*, *The New Statesman* and *The Listener*, and all those who are interested in the best music, classical or contemporary.’<sup>22</sup>

There was one brand new proposal in the Working Party Report and in the Board of Management paper. A reduction in Third Programme time would allow a number of additional spoken word items ‘to be incorporated in a new “Third Network”’, some within the general programme field, others in ‘the spheres of Further Education’. *Science Survey*, *The Archaeologist*, *Naturalist’s Notebook*, *Night Sky Month by Month*, *Talking of Books*, and programmes on many other subjects, mainly aimed at minority audiences, would, it was held, find a natural place there.<sup>23</sup> The idea of a new network emanated from different sources. One interesting paper which was clearly relevant to the discussions of the Working Party was written by Derek Russell, Head of Publicity. It had a section on ‘Leisure Interest’ programmes and on Science programmes, and it referred to the world of magazines, including the periodical the *New Scientist*, which first appeared on 22 November 1956. Television was mentioned specifically in this new context. ‘As Television takes an increasing share of the responsibility for mass entertainment’, Sound should be freed to give more attention to minority interests of various kinds. The new Third Network should seek to develop on these lines. ‘Significant new audiences might be won.’<sup>24</sup>

In fact, significant existing audiences were lost for a large number of programmes of an educative as well as of an educational character. The Third Network proposal, which the Governors accepted, while asking for the name to be changed, was strongly criticized by Scupham and his colleagues in Educational Broadcasting for this reason.<sup>25</sup> Audiences for a Wednesday series organized by the Further Education Unit, headed by Jean Rowntree, and with Joseph Trenaman, an early proponent of communications research, fell sharply to

<sup>22</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, ‘The Future of Sound Broadcasting in the Domestic Services: Note by the Director General’, 7 March 1957. The Working Party urged, none the less, that the Third Programme should no longer include ‘those programmes whose real place is in print, and more properly in the learned quarterlies than in *The Listener*’.

<sup>23</sup> \**Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> \*Russell to Marriott, ‘Sound—Two Further Ideas’, 20 Nov. 1956 (R34/1022/3).

<sup>25</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 14 March 1957. The name was changed to ‘Network Three’.

about a tenth of what they had been before.<sup>26</sup> In the words of John Robinson, who spent twenty years in BBC Education from 1959 to 1979, 'they were coolly and statistically decimated in one week.'<sup>27</sup>

The Governors welcomed the Board of Management's proposals, which were summarized for them in a memorandum by the Director-General. They also authorized Jacob to present the proposals to the staff and to the Press through a Press Release, finalized on 1 April, to be announced on Monday 8 April, the eve of Budget day.<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile, the Postmaster-General was to be provided with an outline. Jacob himself, like the Marriott Working Party, had recognized that presentation would be 'a matter of great importance'. 'The new ideas must be made clear, understood and accepted by the staff as soon as possible, and this is bound to involve discussions inside and outside the BBC. A switch of policy of this kind could not possibly be kept confidential.'<sup>29</sup>

There was a curious twist to the public presentation. Jacob was cut off in a television interview on *Panorama* in which he was describing the changes, in order to allow for the showing of 'live scenes of the Queen's visit to Paris'. A BBC spokesman told *The Times* that the Director-General had been given 'just the same sort of treatment as happens to anybody else who appears on the programme'.<sup>30</sup>

Inside the BBC there had been a great deal of gossip about the likely pattern of changes, as there had been in the Press,<sup>31</sup> and Wellington had to take account of this when he addressed the BBC's sound staff one day after Jacob on 9 April. Reading from a prepared script, which began with a reference to the challenge which radio faced from competition from television, and from commercial television in particular, he went on to discuss in detail criticisms that had been made of the existing three Programmes and the proposals for changing them. He was not 'carping' at the Third Programme, he

<sup>26</sup> For Trenaman, see below, p. 183.

<sup>27</sup> J. Robinson, *Learning Over the Air* (1982), p. 137. See also below, pp. 182–3.

<sup>28</sup> *The Times*, 9 April 1957, which in addition to reporting Jacob's remarks, devoted a leader to the subject. It was critical of the changes in the Third Programme, and warned that 'the extension of the Light Programme' should not become 'an end in itself'. The leader also commented that 'the threat of more regional programmes being heard nationally is a gloomy one'.

<sup>29</sup> \*Report of the Working Party, para. 102.

<sup>30</sup> *The Times*, 9 April 1957.

<sup>31</sup> There is a useful report by Jacob in *Ariel*, April 1957, which begins by pointing out that 'many of the more inventive forecasts in the Press' before he announced the changes had been disproved. He also said that it had been 'gratifying to see the warmth of public support for the Third Programme when rumours of its disbandment' had spread.

emphasized, merely pointing to flaws. Network Three programmes, he stressed, would be planned by Home Service planners and not by the Controller of Talks Programmes.

Finance came next to the last, before the role of the Regions. At this point, Wellington said, he had to be 'sombre and grim'. 'If we go on at the rate we are going now we shall be a million pounds overspent by 1960.' 'Would you like to face a Charter Committee in that state? Would that help you beat off the threat of commercial radio?' The going would be 'rough'.<sup>32</sup> This was gloomier talk than that enshrined in the last section of the Working Party Report, which, using the language of the weather forecasts, had concluded 'Further Outlook—Unsettled'.<sup>33</sup>

It could not have helped Wellington's own morale on this solemn occasion that, even before the Working Party Report had appeared, it had already become abundantly clear that there were professed and tried friends of the BBC outside Broadcasting House who would be uneasy about the main thrust of its proposals. Some of them, not ashamed to call themselves 'Reithian', had played an active role in 1953 and 1954 in the battle to try to preserve the BBC's broadcasting monopoly. Others were in close touch with the BBC, both through the 'patronage system'—which involved personal links between the BBC and university professors and lecturers, links that were closer than they have ever been since—and through the BBC's much vaunted advisory committee structure.<sup>34</sup>

Two days after the Press Conference, the General Advisory Council of the BBC, the most important of all the Committees, complained at its meeting on 10 April, at which Cadogan was present, that it had not been informed about the announcement of future plans or allowed to comment on them.<sup>35</sup> The Council was chaired by Norman Fisher, experienced question master in the wartime and post-war *Brains Trust*, which had switched from radio to television; and it included a wide range of influential people, including two well-known former Ministers, Viscount Waverley and J. Chuter Ede, four MPs, Lady Megan Lloyd George, Clement Davies, W. Glenvil Hall, and Kenneth Younger, the broadcaster Mary (later Lady) Stocks, Leslie (later Sir Leslie) Farrer Brown, Director of the Nuffield Founda-

<sup>32</sup> \*Wellington, 'Sound Broadcasting Future', 9 April 1957 (R34/1022/6).

<sup>33</sup> \*Report of the Working Party, paras. 96–101. The heading for the whole section, 'Stages of Execution', must have sounded ominous to many people in Broadcasting House.

<sup>34</sup> For the structure, see *BBC Handbook, 1957*, pp. 229 ff.

<sup>35</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 10 April 1957.

tion, the Bishop of Bristol, the adult educationist Professor Raybould, and Alan (later Lord) Bullock. Few of these people, whatever their background, were prepared to be rubber stamps. It was Chuter Ede who raised the matter, immediately putting Cadogan on the defensive, and it was Younger who won general consent for his proposal that in future, if a major policy change were under consideration by the Corporation, it should be brought before the Council 'at an early stage before any precise proposals had been formulated.'<sup>36</sup>

Jacob had deliberately chosen dangerous tactics when making his public announcement on the change. He had chosen not to refer even once to finance or to the need for economies. 'It should be implied', he had decided earlier, 'that the changes were being made because the BBC thought them right, to meet the wishes of the listening public.'<sup>37</sup> His statement was selective in other respects,<sup>38</sup> but the thrust was clear. 'More of what is broadcast will be designed for relaxation and entertainment.'<sup>39</sup> In talking to the staff, however, earlier on the same day, Jacob had referred to 'the distasteful subject of finance' and the need to make overall savings of 10 per cent. 'Revenue being static and costs not being static it is clear that over the [next] three years we have got to reduce expenditure.' 'You can be sure', he had continued, that 'if changes in output cause casualties among the staff, everything will be done to mitigate any hardship.'<sup>40</sup>

There was some immediate favourable reaction in the Press, which gave Jacob's statement full coverage; but the tactics had been dangerous not only because of the suspicions of some members of the General Advisory Council, but because a public argument about the changes and their likely effects had begun weeks before Jacob actually met the Press. Moreover, critics of the kind of changes that had been mooted or were being proposed had already created an organizational structure to sustain and, indeed, to extend the argument. On the day that Jacob made his statement, 8 April, a new body, the Third Programme Defence Society, issued a statement of its own describing the BBC's plans as a 'disaster' for sound broadcast-

<sup>36</sup> \*Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 28 March 1957.

<sup>38</sup> For example, while claiming that 'the essential characteristics of the Third Programme will remain unchanged', he did not refer to the need to build up a larger audience than there had been in 1955 and 1956.

<sup>39</sup> \*BBC Press Statement, 8 April 1957.

<sup>40</sup> \*'The Future of Sound Broadcasting: Statement to Staff by the Director-General on 8th April 1957' (R34/1022/6).

ing. 'We interpret it', the statement went on, 'as a retreat on all fronts in the face of the advance of competitive television.'<sup>41</sup>

The leading critic of the BBC and organizer of the new body was the Cambridge historian Peter Laslett, Fellow of Trinity College, who had worked from 1946 to 1949 as a BBC Producer of Third Programme talks.<sup>42</sup> He had first been galvanized into action when the BBC had issued an earlier Press Statement in late January 1957 stating vaguely that 'some adjustment of the existing pattern of sound broadcasting to meet the developing needs of the listening public may be made later this year'. A letter from him to *The Times* in strong support of the continuation of the Third Programme had stimulated a lively correspondence, and in March 1957 the Third Programme Defence Society had been set up at a Charing Cross Hotel meeting.<sup>43</sup> Laslett went on to write a pamphlet for the Society, *The Future of Sound Broadcasting*, which, after asserting the 'fundamental importance' of the Third Programme to 'our cultural and national life', urged readers to write and complain to the Director-General of the BBC, the Governors, the Postmaster-General, and their MPs.

On 27 March, without any such prompting being necessary, the House of Commons discussed the Third Programme. The Labour MP Kenneth Robinson, who was to become Chairman of the Arts Council far ahead in 1977, had asked the Postmaster-General what discussions he had had with the BBC about 'the abandonment of the Third Programme wavelength'. 'None, Sir,' was the economical reply given by Kenneth Thompson, the Assistant Postmaster-General, who had worked during the War for the Ministry of Information. Robinson pointed out that 130 members of the House of Commons had signed a motion 'that this House would deeply regret the passing of the BBC Third Programme'.<sup>44</sup>

The matter was debated fully on 18 April 1957, ten days after the BBC's Press Release. Once again, it was Robinson who raised the issue; and this time he referred to the activities of the Third Programme Defence Society which, he claimed, had received 5,000 letters after an announcement of its objects had been placed in the

<sup>41</sup> *The Times*, 9 April 1957.

<sup>42</sup> He had become a Fellow in 1953. He was to serve on the Working Party which recommended the foundation of the Open University. See below, p. 496.

<sup>43</sup> \*BBC Press Statement, 31 Jan. 1957; *The Times*, 11 Feb., 25 March 1957.

<sup>44</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 567, col. 1132, 27 March 1957. The Labour/Conservative party ratio was 3 : 1. Among the Conservative Members who signed was Peter (later Lord) Rawlinson, who in the previous year had been very critical of BBC policies at the time of Suez. For his comments then, see below, pp. 107–12.

personal column of *The Times* by Peter Needs, 'an angry young schoolmaster', who had been chosen as the Society's provisional Chairman.<sup>45</sup> Some of the finest of the letters were said to have come from 'working-class people'.<sup>46</sup>

Robinson referred too to Jacob's presentation of the BBC's case on 8 April, and to the fact that the General Advisory Council had not had the chance of discussing it. He also quoted the headline of *The Times* leader 'More Light'.<sup>47</sup> The weeklies, too—and Robinson did not quote them—had been generally unfavourable. *The Economist* had described the BBC as having made 'the worst of all its worlds in sound broadcasting'.<sup>48</sup> Later in the year, Henry Fairlie was to be equally critical in the *Spectator*, which he had joined as a columnist in 1955. While agreeing that Haley's pyramid was out of date, and that there was a case for separating out the 'popular' from the 'rest', he felt that the Light Programme was now to become much too light, and would soon resemble a woman's magazine—with a dash of sport for the men—rather than 'any popular newspaper'.<sup>49</sup> Fairlie was an acute observer, who did much to promote the idea of 'the Establishment', within which, he argued, the BBC had become an essential part.

Taking Jacob's silence on economics to mean that the BBC proposals had not been based on 'the desire for economy', Robinson claimed that the proposals had produced 'a black depression' in Broadcasting House.<sup>50</sup> Other MPs disputed this vigorously—as Jacob was to do—but the Labour back-bencher Anthony Wedgwood Benn, whose first job had been with the BBC, supported him strongly, adding for good measure—and hinting at much that he was to say about the BBC in the future—that it was a body which was 'sometimes

<sup>45</sup> This description of Needs appeared in *News of the World*, 24 March 1957. See also K. Whitehead, *The Third Programme: A Literary History* (1989), pp. 216–17.

<sup>46</sup> *The Times*, 21 March 1957.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 April 1957.

<sup>48</sup> *The Economist*, 13 April 1957.

<sup>49</sup> Henry Fairlie, 'Pendulum and Pyramid', *Spectator*, 20 Sept. 1957. Fairlie, born in 1924 and educated at Oxford, also associated himself with one familiar line of attack—the existing Third Programme which he claimed had never been 'meant to become the playground for the esoteric sports of one-dimensional dons'. In 1956 he had figured controversially in an *Any Questions?* programme (see below, p. 115), and in 1966 he was to move to the USA after being sued by Lady Antonia Fraser for a defamatory remark made in another *Any Questions?* programme in which they were both panellists. He left Britain unwilling to pay damages. He died in 1990.

<sup>50</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 568, cols. 2152–7, 18 April 1957. This view had been challenged the previous Sunday in the *Observer*, which had described 'New Third Men' who were 'positively elated' by the changes (Kenneth Harris, 'The Shape of the BBC's New "Third"', 14 April 1957).





1. 'I'm not worried—we don't listen to Luxembourg no more since the commercial telly started', Sproed in *Punch*, 3 April 1957.

unresponsive to public opinion'. It was good, he went on, 'that the House of Commons had the chance of discussing it'. None the less, the Commons, he concluded, in a curious phrase, 'was a great gainer by the BBC', which fully reported its business. He described his criticisms for this and for other reasons as 'affectionate'.

Winding up for the Government, Thompson argued that the BBC had not behaved improperly in changing its strategy for sound. Criticizing the 'Auntie BBC' name as a caricature—this was the first time that the name had been used in a debate in the House of Commons—Thompson believed that Britons living in a 'mixed society'—'salty as well as serene, erudite as well as easy going, high, low and middle brow'—were 'not doing too badly out of what the BBC provides'.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>51</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 568, col. 2174, 18 April 1957.



The Third Programme Defence Society obviously did not think so, and eight days later sent another letter to *The Times*—on this occasion with a list of signatories which included Lord Beveridge, Sir Adrian Boulton, Harold Nicolson, Bertrand Russell, Victor Gollancz, and T. S. Eliot.<sup>52</sup> A few days later, they were supported by Sir George Barnes, writing from Keele.<sup>53</sup> A later letter was signed by Camus, Malraux, Maritain, Maurois, Milhaud, and Lionel Trilling. On 3 May Cadogan took the unusual step of writing to *The Times* himself, insisting that the Third Programme was not going to be merged with any other Programme, as critics had forecast before 8 April. Nor was it true that 'the competitive situation in television' had shaken 'the Corporation's resolve to be much more than a provider of mass entertainment'.<sup>54</sup>

The argument continued throughout the summer, although Laslett, 'moved', as he put it, 'by good will towards the BBC', told Cadogan in the middle of May that he would drop the public controversy if the Governors would receive a deputation to discuss the issue 'in the spirit of Article 17 of the Charter', the Article that referred to the BBC's public accountability.<sup>55</sup> The Governors, who, like many others, thought that the Society was overstating its case, considered the letter along with an impressive list of names of people supporting the Society at their meeting on 23 May.<sup>56</sup> They decided then that they did not want to meet a deputation in their capacity as a Governing Body, but left it to Cadogan to ask Laslett for a full memorandum setting out the Society's case.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>52</sup> *The Times*, 26 April 1957. For the list of supporters, who included 200 academics and 200 representatives of the arts, see The Sound Broadcasting Society, *Unsound Broadcasting, the Case Against the BBC's New Policy* (1957). This pamphlet, costing 1s., was published by Faber and Faber. Eliot was one of Faber and Faber's Directors. The pamphlet included a copy of the BBC's Press Statement of 8 April.

<sup>53</sup> *The Times*, 1 May 1957. Haley wrote to Barnes, 15 April 1957, that he did not find the 'so-called sound broadcasting reorganisation . . . convincing'. 'The BBC's purpose is now in danger of being muddied' (private papers).

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 May 1957.

<sup>55</sup> \*Letter from Laslett to Cadogan, 18 May 1957 (reprinted as a Governor's paper). Bertrand de Jouvenal had queried whether the BBC should use its monopoly position to 'give the public everything and anything it wants'. Hitherto he had supported the monopoly. 'But there is no justification at all for the monopoly if the monopolist is not by the privilege afforded to him removed from the temptation, natural to the market competitor, to give the public everything and anything it wants' (quoted in Sound Broadcasting Society, *Unsound Broadcasting*, p. 9).

<sup>56</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 23 May 1957.

<sup>57</sup> \**Ibid.*, 20 June 1957. At this meeting the Governors minuted my willingness to write a history of the BBC, and invited me to undertake the work. The history was envisaged as a two-volume work. At the same meeting there were discussions about a portrait of Haley.

On 18 July, just before a further full meeting of the Governing Body, Cadogan, along with the Vice-Chairman of the Governors, Sir Philip Morris, Lord Rochdale, and Jacob received a small 'deputation' from the Society, and Cadogan reported back rather guardedly to the Governors that the Society, which had by then renamed itself the Sound Broadcasting Society, had many 'misapprehensions' about the BBC.<sup>58</sup> No 'undertakings' had been given, he insisted. The Governors had reiterated before the meeting that their decisions about the future of sound broadcasting had been firm. 'There could be no question of going back on them.'<sup>59</sup>

The deputation had been an impressive one. T. S. Eliot, who had been made a Vice-President of the newly named Society, represented the 'Spoken Word'—he called proposed cuts in talks output a 'massacre' and 'sheer vandalism'. Sir Ralph Vaughan Williams and Michael (later Sir Michael) Tippett represented music, and Laurence (later Lord) Olivier represented drama. Some of the discussion centred on patronage. More of it related, however, to the broad issues of culture and society which already profoundly interested Eliot.<sup>60</sup> According to a well-informed writer who examined the issues years later—and far away—in the *New Yorker*, Eliot had talked of the dangers of pandering to 'the more moronic elements in our society'. 'The day of bread and circuses is over; the general cultural level of the community is rising; the BBC should provide more and more leaven.'<sup>61</sup>

The Society's deputation was not satisfied by the next BBC Press Statement on the subject of the Third Programme, which was presented to a Press Conference in late August.<sup>62</sup> Nor, indeed, were several sections of the Press, including some that did not support the Society. *The Times* once again found an excellent terse headline: 'The Diminished Third'; the *Manchester Guardian* stated that the plans contained 'neither surprise nor reassurance'.<sup>63</sup> A week before, it had printed a leader entitled

<sup>58</sup> \*Ibid., 18 July 1957.

<sup>59</sup> \*Ibid., 6 June 1957.

<sup>60</sup> Eliot's *Notes Towards a Definition of Culture* had appeared in 1948. In 1950 he had written a letter to *The Times* after he had read that the BBC proposed to spend £4m. during the next three years on television, complaining about the harmful mental, moral, physical, and social effects of television, which he described dismissively as 'this pastime'. The American example showed how dangerous the 'television habit' was, 'whatever the programmes might be' (20 Dec. 1950). Eliot never compared the content of British and American programming.

<sup>61</sup> Quoted in V. Mehta, 'Onward and Upward with the Arts: The Third', *New Yorker*, 18 May 1963.

<sup>62</sup> \*BBC Press Statement, 26 Aug. 1957.

<sup>63</sup> *The Times*, 27 Aug. 1957; *Manchester Guardian*, 27 Aug. 1957. Earlier the *Manchester Guardian* had accused the Society of overstating its case (*ibid.*, 9 April 1957).

'Homelier and Lighter', in which it pointed to the abandonment of 'the old guiding idea of the BBC—that of putting 'the educative pea somewhere under even the most feathery mattress'. 'In this way listeners were supposed to improve themselves almost unawares.' It had been 'a sensible idea', the *Manchester Guardian* claimed. Was it now the case—under financial pressure—that the BBC was 'tacitly abandoning the belief that taste can be encouraged upwards?'<sup>64</sup>

Among all the questions raised, Wellington himself believed that this was the cardinal 'crucial' question 'at the heart of the critical ferment of recent months', as he put it in a memorandum to Jacob.<sup>65</sup> He had obviously not enjoyed talking to the Broadcasting House staff at a second meeting in June, at which he began by saying that there had been much 'misunderstanding'. The 'general policy of the BBC' had been reaffirmed, not subverted.<sup>66</sup> In August too, he had found it necessary to circulate a note to the Sound staff contradicting the 'ordinary mis-statements made in the Press about our affairs . . . You know what our problems are and you are helping to face them.'<sup>67</sup>

An Oxford, as well as a Cambridge, dimension had been introduced into the argument at a meeting held at Oxford on 17 July 1957. This took place one week after the summer meeting of the General Advisory Council had considered BBC Sound policy at some length and after Cadogan, while stressing the advisory nature of the Council, had apologized for the BBC's April Press Statement having been made two days before the Council had last met. On this occasion Cadogan was applauded for his frankness, though Chuter Ede in the Chair stated somewhat coolly that he thought that the appropriate verdict of the Council was 'Not guilty, but do not do it again.'<sup>68</sup>

The Oxford meeting was presided over by Alan Bullock, who had worked with the BBC during the War, and who at the meeting held a week earlier had asked for a note properly setting out the arguments on which 'future plans for sound broadcasting had been based'.<sup>69</sup> At the Oxford meeting, Jacob, who admitted that in future the BBC would become a less generous patron of 'composers and

<sup>64</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 21 Aug. 1957.

<sup>65</sup> \*Wellington to Jacob, 'Policy Sound Broadcasting', 27 Aug. 1957 (R34/874/4).

<sup>66</sup> \*'Sound Broadcasting Policy and Practice', June 1957 (R34/1022/6).

<sup>67</sup> \*Circular letter of 15 Aug. 1957 marked 'personal' (R34/422/3).

<sup>68</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 10 July 1957. Cadogan said far less about the Sound policy of the BBC than about the constitutional position of the General Advisory Council as an advisory council.

<sup>69</sup> The information requested was duly printed for the General Advisory Council's meeting on 16 Oct. 1957.

dons' than it had been in the past—their opposition, he obviously felt, was a major factor in the rallying of a broader front against the BBC—went on to claim that 'if the Corporation could have six months in which to try its new scheme, it would prove successful, although it was inevitable that there should be a howl when anything was cut down.'<sup>70</sup>

'Trying out the scheme' was left to the authors of the Working Party Report. Two of the members of the Working Party, Marriott himself and Standing, were given new key jobs. Marriott became Assistant Director of Sound Broadcasting, and Standing Controller, Programme Organisation, Sound, 'responsible for the co-ordination and control of administrative, establishment and logistic matters within the Sound Broadcasting Directorate both in London and, to the lesser appropriate degree, in Regions'.<sup>71</sup> Pelletier was made Controller, Programme Planning, Sound, responsible under Marriott, for the 'co-ordinated planning of Home Service and Light Programme and (to the less degree appropriate and possible) Third Programme Network'. The Third Programme retained John Morris as its Controller for one more year before Newby succeeded him.

The implementation of the proposals, announced in September in the *Radio Times*,<sup>72</sup> proved easier than had been anticipated, and the much-discussed changes, once they had taken place, were given relatively little emphasis in the *BBC Handbook, 1958*, which insisted that the BBC maintained 'unchanged its essential aims'.<sup>73</sup> For Wellington, the launching of the new Programmes had been 'a relief'. Network Three, in particular, had, he thought, made 'an admirable start' on 30 September, 'sturdy, vigorous and well on the defined target'. 'We may now hope to get constructive criticism of what we are in fact doing, instead of emotional comment on all the sins we might possibly commit.'<sup>74</sup>

<sup>70</sup> \*Report of a Meeting, 17 July 1957. Sir Isaiah Berlin was present as one of the University's representatives. The BBC representatives included Harman Grisewood, Wellington, and John Morris (R34/1022/6).

<sup>71</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'The Future of Sound Broadcasting in the Domestic Services: Note by the Director-General', 7 March 1957. There was little in the memorandum about the Regions, which 'were not significantly affected by the present proposals'. See below, pp. 619–27, 649–79.

<sup>72</sup> *Radio Times*, 27 Sept. 1957, in which Wellington wrote an article, 'The New Pattern of Sound Broadcasting'. 'Culture' would now be 'on offer', he stated, 'not spoonfed'. There was not one minority, he added, but many, and Network Three would cater for the many minorities.

<sup>73</sup> *BBC Handbook, 1958*, p. 32.

<sup>74</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report by Director of Sound Broadcasting, July–Sept. 1957'

None the less, for all the sense of relief, the BBC's difficulties were not over. While there was to be relatively little difference in the overall balance of sound broadcasting between 1957 and 1960,<sup>75</sup> and Network Three was described in the *Handbook* simply as 'an experiment which will only take its final shape as a result of experience and as a result of public demand and response',<sup>76</sup> the opening sentence spoken on its first night had certainly suggested change. The programme, *What's Your Pleasure*, which promised that it would deal with music in alternate weeks on Network Three and in the other weeks with 'the other arts', books, plays, and archaeology, had been announced in totally un-Reithian terms. 'You will hear what you want to hear, and we will do our utmost to see that you get it.'<sup>77</sup>

Tom Driberg, writing in the *New Statesman*, observed that it was hard to understand why the Third Programme should have been 'mutilated' to make way for Network Three. 'There was little in it on Monday that could not have been accommodated in the Home, or even the Light.'<sup>78</sup> Meanwhile, *The Economist* objected to the reduction in the amount of time devoted to music, which could never be 'relegated to the printed page'.<sup>79</sup> It continued to watch the course of British broadcasting as carefully as McGivern was watching it from inside the BBC.

The leading members of the Sound Broadcasting Society had not been listening on Opening Night. Instead, they had staged a 'Third Programme Entertainment' at the Royal Court Theatre, where among those taking part were John Gielgud, Peggy Ashcroft, Cecil Day Lewis, Jill Balcon, Peter Laslett, and the Allegri quartet. Eliot had hoped to attend, but he had sent a message instead, part of which was read for him. What 'frightened' him, he explained, was the assumption that the minority audience which found 'entertainment in what also gives it mental and emotional nourishment' was 'less important than the majority' just because it was a minority.<sup>80</sup> Laslett,

<sup>75</sup> See Paulu, op. cit., pp. 157–62, for a detached view of what had happened and its consequences. 'The plan was in no sense a revolution in programming, requesting instead a shift of emphasis within the already existing framework' (p. 159). Network Three was 'Britain's nearest approach to America's educational stations' (p. 160).

<sup>76</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1958, p. 34.

<sup>77</sup> The announcement might have been written by the Working Party ('see para. 31(a), 'Response to Listeners' Wishes': 'The programmes should reflect fairly... the whole range of what people find stimulating and pleasurable... The BBC should respect [people's] preferences more and not seek to alter them.'

<sup>78</sup> *New Statesman*, 5 Oct. 1957.

<sup>79</sup> *The Economist*, 31 Aug. 1957.

<sup>80</sup> T. S. Eliot, 'The Spoken Word', Address for 'A Third Programme Entertainment', 29 Sept. 1957. The message was reprinted by the Sound Broadcasting Society.

whose speech was reprinted in the *Cambridge Review*, followed a different line of thought. The BBC was still failing to recognize that the pursuit of 'culture' was something different from satisfying the interests of 'dog fanciers, bird watchers and beginners in the Spanish language'. The reason why it had drawn a distinction between the Third Programme and Network Three was because the 'cultured minority', which was bracketed with other minorities, was more influential than the rest.<sup>81</sup>

The Sound Broadcasting Society claimed in February 1958 that by then the Third Programme had lost 37 per cent of its serious music and 22 per cent of its drama, but the BBC counterclaimed that the audiences for sound had actually increased. There were now 340,000 more listeners. *The Times* regretted the nature of the counterclaim. 'Quantitative values' were being propounded 'at the expense of quality'. 'It is as if Ariel were to become the servant of Caliban.'<sup>82</sup> The image, though not the policy, was to appeal to D. G. Bridson, Assistant Head of Features, who had been present at the meeting when Wellington summoned the staff of Sound departments to discuss the future of sound broadcasting.<sup>83</sup> In 1971 Bridson was to present his own personal recollections of 'the rise and fall of radio' under the title *Prospero and Ariel*. His chapter on the late 1950s is called unabashedly 'radio in the doldrums'.

## 5. The Power of the News

In what was a highly personal account, Bridson touched only very briefly on what stands out as one of the biggest changes in the broadcasting situation during the 1950s and 1960s: the increased attention paid to news and to current affairs broadcasting and to political broadcasting both in sound and in television. From the late 1950s onwards this was to alter the balance of broadcasting—both in sound and in television—far more than the controversial changes in sound introduced in the aftermath of the Marriott Report.

<sup>81</sup> *Cambridge Review*, 12 Oct. 1957.

<sup>82</sup> *The Times*, 11 Feb. 1958.

<sup>83</sup> He had found Wellington's attitudes 'unadventurous'. 'HMS *Vanguard* might be written off as obsolete, but the nature and character of radio would remain, substantially as it had been' (Bridson, op. cit., p. 229).



The biggest changes in news broadcasting were to come later,<sup>1</sup> and they were to have profound consequences, both public and institutional. As early as 1957, however, gradual changes in political broadcasting were taking place, which again, over a long period of time, would affect politics as much as the shape of the BBC. The Marriott Report touched on such changes only *en passant*, but Jacob himself was directly involved, while the General Advisory Council, this time well informed, was drawn into a fuller discussion of them than it had been in its disjointed examination of Home, Light, and Third.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, there were people in BBC Television—even more of them in ITV—who were aware of the implication, short-term and long-term, of changes in news and ‘current affairs’ policy, both for sound and television and for other media, including newspapers and periodicals. Within this context questions of competition could never be completely left out.

It was in dealing with the Home Service that the Marriott Working Party had itself touched on some of the issues, stressing that this was the Programme that should carry ‘the main news and information services of the BBC, involving both the full-length news bulletins and current affairs programmes like *At Home and Abroad* and *Radio Newsreel* and the formal commitments for Party Political broadcasts, etc.’<sup>3</sup> *At Home and Abroad* had won praise in many quarters for its ‘topicality’,<sup>4</sup> as had its offspring *The World This Week*, broadcast on Saturday mornings. As Stephen Bonarjee put it, the producers felt that ‘the most exhilarating—if sometimes exhausting—factor in their work springs from the challenge of “immediacy”’.<sup>5</sup> *Radio Newsreel*, first broadcast as an Overseas Programme during the War, had been transferred to the Light Programme in November 1947, and had won a large and appreciative audience.<sup>6</sup>

Television News was not mentioned once in the Report, although, following pressure for ‘news-in-vision’, a combined television *News*

<sup>1</sup> See below, pp. 152 ff.

<sup>2</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 10 July 1957.

<sup>3</sup> \*Report of the Working Party, para. 41. In para. 63 there was a further reference to ‘local information and news’, which American experience had suggested could be an important element in local broadcasting, commercial or otherwise.

<sup>4</sup> See Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 535–6.

<sup>5</sup> *Radio Times*, 7 Jan. 1955.

<sup>6</sup> See Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, p. 525. There was no news on the Third Programme, although the *From Our Own Correspondent* programme began there before being transferred to the Home Service. ‘The Third Programme always cheers me up’, a *Punch* writer observed in 1957. ‘This is understandable: it has no news bulletins’ (quoted in the BBC radio programme *Scrapbook for 1947*, broadcast on 17 March 1957).



and *Newsreel* had been broadcast since July 1954.<sup>7</sup> Described in the *Sunday Times* as 'an uneasy compromise between a sound-radio bulletin and an illustrated newspaper', it often generated considerable internal debate—as much about organization and resources as about content and style—although there were some differences of views, particularly about 'personalisation' of news and views, that went deep.<sup>8</sup>

When competition began, one man was in charge of all BBC news, sound and television, the New Zealander Tahu Hole, whose title was itself comprehensive—Editor, News. Current affairs management, however, was in different hands, separate hands in Broadcasting House and Lime Grove. News presentation was cautious and conservative. It was not until September 1955, three weeks before ITV came on the air, that the still un-named BBC newsreaders, whose voices were heard by viewers, were actually seen by them. Previously, the readers had been concealed behind caption cards.<sup>9</sup> Current affairs presentation was more adventurous, although interviewing was for the most part bland.

The need to develop a new approach both to news and to current affairs had been strongly advocated by Jacob even before he became Director-General. From his vantage-point in Bush House, he had come to appreciate the importance both of organizing a 'bigger supply of news' and of planning a wider range of current affairs programmes. It was imminent competition, however, that provided the spur to institutional change. Having surveyed the scene from Broadcasting House, he told the BBC's News Division in June 1955 that a 'New Deal' was necessary. Although 'news people' might be unpopular with some of their BBC colleagues, he went on—and there

<sup>7</sup> Earlier television news had been a version only of the sound news piped from Broadcasting House to Alexandra Palace. Viewers saw only a clock on the screen—and nothing more. The earliest *Newsreels*, first transmitted in Jan. 1948, had been produced not by the News Division of the BBC but by a separate Unit in Alexandra Palace. For the many internal disputes about its location and its role see Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 539 ff.

<sup>8</sup> Maurice Wiggin, *Sunday Times*, 11 July 1954. In Jan. 1953, before the start of *News and Newsreel*, Tom Hopkinson, ex-Editor of *Picture Post*, produced a commissioned *Report on Television Newsreels* which raised many of the issues. When *News and Newsreel* amalgamated—after several postponements—two people connected with the old *Newsreel*, Paul Fox and Richard Cawston, refused to be transferred to Alexandra Palace. They both had important careers ahead of them. (See below, pp. 234–6, 390, 861–2, 966.)

<sup>9</sup> Robert Dougall, who became one of the best-known BBC television newsreaders, strongly supported this change. (See his autobiography *In and Out of the Box* (1973).) John Snagge, who had made his name in sound, was one of the objectors to it. (See Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, p. 544.)

was certainly a suspicion at that time of 'journalists', just as there was to be a suspicion in reverse later on—they were providing a 'central service' of growing importance.

It was their task, he explained, to satisfy and exploit the public appetite for news, and in discharging their task, they should be engaged in servicing all BBC departments. 'A programme item, originating from a point in the news, that has been developed as a special feature by the addition of views and comment, must be presented in a manner that will so convey the full meaning of the content that it will arouse and hold the interest of the audience.'<sup>10</sup>

In the opinion of Harman Grisewood, whose title Director of the Spoken Word was changed in July 1955 to that of Chief Assistant to the Director-General, the BBC had followed no 'news policy' before Jacob's direct intervention.<sup>11</sup> He, more than Jacob, however, was in a position to understand the strength of internal BBC resistances to introducing a news dimension into BBC activities where so-called news 'values' had previously been looked upon with suspicion.

The unpopularity of 'news men' in some BBC circles, when it was not merely a matter of personalities or of prejudices, had ideological roots. There had been a long-standing concern inside the BBC about too much stress on 'topicality', a concern that had survived the Second World War, when the public appetite for news had reached unparalleled heights and the BBC's own news service had expanded significantly. The philosophy behind the suspicion, Haley's philosophy, had been articulated in many of the articles in the *BBC Quarterly*, which was published between April 1946 and October 1954.<sup>12</sup> It was also the guiding philosophy of many of the BBC's producers in the troubled Talks Department inside Broadcasting House, which dealt both with talks on subjects of 'permanent interest' and with talks on current affairs.<sup>13</sup> The former had been deemed the more important.

ITV, which was free from these strands in the BBC's heritage, quite deliberately changed the news system, making use of ex-BBC talent, some of it disgruntled by BBC experience, in order to do so. The

<sup>10</sup> \*Director-General's Talk to News Division, 22 June 1955 (T16/119/5).

<sup>11</sup> \*Grisewood, 'Notes about News', 5 April 1955 (T16/119/5).

<sup>12</sup> 'It is no part of the BBC's function', Haley had told the Radio Industries Club in 1944, 'to become another newspaper. News is only a small fraction of the BBC's activities and output' (quoted in Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, p. 519, where the significance of the demise of the *BBC Quarterly* is explained).

<sup>13</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 535 and 579 ff.

preparation and presentation of national and international news was handed over not to the contracting companies but to a specialist subsidiary company, Independent Television News, formed in February 1955. The Authority had a right to attend all meetings of its Board—Fraser himself always attended—and, even more important, had to approve of its choice of Editor-in-Chief. Its first Editor-in-Chief, Aidan Crawley, an ex-MP, a brilliant man of many parts, had presented the BBC programme *Viewfinder*, a programme which had Michael Peacock, a future Head of the second BBC Television Channel, BBC-2, as producer, and which owed much to the example and advice of Ed Murrow in the United States.

Once ensconced in his new headquarters at Television House, at the foot of Kingsway, not far from Bush House, Crawley developed a newscaster system which again owed much to American example. Unlike the BBC's newsreaders, whose bulletins were written for them, ITN's newscasters were responsible for presenting the news in their own language. They also helped to gather and to select news. The three first newscasters were Christopher (later Sir Christopher) Chataway, much in the public eye as a long-distance runner, Robin (later Sir Robin) Day, then largely unknown to the public, who had worked with the BBC before moving to ITN, and Barbara Mandell, born in South Africa, the first of a series of women newscasters—and newsreaders. Crawley also had the assistance of Philip Dorté, who, behind the camera, had been a key figure in the development of BBC's *Newsreel*.<sup>14</sup> After leaving the BBC, Dorté had worked for a brief spell with ATV, the television company run by Norman Collins. He had co-operated closely with Collins while they were both involved in BBC Television.

Crawley's own spell at Television House was itself brief, yet it was long enough for him to make a permanent impact. Moreover, the manner of his going—on a matter of principle—strengthened, rather than weakened, the young organization. It also demonstrated that for all the differences between the structures of ITV and the BBC, there were underlying restrictive attitudes towards the active development of news in both organizations. In both cases, too, finance influenced attitudes, for awkward questions arose about the allotment of scarce resources. In the case of the BBC, however, 'folklore' was involved as well as self-interest or reasoning.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> See P. Dorté, 'The BBC Television Newsreel', *BBC Quarterly*, vol. 3 (1949).

<sup>15</sup> Grisewood, in 'Notes about News', had written of 'a mass of tradition—folklore or myth it may be called—that has grown up round news and the BBC's handling of news'.

One man who was in a position to know about both structures—Howard Thomas, a former BBC producer, who was Managing Director of ABC from 1955 to 1968—triggered the early crisis in ITN that led to Crawley's resignation in December 1955.<sup>16</sup> Demanding toughly that ITN should reduce the number of its news bulletins and shorten their length in order to save money, Thomas and his allies put so much pressure on Crawley that he offered his resignation. The Authority, which according to statute had to satisfy itself that news was presented with 'due accuracy and impartiality', was forced directly to intervene. By insisting in a display of principle that there should be a minimum of twenty minutes of ITN news a day—a figure said to have been plucked from the blue by Clark—the Authority secured the withdrawal of the resignation, only to find that the companies were strong enough to fight back, seeking through a new sub-committee to curb ITN's funds. Crawley now resigned a second time, this time for good, on 13 January 1956.<sup>17</sup> The effect of the suggested cuts would have been to reduce Independent Television News bulletins to 'radio in vision' as BBC news bulletins had been until so very recently.<sup>18</sup>

On the day of Crawley's resignation it fell to the lot of Robin Day, very much Crawley's own choice as a newscaster, to interview Clark about the resignation and its significance both for ITN and for the ITA. It was Day's first live television interview, although after only a short time in television he was already well known for his belligerence.<sup>19</sup> Refusing to treat Clark differently from any other person whom he might be called upon to interview, Day realized his intention of 'clearing the air', and secured a pledge from Clark that a 'full and responsible news service of at least twenty minutes a day' was essential. Day's handling of the interview won him the unstinted praise of colleagues inside ITN, among them a number of colleagues

<sup>16</sup> Thomas had launched Vera Lynn's *Sincerely Yours*, and had been the architect of the *Brains Trust*. (See Briggs, *The War of Words*, pp. 290–1.) He left the BBC in 1943 to join Pathé Pictures Ltd. He moved to ABC Television as Head of the Documentary Department before becoming its Managing Director. He says nothing about his involvement in ITN in his autobiography *With an Independent Air* (1977).

<sup>17</sup> The detailed story is well told, and the 'lessons' from it are drawn, in Sendall, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 85 ff., 140 ff.

<sup>18</sup> For financial restraints on early BBC television news development see Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, p. 539.

<sup>19</sup> R. Day, *Grand Inquisitor* (1989), p. 78. Day writes himself of his 'belligerent interpretation of the newscaster's role', which, he explained, had the full support of Crawley. For an early critique see *Truth*, 22 June 1956, which he quotes. See also his earlier book *Day by Day*, subtitled *A Dose of My Own Hemlock* (1975), esp. ch. 7, a chapter of questions.

with whom he had previously clashed, of critics of his style outside ITV, and, inside the BBC, of Peacock, who was now producing *Panorama*, the programme with which Day himself was eventually to be closely associated.<sup>20</sup>

Day's reputation was consolidated in 1956 and 1957 under the regime of ITN's second Editor-in-Chief, the quiet but impressive New Zealander Geoffrey Cox, whose reputation as a Press journalist—and as a contributor to BBC current affairs programmes—was well established before he took the risk of heading a young and obviously still vulnerable television news organization.<sup>21</sup> Even before Cox arrived, however, Day had already formed his own conception of competition in the course of his brief career. After leaving Oxford and becoming a barrister, he had joined BBC sound, showing enough initiative while there to suggest a daily morning news programme in sound, an idea which his superiors, including Stewart, did not choose to take up or even to take seriously.<sup>22</sup> Day tried too—and failed—to be admitted to a BBC television training course. Only after being successfully interviewed for his ITN post was he asked by John Green whether he might change his mind and stay with the BBC if he were offered 'an immediate and special increase in salary'.

'For the first time in my life', Day wrote in retrospect, 'I really understood what competition meant. I was no worthier of the BBC's interest than I had been a month previously. It was simply that someone else was after my services.'<sup>23</sup> He soon went on to draw more general conclusions about institutional competition. 'ITN set new standards of rigour, enterprise and pace for television news, making the BBC version look stiff and stuffy, which it was. Ludicrous taboos were swept away by the post-1955 wind of change.'<sup>24</sup>

When competition began, with one man in charge of all BBC news, sound and television, there was one central news pool at Egton House, a few yards away from Broadcasting House. It 'fed' not only BBC radio, but Alexandra Palace, from which television news was broadcast, and Bush House, from which news bulletins in English

<sup>20</sup> Day, *Grand Inquisitor*, pp. 86–7. Day also quotes the *Evening Standard*, 14 Jan. 1956. 'Robin Day hammered at Sir Kenneth Clark so hard that at one stage a definitely worried look came into Sir Kenneth's eyes. Full marks.'

<sup>21</sup> See Cox, *op. cit.*, for an admirably concise, lucid, and readable account of his life in ITN. He paid a tribute to Goldie, with whom he had served what he called his television 'apprenticeship' (p. 17).

<sup>22</sup> Day, *op. cit.*, pp. 68–9. The long-running programme *Today* was introduced two years later. See above, p. 42, and below, pp. 222–3.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82. Day greatly appreciated Crawley's confidence in him.

were transmitted along with bulletins in foreign languages. Sound still set the agenda—and the pace. The list of the main stories provided for the 1 p.m. sound bulletin always provided the starting-point for the 11 a.m. planning meeting held at Alexandra Palace.<sup>25</sup>

This centralized system had Jacob's backing.<sup>26</sup> So, too, did Hole, described by Cox, his fellow New Zealander, as 'a powerful man filling a powerful position'.<sup>27</sup> After having been Assistant Editor for two years, Hole became Editor, News, in 1948. Tall, grave, authoritarian, and ambitious—he was determined to secure a seat on the Board of Management and dreamed of the Director-Generalship—Hole was to alienate many of his colleagues inside the BBC, particularly Hugh Greene—in this case 'alienate' is too weak a word—first, by his unwillingness to take account of any views other than his own, and, second, by what they came to regard as an entrenched and restrictionist attitude towards the news itself. His emissaries even brushed with Jacob in January 1955, when there was a wrangle on the eve of the general election about the access to News Division tapes by a group from Topical Talks in sound, then organized by Stephen Bonarjee. The wrangle ended with Jacob demanding that what seemed to him an 'absurd departmental divisional rivalry' should cease.<sup>28</sup>

Few of Hole's staff were attached to him, for he was suspicious of independent initiatives, particularly in television. The atmosphere was often tense. Yet there was an 'old guard' that shared his outlook. One critical member of his staff, writing in retrospect, referred to the regime as 'at times terrifying'. 'The vitals of the news staff—their enterprise, their willingness to experiment or even to try to match the treatment to the occasion, and certainly their joy in the job—were utterly destroyed.'<sup>29</sup> Another member, appointed to arrange the first facilities for news-in-vision, chose different metaphors, speaking with feeling, when he returned to Britain from a visit to the United States in 1954, of News Division 'playing along on a set course, like some editorial Queen Mary, with a bridge full of officers, while the

<sup>25</sup> \*'Presentation of News in BBC Television Service: Report of a Study Group', 24 April 1959 (WAC file T16/482/2). See below, pp. 152–6.

<sup>26</sup> Jacob had called the news supplied to different audiences 'the kernel of overseas broadcasting'; but he had refused, none the less, to allow control of bulletins in foreign languages to be determined by Egton House.

<sup>27</sup> Cox, *op. cit.*, p. 6. Hole had risen rapidly in the BBC's hierarchy. He had been a news commentator in the Empire Service before becoming Overseas Talks Manager in 1944.

<sup>28</sup> \*Stephen Bonarjee interviewed by George Scott for the Oral History Project, April 1980.

<sup>29</sup> Note written by Anthony Wigan, Autumn 1974.



Baverstock boys [in Television Talks] buzzed and bucked by in their jet-driven patrol boat'.<sup>30</sup>

For all his insistence on rules and penalties and for all his difficulty in communicating with many of his own staff and colleagues who were heads of other divisions or departments, Hole believed fiercely that his own approach to news presentation was right and that it would be disastrous to 'Americanize' it.<sup>31</sup> He was proud, indeed, of the fact that visitors from the American NBC found *News and Newsreel* not only 'strikingly consistent in its excellence' but 'strikingly more international than most TV programmes in the United States'.<sup>32</sup> Hole did not like snippets of news, and he insisted on all items of news being checked. There had to be at least two separate and matching sources. Scoops were very unlikely, therefore. So also, however, were gaffes. In 1956 Tom Driberg argued that the main role of the BBC had been to teach people to stop believing newspapers—'newspapers at any rate of the more garish sort'.<sup>33</sup> Hole would have agreed. Experiments in presentation had to be watched carefully. He had been criticized himself in 1950 when he tried to tamper with the format of the almost sacred 9 p.m. news bulletin by introducing headlines, by concentrating on a limited number of stories, and by introducing live or recorded inserts.<sup>34</sup>

Hole took it for granted that there was a division inside the BBC between news, which should be objective and unadulterated, and current affairs, which could be explanatory and speculative, a distinction that was not drawn in the United States but that was drawn inside ITN. Indeed, it was a distinction which had attracted Cox when he decided to join ITN. Thus, while the BBC's *Panorama* was the responsibility of Television Talks, the liveliest group in television, it was Associated-Rediffusion, and not ITN, that developed one of the liveliest ITV current affairs programmes, *This Week*.<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile, in BBC sound a unit of twelve specialists in current affairs, headed by John Green, had been set up in 1953 and had developed not only *At*

<sup>30</sup> Note by S. W. Smithers, who was appointed Television News Organiser in April 1954 and, after W. J. Brething, Head of Television News in 1956. See below, p. 156. Smithers wrote an unpublished book 'The Auntie that Changed Sex'.

<sup>31</sup> He had visited the USA, as had Dorté and McGivern. (See Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 540, 544.)

<sup>32</sup> \*Romney Wheeler to Jacob, 10 Sept. 1954; Leonard Hole to Jacob, 28 Oct. 1954 (R28/265/2).

<sup>33</sup> T. Driberg, *Beaverbrook: A Study of Power and Frustration* (1956), p. 215. Cf. A. J. P. Taylor's view of Beaverbrook in *Beaverbrook* (1972).

<sup>34</sup> \*Hole to Barnes, 'New Type of Bulletin', 4 May 1950 (R28/88/5).

<sup>35</sup> For *Panorama* see below, pp. 164–7.



*Home and Abroad* but *The World This Week*.<sup>36</sup> The older programme, *Topic for Tonight*, had among its contributors Geoffrey Cox (before 1956), William Clark,<sup>37</sup> Cyril May (an applicant for Cox's job at ITN), Mark Abrams,<sup>38</sup> Graham Hutton, Andrew (later Sir Andrew) Shonfield, and Honor Balfour.

The contracting companies continued to claim that current affairs was their responsibility, not that of ITN, and ITN had to argue with them about its programme *Roving Report*, first presented in March 1957 as a news programme 'in depth'. In ITA headquarters, Fraser pressed for the division of interests to be maintained. 'Documentaries and news features are the consciences of the programme companies', he told Cox. If they were taken away from them and given to ITN, the companies would be only 'entertainment-makers, entirely given over to the show-biz mind'.<sup>39</sup>

'Showbiz' was far from Hole's mind when he persuaded Jacob in the late autumn of 1956 to commission a report from Audience Research on the 'consumption of news', public attitudes towards its different ingredients, the quality and 'standing' of the BBC's news services, and, still low on the list, television news. Silvey and his colleagues set to work on the survey in December 1956, using their standard 'audience barometer' and supplementing it with a special inquiry—and a special sample—and with a series of twenty group sessions at Broadcasting House, at which 1,154 listeners made written comments on the contents and presentation of the 6 p.m. News after having listened to it together. It was published as *The Survey of Listening and Viewing*.<sup>40</sup>

The preoccupations of those carrying out the survey did not include fears of news saturation or fears of bias in the presentation of news. Nor did they spill over into issues concerning 'current affairs' broadcasting. Instead, as in the case of other inquiries made around this time, considerable emphasis was placed on 'comprehensibility'—what viewers and listeners could understand—although it was conceded that 'the fact that many listeners already knew the

<sup>36</sup> Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, p. 536. At the same time J. C. Thornton, Administrative Officer, Talks Department, moved over to become Assistant Controller, Talks, to Mary Somerville, then the most experienced woman on the BBC's staff. She retired from the BBC in 1955.

<sup>37</sup> See below, p. 85.

<sup>38</sup> See above, p. 25 n.

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in Cox, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

<sup>40</sup> The survey, based on daily interviews, was given its name in 1951. It provided the basis for much BBC research. See Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 242 ff.

antecedents of a news story means that they are likely to be able to get the hang of its main point even if some of its wording were obscure to them'.<sup>41</sup>

Facts came first in the Report, which appeared in June 1957. Nine out of ten of the adult population heard or saw BBC News broadcasts during the course of a week, with seven out of the ten who did so stating that they *usually* listened to the whole sound bulletin. The main reason given for listening to the late evening Home Service and Light Programme news bulletins, the former the pivotal BBC news programme of the Second World War, was the desire 'to hear the very latest news'. The second reason was that BBC news bulletins were more 'reliable', although not necessarily more 'interesting', than newspapers. Broadcasting was treated by most people as the main source of news.

According to the Survey, listeners and viewers liked the way the news was presented, a very different way from that which was soon to develop. 'The traditional BBC policy of dispassionate news reading was supported by virtually everyone,' even if in practice this sometimes meant that newsreaders 'sounded uninterested' in what they were reading. There was 'no substantive demand for change in the length of bulletins, for alterations in their timing or for more (or less) frequent use of the voices of BBC Correspondents, a distinguished group of radio journalists which, with Haley's encouragement, had been deliberately built up since 1945'.<sup>42</sup>

'Listeners' appetite for news', the Survey suggested, extended over a wide range of subjects, but was particularly keen for news of 'accidents and disasters' and, somewhat surprisingly, 'science and technology'. Weather rated third. There was no demand for 'gossip'. Obviously 'the papers' provided plenty of that. Yet one-seventh of the items broadcast in a sample of ten 6 p.m. news bulletins in February and March 1957 had been voted 'rather dull' and 'very dull'

<sup>41</sup> \*An Audience Research Report, *The News: A Study of News Listening and Viewing and of the Public's Attitudes Towards the BBC's News Service*, June 1957, pp. 5-10. Comprehensibility studies were developed first by Professor Philip Vernon and his wife, and later, along the same lines, by Joseph Trenaman, who in 1959 was to make a detailed study of television and the general election (see below, p. 248) after being the first Granada Fellow and Head of the University of Leeds Television Research Unit, one of the first university centres of communications research in Britain, supported financially by Granada. Sir Gerald Barry, formerly Editor of the *News Chronicle* and Director of the 1951 Festival of Britain, was the intermediary.

<sup>42</sup> Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, p. 524. The Correspondents in 1956 included Roland Fox, BBC Parliamentary Correspondent; Bertram Mycock, the Industrial Correspondent; and F. D. Walker, the United Nations Correspondent.

by sizeable minorities, and there was a sense too that through too much repetition far too many items had lost their freshness.

In the statistics relating to 'interest' and 'social scale' there was a social dimension, similar to that detected by the Marriott Working Party. 'The amount of Television News viewing decreased with each step down the social scale.' It was also notable that younger people, particularly the 16 to 19 age-group, tended to see and hear less news than their elders. And when they saw or heard, they were more 'desultory', being prepared to switch attention, if not to switch off, after the headlines. In general, however, differences in listening and viewing habits were related more to 'convenience' and to 'opportunity' than to 'attitudes'.

The conclusion of the Report, set out in less than a page of 'reflections', was not complacent. 'It would be a mistake to conclude that because the public is, by and large, satisfied with the BBC News Service, its satisfaction could not be increased.' Nevertheless, there was an element of complacency in the references to competition. It was claimed confidently, for example, that the reason why BBC and ITN shares of the viewing audience were 9.6 per cent and 14.6 per cent, when the BBC and ITN were in direct competition at 10.45 p.m., was 'audience inertia'. People viewed the early news on whichever channel they subsequently intended to view and the late news on whichever channel they had been viewing earlier.<sup>43</sup> BBC television news, the Report argued, enjoyed 'greater respect than ITN amongst those who can view either'.

Whether or not quality counted for less than habit, as far as competition between ITN and BBC was concerned, in the other kind of competition within the BBC itself—between sound and television—television had already won. The 7.15 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. news bulletin on television had rather more than 4¼ million viewers, while the 9 p.m. Home Service news, once the peak point of the listening day, had less than half that number of listeners.<sup>44</sup> Soon, in one of the most symbolic moves of the whole period covered in this volume, it was to move away from 9 o'clock.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup> The 6 p.m. BBC news bulletin on radio was listened to by 4.9% of the Band III public, as compared with an 8.5% rating for ITN's 5.45 p.m. news bulletin.

<sup>44</sup> Less than 1% of television-viewers heard either the 9 p.m. or 10 p.m. news bulletins on Sound. Yet there was an appreciable audience for the 6 p.m. radio news when, until mid-Feb. 1957, television screens were blank because of the 'toddlers' truce'. See below, pp. 159–60.

<sup>45</sup> See below, pp. 325–32. For the situation in 1957 see *Radio Times*, 15 Feb. 1957.



---

## Suez

Reading the Suez documents was a sombre experience.

PETER HENNESSY and MARK LAITY, 1987

External broadcasting is a long-term operation. It should be founded on principles that will stand the test of all situations.

THE BBC'S EXTERNAL SERVICES, A Paper for the BBC's General Advisory Council, 1957

We express our appreciation of the London radio station, BBC, for the objective information given to the world about our people's struggle. We were particularly pleased to note that there was no incitement to extremism and that the tone of the broadcasts expressed solidarity in our joy over victories and in our sorrow in weeping for our dead.

Message from FREE HUNGARIAN RADIO, delivered to the British Legation in Budapest, 3 Nov. 1956

I do not want to get us involved in a declared radio war in the Middle East. One reason for this is expediency . . . The resources which we should be able to devote to such a war are less than those of our opponents . . . Secondly, the idea that we are fighting a radio war would tend to make our future relations with the Arab states more difficult. We want to persuade as many of them as possible that it is in their interests to establish a *modus vivendi*.

SELWYN LLOYD to CHARLES HILL, 10 Nov. 1958

---

## 1. Two Crises: Two Threats

Within the period covered in the last chapter there were events abroad that not only hit the news headlines but seemed to mark the sharpest of breaks between the old and the new. The most traumatic of them all was the Suez crisis, which reached its peak in November 1956, when a second crisis—in Eastern Europe—had equally serious international ramifications. Suez was a crisis that raised basic questions about power, including the power of broadcasting, and while it lasted, it posed what seemed at the time to be a serious threat to the BBC as a broadcasting institution.

The word 'threat' was in the air. Now, in the aftermath of the start of commercial television, the threat came, as far as the BBC was concerned, not from 'the competitor' but from the Conservative Government of Sir Anthony Eden (later first Earl of Avon), who in April 1955 had succeeded Churchill. It had something in common with the threat posed by the general strike to the infant BBC before it received its first Royal Charter.<sup>1</sup> Yet in 1956 the issues were both domestic and foreign. It endangered, therefore, both the BBC's independence in its domestic broadcasting and its integrity as a provider of external broadcasting services, including news. In the latter role it had established an unparalleled international reputation during the Second World War.<sup>2</sup>

Fortunately for Britain, it retained that reputation during the crisis in Eastern Europe. Beleguered as it had often been during the Suez crisis—and the two crises for a time became one—the BBC now won the kind of tributes abroad that it had won during the War. The Hungarians in particular, victims of Soviet military power, thanked the BBC for broadcasting the information they wanted—and needed—in days of trouble. They distinguished between the Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, and the BBC on the grounds that 'you could always be sure that if the BBC said something was the case it was the case'.<sup>3</sup> Sadly, however, free Budapest could not be saved by radio or by television.

<sup>1</sup> See Briggs, *The Birth of Broadcasting* (1961), pp. 329 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Briggs, *The War of Words* (1995), *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in a Memorandum for the General Advisory Council, 'The BBC's External Services', 4 Jan. 1957.

Thousands of words have been written about 'the Suez crisis' and its aftermath, most of them in a war of words that continued to be waged long after British forces attacked Egyptian airfields on 31 October 1956, landed at Port Said on 5 November, and accepted a cease-fire on 7 November.<sup>4</sup> With few exceptions, however, relatively few words have been devoted to the broadcasting issues raised during the crisis, serious though they were at the time,<sup>5</sup> and important though they were deemed to be when they were raised later—for example, in the last few pages of the memoirs of Harman Grisewood, who in 1956 was Chief Assistant to the Director-General.<sup>6</sup>

The most concise, clear-cut, and detached of the statements about the double threat to the BBC in 1956 was made soon afterwards by J. B. Clark, who had succeeded Jacob as Director of External Broadcasting in 1952 when Jacob became Director-General. With a long, rich experience of external broadcasting, including broadcasting to Arab countries, that went back to pre-war days, Clark explained in 1957 why there had been so much fuss.

At no time since broadcasting began had there been such a lack of agreement in Parliament and the country on a major matter of foreign policy. Never previously, therefore, had the BBC's tradition of objective reporting, in its external as in its home programmes, [been required] to show to the world a large part of the nation deeply critical of the Government of the day on a matter of vital national concern.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Two of the first books to appear were among the liveliest, Paul Johnson's *The Suez War* (1957) and Randolph Churchill's *The Rise and Fall of Sir Anthony Eden* (1959), even if Randolph Churchill was described (misleadingly) by Anthony (later Lord) Head, Minister of Defence during the last stages of the Suez crisis, as a writer who could 'be bracketed with Edgar Allan Poe for imagination' (*Hansard*, vol. 597, col. 1074, 16 Dec. 1958). Hugh Thomas's *The Suez Affair* (1966) was an early attempt at a synthesis. See also an American study by L. D. Epstein, *British Politics in the Suez Crisis* (1964), which, however, does not refer to broadcasting in its chapter on 'the broader public'.

<sup>5</sup> One exception is an article by J. King, 'The BBC and Suez', *Round Table*, Vol. 304 (1987), which presents a somewhat different set of conclusions from mine. Another is the most recent and comprehensive study of Suez, that of K. Kyle, *Suez* (1991), which includes many references to the BBC, with which he had worked between 1951 and 1953 and with which he was to work again from 1965 to 1981 on long-term contracts. The idea of a book on Suez was suggested to him by Peter Hill, the BBC producer of his four-part television series *Secrets of Suez*, broadcast by the BBC in 1986. There are no references to broadcasting in W. R. Louis and R. Owen (eds.), *Suez 1956: The Crisis and its Consequences* (1989).

<sup>6</sup> Grisewood's *One Thing at a Time* appeared in 1968. His BBC connections stretched back to 1929, when he was a member of the BBC Repertory Company. Before becoming Chief Assistant to Jacob, he had been Controller of the Third Programme from 1948 to 1952 and Director of the Spoken Word, the grandest of all BBC titles, from 1952 to 1955.

<sup>7</sup> Cmnd. 267 (1957), *BBC Annual Report and Accounts, 1956-7*, p. 15. I dedicated *The War of Words* to Sir Beresford Clark, as he had then become; he was knighted in 1958.

There were to be later occasions when a large part of the nation was deeply critical of Government for its foreign policy, but on no later occasion was party difference so pronounced as in 1956. Moreover, in 1956 there were divisions behind the scenes in Whitehall as well as at Westminster and among soldiers and sailors as well as among politicians and civil servants. The Cabinet was split, and the fact that when action was taken it was only to be abruptly terminated, revealed 'realities' that had hitherto been obscured.

In relation to the second crisis of 1956, there was unity of sentiment in Britain concerning Hungary, but no action, and the lack of action was decisive. While for more than a generation the problems of the Middle East were to remain unsettled, Hungary was to remain firmly within Russian control.<sup>8</sup>

To understand how the two crises were perceived and related at the time—and they were both world crises—it is impossible to leave out the role of the United States. There would have been no Suez crisis had the foreign policy of the United States been more clearly thought through, and the crisis came to an end because of the strength of American economic power. The invasion of Egypt was terminated after a run on the pound and an American refusal to support a British request for a loan from the International Monetary Fund unless a cease-fire were agreed. The American writ, however, did not stretch as far as Budapest.

There was much that the British public did not know about the origins and course of both crises. It would have known less, however, without the BBC.

## 2. Suez Unfolds

Early in 1956, there were few intimations that during the year to come there would be a double international crisis, one that would involve both Israel and the Arab world and Central and Eastern Europe. Indeed, in 'East-West relations' there were grounds for hope during the spring of 1956 following Khrushchev's attack on Stalin at the Twentieth Communist Party Congress in Moscow in February; and when in March his predecessor Malenkov, now demoted to be Russian Deputy Prime Minister, visited London, it seemed fitting that

<sup>8</sup> See A. Adamthwaite, 'Suez Revisited', *International Affairs*, vol. 64 (1988), pp. 449–64.



Hugh Gaitskell, newly elected leader of the Labour Party, should present him with a copy of Evan Durbin's *Politics of Democratic Socialism*.

The first surprise came a few weeks later when Bulganin and Khrushchev followed in Malenkov's steps to London on an ill-starred visit and found themselves quarrelling openly—and in the full glare of publicity—not with the Foreign Office but with the Labour Party.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, throughout those months there was more public preoccupation in Britain with troubled Cyprus, where a state of emergency had been declared the previous November, than with either Egypt or Eastern and Central Europe.

The sharpest domestic divisions in January and February concerned not foreign but domestic affairs. Labour relations were troubled, and the BBC was itself seriously affected by a dispute with the Musicians' Union, leading to gramophone records being substituted for live orchestras.<sup>2</sup> (When Eden succeeded Churchill, the newspapers had been on strike.) Meanwhile, a dispute between printers and publishers of periodicals led to the *Radio Times*, reduced to a single sheet, being printed in Paris and Lille.<sup>3</sup>

With a great reputation as a conciliator, Eden had secured a small majority at the general election of May 1955,<sup>4</sup> and although early in 1956, in the words of the *Annual Register*, he was passing through one of those 'spells of depreciation which are the lot of all political leaders', there was no premonition that within a year he would have left 10 Downing Street.<sup>5</sup> Nor was there any premonition that the Labour Party's new leader, elected by a large majority in the Parliamentary party in December 1955, would be involved in bitter

<sup>1</sup> Gaitskell gave a television interview on the visit (P. Williams (ed.), *The Diary of Hugh Gaitskell, 1945–1956* (1983), p. 515), but it was Eden who made the best use of television on this occasion. See also below, p. 82, for the status of his broadcast as 'Ministerial'. There were problems for the Government later, following Soviet allegations concerning the activities of Commander Crabb (see Churchill, op. cit., pp. 217–20).

<sup>2</sup> Cmd. 9803 (1956), *British Broadcasting Corporation, Annual Report and Accounts for the Year 1955–6*, pp. 71–2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73. Other BBC publications were printed in Cologne, Normandy, and Malta.

<sup>4</sup> For the election, which the *New Statesman* (and others) called the first 'TV election' (14, 21 May 1955), see Briggs, *Sound and Vision* (1979), pp. 677–86. It was none the less a dull election. 'Even TV could not make an impact' (*Spectator*, 27 May 1955). 'What it lacked in excitement it made up in decorum' (*Annual Register for the Year 1955*, p. 27). During the election the Conservative Party had hired Roland Gillett (see above, p. 9), who for the BBC was a representative of 'the competitor'.

<sup>5</sup> *Annual Register*, 1956, p. 1. The headline on 5 Jan. 1956 in the *Daily Mirror*, not a sympathetic newspaper, read 'EDEN IS A FLOP. EVEN THE TORIES ARE SAYING IT NOW.' Cf. critics in the *Daily Telegraph*, a sympathetic newspaper, 3 Jan. 1956, and Churchill, op. cit., pp. 207 ff.

exchanges with him: Gaitskell had little sympathy with political extremism in his own ranks or outside. Like Eden, however, he had his critics inside his own party, and as the international situation deteriorated in 1956, some of the divisions were to cut across party lines.<sup>6</sup> Others were to generate a degree of party bitterness that had been absent during the Second World War, even during the last stages of Neville Chamberlain's Prime Ministership. Then the argument had been about leadership and not about objectives.

Both Eden and Gaitskell knew that it was essential in politics to make effective political use both of radio and of television, although in the opinion of Grisewood, who had been a contemporary of Gaitskell at Oxford, the Labour leader had 'little natural sympathy with broadcasting'.<sup>7</sup> Eden had. At the general election of 1955 he had come top in every BBC television rating.<sup>8</sup> Gaitskell, by contrast, always felt happier on the platform than in the television studio.<sup>9</sup> None the less, he seemed prepared to learn, and early in 1956 he established good relations with Grisewood.<sup>10</sup> He also told Grisewood that in future he personally—and not the Secretary of the Labour Party, Morgan Phillips—would take charge of relations between the Party and the BBC.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> In his memoirs, *Full Circle* (1960), p. 320, Eden was to write later that he and Gaitskell 'never seemed to get on terms'. That was not obvious in Dec. 1955.

<sup>7</sup> Grisewood, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

<sup>8</sup> Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, p. 680; Grisewood, *op. cit.*, p. 193; M. Cockerell, *Live from Number 10* (1988), pp. 28–32. Eden had first been interviewed for television on 9 Sept. 1951 after a trip to the USA. He also appeared on television after the Geneva Peace Conference on 28 July 1955.

<sup>9</sup> Gaitskell detested the 'manipulation of personality' to create an 'image', a detestation that was to influence all his attitudes towards Harold Macmillan (later Lord Stockton). He was also suspicious both of public relations and of advertising agencies. The Labour back-bencher Anthony Wedgwood Benn, however, was anxious that the Labour Party, which had set up a Broadcasting Committee, should 'radically revise its assessment of the importance of broadcasting propaganda so as to take into account the new situation created by the size of television and radio audiences' (quoted in Cockerell, *op. cit.*, p. 32).

<sup>10</sup> Benn was present in Jan. 1956 when Gaitskell had a TV rehearsal at a local studio. 'I am fairly confident', Gaitskell wrote after it, 'of being able to speak to the camera with an audience' (Williams (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 413). He judged his performance later in the months as 'fair' (*ibid.*, p. 428). When he met Grisewood (*ibid.*, pp. 414–15), they discussed trade union problems and industrial unrest, as well as the choice of BBC Governors—Gaitskell suggested three possible replacements for Barbara Wootton—and 'whether Ministers should be allowed to go on TV outside Party political series'.

<sup>11</sup> P. Williams, *Hugh Gaitskell, a Political Biography* (1979), pp. 379, 382. On 27 Feb. Gaitskell, according to his diary, had lunch at the BBC with Jacob and 'five or six top people'. The main topic of discussion was the '14 Day Rule' (see below, p. 84). He found Jacob 'a very serious, rather conservatively minded, but very successful ex-General', and concluded that he would be 'quite good as an administrator' (Williams (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 455).

The Suez crisis, which had a long prologue, went through many twists and turns before reaching its climax. It was, in fact, a series of crises, raising different, if always related, issues. It also had a curious 'idiosyncratic' element in it, for it revealed 'oddities of the moment as much as underlying trends in the decline of British power'.<sup>12</sup> Broadcasting figured in each phase, not least in the prologue, for it was through President Nasser's 'Voice of the Arabs' programmes, broadcast by Cairo Radio, that the Egyptian leader was able to make a direct appeal to the 'Arab World'.<sup>13</sup> And the Egyptian propaganda machine was to continue to operate after the crisis was over, creating further problems both for the Government and for the BBC.<sup>14</sup>

The prologue began with a military coup that led to the fall of King Farouk of Egypt in 1952, followed in 1954 with an Anglo-Egyptian agreement that entailed the withdrawal throughout 1955 of British troops from the Canal Zone. The withdrawal stirred a 'Suez group' of Conservative MPs into revolt against Eden's policies, but left President Nasser unconciliated and strongly anti-imperialist. Appealing successfully to the crowds, he was bitterly opposed to Britain's role in the making of the Baghdad Pact of February 1955, with Iraq as its keystone, and was successful in preventing Jordan from joining it. The next dramatic step came on 1 March 1956, when the King of Jordan dismissed General Glubb, the Englishman who commanded his Arab Legion, and two months later Nasser bought large quantities of arms, including bombers and fighters, from the Czech government. These last two events shifted the regional balance of power in the Middle East, a particularly sensitive area for Britain, both for political and for economic reasons.

The first element of an idiosyncratic kind in the crisis was that when news arrived of Glubb's dismissal, Britain's Foreign Secretary since December 1955, Selwyn Lloyd—he had succeeded Macmillan, who became Chancellor of the Exchequer—was in Egypt dining with Nasser. On returning to Britain, Glubb strongly urged Eden to use the BBC's Arabic Service to counter Cairo Radio propaganda, which he believed had secured his dismissal.<sup>15</sup> Eden listened. Ian (later Sir Ian)

<sup>12</sup> D. Reynolds, *Britannia Overruled, British Policy and World Power in the Twentieth Century* (1991), p. 205.

<sup>13</sup> See G. Waterfield, 'Suez and the Role of Broadcasting', *The Listener*, 29 Dec. 1966. Waterfield, who had worked with *The Times* and with Reuters, was Head of the Arabic Service of the BBC from 1945 to 1963. In the same article he noted how strongly Eden's perception of the crisis was influenced by BBC-monitored reports of Egyptian radio broadcasts. Eden had studied Arabic and Persian as an undergraduate at Oxford.

<sup>14</sup> See below, p. 680.

<sup>15</sup> Waterfield, loc. cit.

Trethowan, then a political correspondent of the *News Chronicle* and later a Director-General of the BBC, described the Prime Minister's nerves at this time as being 'as taut as a banjo string . . . [He] was ripe for fiasco.'<sup>16</sup>

The situation entered yet another new phase on 19 July 1956, when the American Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, refused to employ American economic power to help Nasser build the Aswan High Dam. Talks had been going on concerning the project, which mattered immensely to Nasser and to Egypt, since November 1955. Dulles was deeply disturbed, however, by Egypt's arms deal with Czechoslovakia. His eyes were on Russia, and he did not foresee the consequences. They were speedy. One week later, on 26 July, Nasser announced that he had nationalized the Anglo-French Suez Canal Company. (Eden heard the news when he was dining in London at a State banquet for King Feisal of Iraq.) Initially the dramatic news brought together, rather than separated, most (but not all) sections of the two main British political parties, for the reaction of the Labour Party leadership to Nasser's announcement was as sharply anti-Nasserite as Eden's had been. Gaitskell, who was present at the State banquet,<sup>17</sup> was outraged by the Egyptian action, while Herbert Morrison, Attlee's last Foreign Secretary—and the man whom Gaitskell had beaten in the election for the party leadership—condemned Nasser as 'this pocket dictator in Cairo'. Another Labour MP, R. T. Paget, asked the Prime Minister in Parliament whether he was aware of the consequences of not answering force with force until it was too late.<sup>18</sup>

So long as there was near consensus between the political parties, there were no special difficulties for the BBC, even though Gordon Waterfield, Head of its Arabic Service, who had opposed the idea of using the Service to counter Radio Cairo in a propaganda war, was concerned about the attitudes of his staff. There was another idiosyncratic element in the situation, however, in that Cadogan, Chairman of the BBC's Board of Governors since 1952, was also one of the directors of the Suez Canal Company. Cadogan had been very much a Churchill nominee to the Chairmanship, and before that he had served long and faithfully in the Foreign Office as Eden's right-hand

<sup>16</sup> *News Chronicle*, 12 March 1956.

<sup>17</sup> He wrote a full account of it in his diary (see Williams (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 551–5).

<sup>18</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 557, col. 1657, 2 Aug. 1956; vol. 557, cols. 779–80, 27 July 1956.

man.<sup>19</sup> As the crisis developed, therefore, there was a private line between the Chairman's office and 10 Downing Street.

It was against this background that on 8 August 1956 Eden made what was then only the second Ministerial broadcast on television—at 10 p.m. on a Wednesday evening. The first television Ministerial broadcast had been on the occasion of the visit to London of Bulganin and Khrushchev, and had been arranged in part to establish the convention, as Eden put it, that Ministerial broadcasts could be made on television and not only on sound.<sup>20</sup> The second broadcast was less happy than the first. Grace Wyndham Goldie, who made the arrangements and produced the broadcast, was ashamed of the Lime Grove setting in which it took place. Eden had to climb three flights of concrete steps lit by naked bulbs in order to reach the tiny studio from which he broadcast. Not even iced champagne was much of a consolation on a stifling August night.<sup>21</sup>

Eden who, against his will, had to wear his glasses for the broadcast in order to be able to read his script easily, is said to have suspected, as Churchill had done, that there were 'Communists at the BBC' who were deliberately shining the light in his eyes.<sup>22</sup> None the less, he thought rightly that he had got his message across. The term 'Ministerial broadcasts' was a technical one, relating to broadcasts that were required to follow a set of rules and conventions that had been accepted by the main political parties. They were not meant to be controversial in their content; and on this occasion Eden followed the pattern when he warned the country of the dangers of appeasing dictators and emphasized the commercial importance to Britain—and to the world—of the Canal.

<sup>19</sup> See Briggs, *Governing the BBC* (1979), pp. 209 ff.

<sup>20</sup> PRO, *Cabinet Minutes*, 29 March 1956. See above, p. 78 n. In 1954 the Labour Party had opposed such broadcasts, partly on the ground that 'a Minister might build up his personal reputation', partly on the ground that the damage of being controversial was greater on television than on sound (PRO Papers, PREM 11/2604, Patrick Buchan-Hepburn, Chief Whip, to Eden, 20 June 1955). For the origin of the rules and their application see Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 581 ff. and the Appendix to that volume which reprints the key *Aide Memoire on Political Broadcasting*, 6 Feb. 1947, rev. July 1948. See also below, p. 92.

<sup>21</sup> G. Wyndham Goldie, *Facing the Nation* (1977), pp. 176 ff.

<sup>22</sup> Cockerell, *op. cit.*, p. 45. Eden objected to wearing glasses on two counts. First, they made him look old. Second, he was too busy to learn television scripts by heart, but did not want viewers to learn that he was reading. Yet he was even more preoccupied with the politics of the people that he met, and on his return to Number 10, he and his entourage generally agreed that Goldie was 'a well known socialist' (W. Clark, *From Three Worlds* (1986), p. 171). In fact, she was a Conservative and a friend of the Earl of Woolton, then Chairman of the Conservative Party. She always kept her political views strictly private.

Whatever the problems involved in producing the broadcast—and they were far fewer than those of preparing for a military operation—all the problems involved in ‘distributing’ it effectively were fully overcome. It was delayed for twenty-four hours so that it could also be relayed by ITV—this, too, was a new departure—and it was then simultaneously broadcast by domestic radio and on shortwave by the General Overseas Service. Abroad, it was relayed by all four radio networks in the United States and by all the broadcasting authorities in the Dominions. Ironically, on British domestic radio the broadcast delayed the start of a scheduled Home Service programme on ‘The Policy of Appeasement’.

Between the broadcast, which was well received, and the end of August the political consensus in Britain, including the consensus at Westminster, was effectively destroyed. So, too, was mutual understanding between Britain and the United States on what to do next. Increasingly, suspicion grew on both sides of the Atlantic that events were leading up to a joint Anglo-French attack on Egypt. President Eisenhower left no doubt that he opposed a military solution. Eden, for his part, fretted at delays.<sup>23</sup> Inevitably, therefore, the role of the BBC became far more difficult both in domestic and in overseas broadcasting. They were managed quite separately—the first from Broadcasting House, the second from Bush House—but ultimately it was the Board of Governors that was responsible for both.

Some of the first signs of political party difference in Britain were obvious in letters to *The Times* written before the Eden broadcast; and at a meeting on 10 August between Eden and Gaitskell (along with Alfred (later Lord) Robens, Labour’s shadow Cabinet spokesman on Foreign Affairs, the Labour Party asked Eden to give an undertaking that he was not preparing to use force unless in accordance with the United Nations Charter.<sup>24</sup> Thereafter, the United Nations, with Dag Hammarskjöld as Secretary-General, figured prominently in the unfolding of events and in all British discussions of foreign policy. Hammarskjöld knew that the United States, where Eisenhower was in the last stages of a Presidential campaign, wanted to work through

<sup>23</sup> The differences on the American side were set out clearly by S. E. Alibone in his *Eisenhower* (1984). See also Eisenhower’s own account, *The White House Years: Waging Peace, 1956–1961* (1966).

<sup>24</sup> In his anti-Nasser speech of 2 Aug. Gaitskell had said, ‘We must not allow ourselves to get in the position where we might be denounced in the Security Council as aggressors, or where the majority of the Assembly were against us’ (*Hansard*, vol. 557, cols. 1616–17, 2 Aug. 1956). See also Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 576. The first joint Anglo-French military planning began on 8 Aug. For Cabinet reaction see A. Horne, *Macmillan, 1894–1956* (1988), pp. 406 ff.



the United Nations. He knew too—and it was priceless knowledge—that whatever intermediate moves were agreed upon, Eisenhower and Dulles were adamant that any attempt by Britain and France to take action by ‘shooting their way through the Suez Canal’ had to be checked.<sup>25</sup>

There were immediate implications for the BBC even during the period when international attempts were being made to influence Nasser without using force. Thus, in the first of the intermediate moves, a Conference of Canal Users, called by the United States, Britain, and France, opened at Lancaster House in London on 16 August, and revealed substantial differences in the attitudes of Britain and the United States to the use of coercion against Egypt. The differences were brought out, not concealed, in a television discussion programme. Such a discussion, a relatively new feature in television broadcasting, did not fit easily into any system of political broadcasting based on conventions and rules, which later in the year R. A. Butler, then Lord Privy Seal, was to liken to medieval theology.<sup>26</sup> Grisewood, not unknowledgeable about theology, did not object to the parallel. Most politicians in practice did, although it was they or their predecessors who had drawn up the rules.

All such conventions and rules were soon to appear as both restrictive and undemocratic. So, too, was the most restrictive of all rules, the so-called ‘Fourteen Day’ rule which went back to 1943 and which laid down that the BBC should not ‘on any issue, arrange discussions or *ex parte* statements which are to be broadcast during a period of a fortnight before the issue is debated in either House or while it is being so debated’.<sup>27</sup> Fortunately, perhaps, neither House was sitting when the London Conference took place.

<sup>25</sup> The British Ambassador to the USA, Sir Roger Makins (later Lord Sherfield), made this position plain to the Foreign Secretary from the start.

<sup>26</sup> Grisewood, *op. cit.*, p. 202. Grisewood had chaired an inconclusive working party on the subject in 1953 (Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, p. 614). The working party was concerned only with television. For earlier rules relating to Ministerial broadcasts, which were complicated not because of the attitude of the BBC but because of the attitude of the political parties, see *ibid.*, pp. 636 ff.

<sup>27</sup> A second paragraph in the Rule stated that ‘when legislation is introduced in Parliament on any subject, the Corporation shall not, on such subject, arrange broadcasts by any Member of Parliament which are to be made during the period between the introduction of the legislation and the time when it either receives the Royal Assent or is previously withdrawn or dropped’. For the fascinating history of the Rule, see Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 554–60. The Rule had been enforced between 1945 and 1955 by the BBC itself, but by 1955 it wished to disengage itself. In July 1955, after acrimonious exchanges between the BBC and the Postmaster-General, it became an imposed Rule, an instruction from senior Ministers backed by Opposition leaders. For the subsequent history of the Rule, see below, pp. 114–16.



At the time of the Canal Users' Conference, Eden wanted to secure full backing from the British public, and suggested that a broadcast should be given by his main Commonwealth ally, the Australian Prime Minister, Robert Menzies. As an elder statesman, Menzies had played a key role at the Conference, and at a Cabinet Meeting which he had been invited to attend on 14 August he had 'stressed the need to educate public opinion' as to what was happening.<sup>28</sup> He had also been deputed by the Conference to head a mission to put a plan to Nasser that it was obvious that the Egyptian President would not accept. The Prime Minister was angry, therefore—indeed, he is said by William Clark, his Press Secretary, to have 'exploded with wrath'—when he heard the news that the BBC had refused to offer Menzies an invitation, on the grounds that it would entail political imbalance. The suggestion was declined by John Green, Controller of Talks (Sound), who was acting as the BBC's Liaison Officer with the political parties in place of Grisewood, who was in hospital.<sup>29</sup>

Grisewood had left his post confident that whatever course events took in the Middle East—or, indeed, events elsewhere—there was no cause for alarm that he could foresee 'from the standpoint of the BBC'. 'The programmes which would deal with these events were well manned and the system of control was by now in good order. Relations with Parliament were better and closer than they had been.'<sup>30</sup> In retrospect, Grisewood was completely wrong. At the time, too, he was over-confident about the value of his Rules—or at least about the willingness of politicians to follow them in periods of crisis. He was to be equally confident when, recollecting in tranquillity, he wrote his memoirs a decade later.

Irritated by Green's refusal, Eden telephoned Cadogan,<sup>31</sup> whom he knew so well, and Cadogan, at once agreeing with him that the refusal was 'absurd', 'really nonsense', went on to telephone Jacob, instructing him that Menzies must be allowed to speak 'no matter

<sup>28</sup> PRO, *Cabinet Minutes*, 14 Aug. 1956.

<sup>29</sup> \*Green to Lindsay Wellington, Director, Sound Broadcasting, 'Broadcast by Mr. Menzies', 13 Aug. 1956 (WAC file R34/1580/1). Clark, who had been an experienced BBC presenter, was appointed Eden's Press Secretary two months after Eden became Prime Minister. He describes his position in *From Three Worlds*. See also Clark, 'Suez: An Inside Story', *Observer*, 3 Oct. 1976. His vivid account of events in 1956 must be treated with some caution.

<sup>30</sup> Grisewood, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

<sup>31</sup> Clark recalled that on being summoned to Chequers to discuss the BBC's action, he had refused to complain further to the BBC, and had told Eden to take it up with the BBC himself (Cockerell, *op. cit.*, p. 46).

what our traditions and inhibitions might be'.<sup>32</sup> As a result, to the annoyance of Grisewood, who had by then returned from hospital, the Australian Prime Minister was allowed to broadcast not only on radio but also on television. Grisewood was by now concerned not only with the Rules, most of which concerned 'authority' and 'imbalance'—Menzies' broadcast, Grisewood felt, would be bound to be treated as 'semi-Ministerial'<sup>33</sup>—but with what he regarded as a dangerous intervention by the Chairman of the Governors in the executive management of the BBC. It was a concern that reveals much about the BBC of the 1950s. The supreme danger for Grisewood was that 'the Chairman would misunderstand his role and that the Prime Minister would encourage him to assume more of an executive responsibility than was practical or constitutionally proper'.

With no thought in mind at the time that a politician of the temperament and experience of Charles Hill—he was then Postmaster-General—could ever be a future Chairman of the BBC, Grisewood reflected later that there would always be 'a danger' if a retired civil servant were appointed to the post of Chairman. 'He has acquired a habit of obedience to Ministers and a deference to them which, unless he is very exceptional and of the calibre say of Lord Normanbrook [who by then had served Chairman of the BBC], he finds it hard, past sixty, to alter. Very different and far more suitable to the BBC was Ian [Jacob]'s soldierly disrespect for all politicians.'<sup>34</sup> Normanbrook, who became Chairman in 1964, was knowledgeable about just what was happening in 1956. Prudently, however, he never wrote about his 1956 role not only as Secretary to the Cabinet but as Secretary of the Egypt (Official) Committee of civil servants which held nine meetings between 24 August and 2 November 1956 supporting the work of the Cabinet's Egypt Committee. Details of its secret work have never been made fully available to historians.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> D. Dilks (ed.), *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan* (1971), p. 797.

<sup>33</sup> At the Cabinet meeting which Menzies attended, he had pointed out that 'it seemed possible that there would be insufficient public support for the use of force against Egypt unless some new incident occurred' (PRO, *Cabinet Minutes*, 14 Aug. 1956).

<sup>34</sup> Grisewood, *op. cit.*, pp. 196–7. See also Briggs, *Governing the BBC*, *passim*. Compare Randolph Churchill on 'the dangers inherent in putting a military man' as Defence Secretary 'in charge of generals, admirals, and air marshals' (*op. cit.*, p. 317). Churchill was referring to Anthony Head. For Normanbrook as Chairman of the BBC, see below, p. 378. For Hill's Chairmanship, see below, pp. 595 ff.

<sup>35</sup> One of the members of the civil service committee was (Sir) Ralph Murray, a future Governor of the BBC. Clark saw the papers of the Egypt Committee but not of the Chiefs of Staff.

Normanbrook warned Eden on 9 August that 'the idea of using force in this age' was 'increasingly unpopular'. 'How do you do it in this age?' he asked. He also described the Prime Minister as 'very difficult'. 'He wants to be Foreign Secretary, Minister of Defence and Chancellor.'<sup>36</sup>

As far as broadcasters were concerned, Eden was more disrespectful to them than Jacob was to politicians. After being informed of a broadcast on the Light Programme on 15 August on the eve of the Canal Users' Conference by one of Nasser's spokesmen, the editor of *al-Sha'ab*, Major Salah Salem, 'the Dancing Major', who was critical of the Conference, Eden concluded that the broadcast, which presented the Egyptian point of view, should never have been transmitted. Were the people who arranged it inside the BBC, he asked, 'enemies or just socialists'? In any case, the Corporation was presenting 'a deplorably misleading picture of British opinion as uncertain and hesitant'. Neither the Prime Minister nor the Foreign Office had been told that Salem would broadcast, and insult seemed to be added to injury when the *Evening Standard* quoted a BBC spokesman who stated tersely that 'The Foreign Office were informed that Major Salem was to broadcast. We are not obliged to seek permission.'<sup>37</sup>

Later in the year, when Eden wrote to Winston Churchill criticizing the BBC, he still looked back in anger on this incident, accusing the BBC in September of 'leaning over backwards to be what they call neutral and to present both sides of the case, by which I suppose they mean our country's and the Dancing Major's'.<sup>38</sup> He also warned Cadogan in a personal letter that at a time of 'grave crisis' for 'this country and the whole future of the Western world' he hoped that the Governors would 'bear in mind the very heavy responsibility which rests on the BBC'. 'Many people will judge the strength and determination of Britain by what they hear on the BBC.'<sup>39</sup> He added, however, that 'of course' the Government had 'no intention of interfering with the freedom of the BBC to try and reflect, as well as educate, public opinion in this country'. The words 'of course' now

<sup>36</sup> Kyle, op. cit., pp. 190-1.

<sup>37</sup> PRO PREM 11/1089A; *Evening Standard*, 16 Aug. 1956. Clark wrote against the statement 'They were *not* informed. The F.O. read it in the evening papers and made enquiries.' See his reminiscences, *From Three Worlds*. Apparently, according to Clark, it had been suggested to a Minister that the Salem broadcast 'was designed to balance the ministerials' (op. cit., p. 175).

<sup>38</sup> Quoted in R. Rhodes James, *Anthony Eden* (1986), p. 516.

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in Dilks (ed.), op. cit., p. 797.

stand out. Perhaps they did then. The same message was delivered to Jacob when on 17 August he was summoned by telephone from his home in Suffolk to talk to Eden.

Given Grisewood's suspicions of Cadogan, it is notable that in his reply to Eden, Cadogan told the Prime Minister that he had listened to the Salem broadcast himself, and did not agree with 'all your friends who have criticised it to you'.<sup>40</sup> It had been a scripted statement, quiet in tone. Eden's 'friends', however, were not convinced. Alan Lennox (later Lord) Boyd, the Colonial Secretary, wrote to him on 16 August, calling it 'an outrage that a body widely believed to be in part at least associated with the British Government should broadcast at such a moment a speech by a notorious enemy'.<sup>41</sup>

In focusing on the 'Dancing Major', what Eden and his friends did not acknowledge—and what many of them found it impossible to acknowledge later—was the mounting strength of the domestic opposition to the policies that they were following. There was one Conservative, however, who was helpful to the BBC then and later: Edward (later Sir Edward) Heath, the Government's Chief Whip—William Clark called him 'unworryable'<sup>42</sup>—agreed to give to John Green the names of Conservative MPs who might be asked to take part in future broadcasts when political divisions were apparent. Goldie might have added both to Green's and to Heath's problems, for in August 1956 a television proposal was being considered to send Aidan Crawley, who had returned to the BBC from ITN, to Cairo to interview Nasser himself.<sup>43</sup> Official soundings were taken by Green, who talked to Clark. The proposal, which was deemed 'unwise' at 10 Downing Street, was abandoned.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>40</sup> PRO PREM 11/1089A, Cadogan to Eden, 17 Aug. 1956.

<sup>41</sup> PREM 11/1089A, Lennox Boyd to Eden, 16 Aug. 1956. Boyd wrote another letter to Eden, stating that 'if Nasser wins, or even appears to win, we might as well as a government (and indeed a country) go out of business' (quoted in P. Hennessy and M. Laity, 'Suez—What the Papers Say', *Contemporary Record*, no. 1 (1987)).

<sup>42</sup> Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

<sup>43</sup> For Crawley, see above, p. 88.

<sup>44</sup> \*Green to Wellington, 'Television Proposal to Interview Colonel Nasser', 13 Aug. 1956 (T16/204/1). Clark reported Eden as saying: 'we should lay ourselves open to the criticism of strong forces in the House of Commons, . . . particularly as the interviewer [formerly a Labour, but later a Conservative MP] was known to hold left wing views'. Green told Wellington that he had approached the Prime Minister's office because the BBC was seeking 'to test the responsibility' of its proposal, and that he did not consider that this answered the question. Clark had been 'loath to say that the Prime Minister's Office would not wish us to carry out the project'.

While the situation was deteriorating, the Government asked for permanent broadcasting facilities to be installed in No. 10 Downing Street,<sup>45</sup> and Norman Brook wrote to the Director-General about 'general broadcasting policy', eliciting the firm reply: 'I am not sure what is intended by the words "general broadcasting policy". There has never been any guidance in the past, nor do I believe that we require any . . . I don't imagine that there was any idea that the Government would take it upon themselves to regulate the output of the BBC at this time any more than at any other.'<sup>46</sup>

### 3. Collision Course

With the worsening of the Suez Crisis, Parliament was recalled to Westminster on 12 September under strong Labour Party pressure, and a stormy two-day debate followed. Eden, who was cheered by most of his back-benchers in his opening speech, declared himself increasingly committed to decisive action, including military action, although the closing speech that he delivered was more ambiguous. Meanwhile, most sections of the Labour Party, whatever their other differences, were united in opposing any attempt by Britain and France to bypass the United Nations. In these circumstances, the tone of Gaitskell's speech, in which he described the Prime Minister's stance as 'provocative', was quite different from that of his earlier speeches. The Commons debate ended with an Opposition vote of censure, which was defeated on a party vote by seventy votes, the Liberals voting with the Government.

Gaitskell, who had earlier declined to take advantage of the opportunity of giving a 'Ministerial'-type broadcast 'in reply to' the Prime Minister's broadcast on 8 August and a further broadcast by the Foreign Secretary on 14 August, was now himself requesting the opportunity to broadcast, as Leader of the Opposition.<sup>1</sup> According to Grisewood, he still knew little about BBC 'rules' on such matters.<sup>2</sup> He

<sup>45</sup> William Clark dined with Gerald Beadle on 22 Aug. and discussed the proposal to instal a coaxial cable (op. cit., p. 178). The system was tried out on 5 Sept. (ibid., p. 183).

<sup>46</sup> \*Jacob to Brook, 30 Aug. 1956 (WAC R34/1580/1).

<sup>1</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 13 Sept. 1956. The Labour Party, and not Gaitskell personally, had been approached in Aug. No Labour voice had been heard until 4 Sept. when Robens was invited to take part in *At Home and Abroad*.

<sup>2</sup> Grisewood, op. cit., p. 202.

had, however, given an ITV interview on 13 August.<sup>3</sup> The situation was now becoming far more difficult for the BBC than it had been at any earlier stage. It was also becoming more difficult for the Prime Minister. He believed that the BBC should support him in the national interest, instead of dwelling on party differences.

The most recent example of similar foreign policy divisions had been as long ago as 1938, which for other reasons provided Eden, if not Gaitskell, with a pertinent historical precedent, a precedent with personal resonances. As he wrote in the foreword to his autobiography *Full Circle*, 'the lessons of the thirties and their application to the fifties . . . are the themes of my memoirs.'<sup>4</sup> During the Munich crisis, however, leaving on one side the leading personalities, opinion had not been so sharply divided into large blocks as it was in 1956. Jacob was to write later that 'the procedures which govern political controversy' had been designed for 'domestic controversy of the kind that normally accompanies political life; a national emergency when Government action was not nationally supported presented a new problem'.<sup>5</sup>

By another of the coincidences of the continuing crisis, the BBC's Board of Governors met on the second day of the Parliamentary debate, when one of the first items on its agenda was the latest Report of the Public Accounts Committee, which claimed that the BBC's income was 'considerably in excess of its immediate needs' and which queried the size of BBC reserves. The Treasury already withheld 12½ per cent of the total licence income. The Public Accounts Committee wanted tight control. Indeed, it described as misleading the use of the term 'licence income'. The sums the BBC received, it claimed, were 'annual grants of Parliament'.<sup>6</sup> Jacob, who told the Governors that the report came as a complete surprise,<sup>7</sup> was strongly backed in his opposition to the report by *The Economist*, which quoted him as saying that if such a proposal were carried through, it would put the BBC in the position of a Government department, not operating as an independent corporation, but subject to the usual Treasury control.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup> \*Green, 'Note of Telephone Conversation with P. Barlow, Private Secretary to Gaitskell', 14 Aug. 1956 (R34/1580/1).

<sup>4</sup> Eden, op. cit., Foreword.

<sup>5</sup> Sir Ian Jacob, 'The Suez Crisis and the BBC', *Ariel*, Jan. 1957.

<sup>6</sup> See *The Times*, 17 Aug. 1956.

<sup>7</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 13 Sept. 1956.

<sup>8</sup> *The Economist*, 20 Oct. 1956.



Competition came into the picture also, for as the *Spectator* noted, the secretary of the Popular Television Association used the Report to argue the case for a reduction of the BBC's licence fee: 'it always pops up when hatchet work needs to be done.'<sup>9</sup> When, later in the year, the BBC discussed the financial arrangements for the following three years with the Treasury, after the Government had refused to accept the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee, Jacob stated that the Corporation needed to be assured that its freedom, both 'to provide adequate service to the public' and 'to meet the challenge of competition' would not be unduly limited.<sup>10</sup>

Suez did not figure in the Governors' discussion, although there must have been a sense that threats to independence were now coming in from quite different quarters. Suez did figure, however, on the agenda of the meeting soon afterwards. Minute 190 refers to Gaitskell's wish 'to take up the BBC's offer of a month ago', and give a broadcast, preferring it to be in the Television Service, 'possibly in the form of a Press Conference'. Gaitskell did not know—and many members of the Government, even of the Cabinet, were in the dark also—that soon it would be the future not of the BBC's reserves but of the nation's financial reserves that would be in doubt.<sup>11</sup>

Jacob expressed the view that Gaitskell's request for a broadcast 'could not be regarded as in any sense a response to the BBC's August invitation', for the international situation had changed considerably since then: 'there had been the London Conference, the Menzies Committee and the recall of the House'. Moreover, no request had been made by the Prime Minister or by the Foreign Secretary for further Ministerial broadcasts by them. There seemed to be a three-

<sup>9</sup> *Spectator*, 26 Oct. 1956.

<sup>10</sup> 'Jacob to Sir Gordon Radley, Director-General of the Post Office, 26 Oct. 1956 (R78/206). There had been no earlier communication with the Government on any inferences to be drawn from the Public Accounts Committee Report, for in the view of the Governors, 'there was no evidence to show that the Government intended to give serious consideration to the recommendations' ('Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 13 Sept. 1956). Later in the year, Hill, then Postmaster-General, ensured that the proposals in the Report would be rejected. 'Such a change would represent a very real diminution of the independence of the Corporation and would prejudice their formal planning. The Treasury are proposing, with my concurrence, to reject the proposal' (PREM 11/1213, Memorandum, 'BBC Finance', 2 Nov. 1956; Cabinet Home Affairs Committee, *Minutes*, 12 Nov. 1956).

<sup>11</sup> During the first two weeks of Sept. warnings were reiterated that there would be no American support. Makins stated categorically that unless 'American resources' were committed, bilateral Anglo-French action would fail calamitously (see Hennessy and Laity, loc. cit.) Macmillan failed to realize the financial significance of their stance until later in the crisis, even after a visit to the USA (see Horne, op. cit., pp. 424–5). See below, p. 119.



fold choice, therefore: between arranging a further Ministerial broadcast by Eden and granting Gaitskell the right to reply; deciding that all broadcasts on the subject of Suez by spokesmen of either party must be party political broadcasts, subject to 'rules' agreed upon by the parties; or taking a BBC initiative and inviting a 'leading member of the Government and Opposition to appear in a Press Conference type of programme'.<sup>12</sup>

The Governors chose cautiously not to take the initiative, giving as their grounds their shared view that 'the BBC should do nothing to underline the existence of party division and party disunity at a time of crisis'. At the same time, they expressed themselves anxious to anticipate any request from the Government for a Ministerial broadcast on so controversial a matter that it would be bound to rouse the Opposition; and they decided to ask their Chairman and Jacob to seek an early meeting with both the Government and the Opposition to discuss with them 'the best way for broadcasting to deal with the situation'.<sup>13</sup>

And there the Minute ends. The following day, 14 September, a joint meeting was duly arranged with Butler and with Gaitskell, at which 'the BBC's attitude' was explained to the party leaders, who were said to have 'fully understood it'. There was general agreement, it was minuted, that no change should be made in the existing Rule relating to Ministerial broadcasts, as formally set out in the *Aide-mémoire* of 1947; both parties had confirmed that 'they did not wish to underline the existence of Party differences on this matter'. Butler reserved the Government's right to ask for a Ministerial broadcast, if this seemed desirable, but on the understanding, as before, that the Opposition could be expected to ask for an opportunity to reply.<sup>14</sup> The *Aide-mémoire* procedure laid down that if the Opposition considered a Ministerial broadcast to have been 'controversial', it could claim a reply through the 'normal channels', the Chief Whips, 'normally within a very short period after the original broadcast, say three days', and that if the Government had not agreed to a reply, the Opposition could appeal to the BBC which would then be 'free to exercise its own judgment'.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, the BBC took the decision to invite Gaitskell to appear in *Press Conference*, a regular television programme, on 21 September,

<sup>12</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 13 Sept. 1956.

<sup>13</sup> \**Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> \**Ibid.*, 27 Sept. 1956.

<sup>15</sup> \**Aide-Mémoire on Political Broadcasting*, 6 Feb. 1947, rev. July 1948.

rather than to give a party political broadcast, a decision that broke new ground and pointed to the future. Yet the principle of 'balance' was retained, for Selwyn Lloyd was invited to appear on *Panorama* on 24 September. According to William Clark, it was his idea that Selwyn Lloyd should be invited. He put the idea to Leonard Miall, Head of Television Talks, at lunch on 18 September. Clark described *Panorama* to Lloyd as 'a programme with a far larger audience than *Press Conference* which would do [him] proud'.<sup>16</sup> Miall would have agreed. He was deeply committed to the programme which attracted a large audience.

As far as 'political balance' was concerned, all this seemed neat and tidy, and Selwyn Lloyd was interviewed by Hugh (later Lord) Cudlipp, then Editor of the *Daily Mirror*. The timetable of events was being determined elsewhere, however. On 23 September, in line with Eden's promises to Parliament, delivered however unwillingly, Britain and France had referred the Suez dispute to the Security Council of the United Nations, but it did not meet to consider it until 5 October. After nine meetings, six 'principles' were agreed upon; but when it came to trying to enforce them, there was little agreement. On 13 October the Soviet Union vetoed an Anglo-French resolution carried by nine votes to eight, that would have enabled action to have been taken in the name of the United Nations.

Two days earlier, the Conservative Party Conference had met in Llandudno: it ended with the Government being encouraged to take decisive action.<sup>17</sup> And that decisive action, first prepared for 8 August, was, in fact, now being planned. On the very day of the Butler/Gaitskell meeting with Cadogan and Jacob, a Cabinet Committee approved the outline of a three-phase Anglo-French military operation, first code-named *Musketeer*, which included a large-scale Anglo-French landing and an advance through Cairo to the Canal. It was a plan, criticized by Earl Mountbatten, the First Sea Lord, and by Sir Walter (later Lord) Monckton, who had been Eden's Minister of Defence until early October, and it was subsequently reshaped more than once.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

<sup>17</sup> Another idiosyncratic element in the unfolding of the Suez crisis was that the winding-up speech in the Conference debate was delivered by Anthony Nutting, who declared that 'should the hard test come upon us . . . this country will not flinch' (*Annual Register*, 1956, p. 48). Nutting was to resign from the Government on 31 Oct. in opposition to Eden's policies, before the 'hard test' began. His resignation was not announced, however, until 3 Nov. At the Labour Party Conference, in a debate on Suez on 1 Oct., Gaitskell had to reply to a number of strongly 'pro-Nasser speeches' (Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 430).

<sup>18</sup> For Mountbatten's criticism, see P. Ziegler, *Mountbatten* (1985), pp. 537-56. For

In both early and final form, the plan had broadcasting implications. Great importance was attached to psychological warfare, to be waged mainly by 'black radio' as an accompaniment to air attack, itself a preliminary to the landings. The key question was, as Monckton put it, how could such air attack and landings be started?<sup>19</sup> What would provide the *casus belli*? The decisive Cabinet meeting to approve British action was held on 25 October, another day when, again coincidentally, the Governors met—on this occasion, as on 11 October, without formally discussing Suez at all.

The day before, at a special meeting at No. 10 Downing Street, attended by Eden, Butler, Macmillan, Mountbatten, and Head, who a week earlier had succeeded Monckton as Minister of Defence, the Prime Minister explained that he had now found the *casus belli*. He had had secret talks at Chequers with the French about a possible planned pre-emptive strike by Israeli forces. Moreover, on 22 October Selwyn Lloyd had been involved in more protracted, but equally secret, Anglo-French-Israeli consultations at Sèvres, near Paris, consultations that were suspected but hotly denied at the time—as was all talk of 'collusion' in relation to the timing, scale, and character of Israeli military action. It was these meetings that directly determined the subsequent timetable of events.<sup>20</sup>

The timetable in Broadcasting House was affected by the fact that Jacob was about to attend a Commonwealth Broadcasting Conference in Australia, and would not be back until December.<sup>21</sup> In his absence, it was Grisewood and the BBC's Acting Director-General, Sir Norman Bottomley, its Director of Administration, who, according to Grisewood, were informed by the Ministry of Defence at the

Monckton's criticism, see Horne, *op. cit.*, p. 410. Macmillan noted in his diary on 24 Aug. that Monckton had raised the general question at a Cabinet Meeting. 'Could we use force? Would British public opinion support us? Would world opinion condemn us?'

<sup>19</sup> On being shown the latest version of the revised plan, Monckton said pertinently, 'Very interesting, but how do we actually start this war?' (quoted in D. Neff, *Warriors at Suez* (1988), pp. 307–8).

<sup>20</sup> For Selwyn Lloyd's version, see S. Lloyd, *Suez 1956: A Personal Account* (1978). For critiques see A. Nutting, *No End of a Lesson* (1967), Rhodes James, *op. cit.*, and Horne, *op. cit.* The French and the Israelis had already established a close military understanding before Eden heard of it. For an Israeli version, see M. Dayan, *Story of My Life* (1976). The protocol of Sèvres does not feature among the official documents released under the thirty-year rule. There is one reference in the *Cabinet Minutes*, however, to 'secret conversations which had been held in Paris with the Israeli government' (*Cabinet Minutes*, 23 Oct. 1956, Confidential Annex).

<sup>21</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 25 Oct. 1956. Bottomley's successor as Director of Administration, Hugh Greene, was given the task, along with Bottomley, of acting in Jacob's absence as 'proper officers' of the Corporation in relation to the Charter.

beginning of November that when military operations began—and they were to start soon—the BBC would be subject to wartime controls, including censorship.<sup>22</sup> They were not impressed by the official who told them so at a meeting on 2 November. In Grise-wood's opinion, he knew little of 'the elaborate system' of wartime control that had been dismantled ten years before.<sup>23</sup> Bottomley had been at pains to state that 'the public will expect our broadcast reports of military operations to be of the same high standard which the BBC set in the last war, though not, of course, on the same elaborate scale'.<sup>24</sup>

It had been claimed that in late October the Prime Minister instructed the Lord Chancellor, Lord Kilmuir, to prepare 'an instrument' which would enable the Government to take over the BBC. This statement, originating with Clark, lacks any independent confirmation, inside or outside the BBC.<sup>25</sup> In fact, no such instrument would have been necessary, since under the BBC's Charter and Licence the Government already possessed the necessary powers.<sup>26</sup> However much loose talk there might have been about 'schemes to discipline the BBC', the Government did not choose to use these powers when hostilities began.

#### 4. Action Taken and Stopped

Hostilities began on 29 October when Israeli forces, secretly mobilized four days before, entered Egypt and, as planned at Sèvres, attacked positions in the Sinai desert. A day later, Britain and France—also by arrangement, then undisclosed—sent ultimata both

<sup>22</sup> Bottomley, a wartime Air Chief Marshal and former Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, had been appointed to his management post inside the BBC in 1947, at the same time as Jacob had been appointed to direct external broadcasting (Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, p. 115). At the time of Suez he was 65 years old, and he was spending his last weeks at the BBC.

<sup>23</sup> \*Grise-wood, 'Record of Meeting with Mr. Chilver et al. on 2 November 1956', 5 Nov. 1956 (R34/1580/2).

<sup>24</sup> \*Bottomley to Chilver, 1 Nov. 1956 (R34/1580/2).

<sup>25</sup> Dilks (ed.), op. cit., p. 798. See also Lord Hill, *Behind the Screen* (1974), p. 169.

<sup>26</sup> Grise-wood, op. cit., p. 199. The statement was widely discussed, nevertheless, and twelve years later it was even debated in the House of Commons (*Hansard*, vol. 764, cols. 173–82, 6 May 1968). Michael Foot had pressed for a public inquiry into the Suez affair in 1967, after the publication of Sir Anthony Nutting's *No End of a Lesson*. (For Nutting, see above, p. 93 n., and below, pp. 117 ff.) In Jan. 1987 Tony Benn, as he by then called himself, urged an investigation by a Parliamentary Select Committee after the opening of the Public Record Office Archives dealing with Suez, records that are by no means complete.

to Egypt and to Israel demanding them to cease hostilities. The Israelis accepted theirs; Nasser took nine hours to reject his. When the Security Council adopted an American resolution calling upon Israel to withdraw behind its frontiers, the British, along with the French, used their veto against it, the first time they had used their veto in the history of the United Nations.

After the veto, strongly attacked by the Labour Party in Parliament, discussion in the United Nations moved from the Security Council to the General Assembly, which met in emergency session. On 2 November, when it was clear that the Israelis had secured a complete victory, the Assembly carried by sixty-four votes to five a resolution demanding a cease-fire and the withdrawal of attacking forces. Britain and France, in the minority, stated that they would accept a cease-fire only if Egypt and Israel agreed to accept a United Nations peace-keeping force, if the United Nations agreed to provide such a force, and if both combatants agreed that British and French troops should be stationed between them until such a force arrived.<sup>1</sup>

Before the vote, on 31 October, first France then Britain had attacked Egyptian airfields, though neither of them had declared war, and at Westminster the difference between Government and Opposition was now so great that on 1 November the Speaker took the unusual step for the first time for over thirty years of suspending the sitting for half an hour. An emergency debate held on 3 November ended with the Commons in 'a state of uproar'.<sup>2</sup>

It was in such circumstances that first Eden and then Gaitskell addressed the country on radio and television in Ministerial broadcasts. There was clearly a need for a broadcast from the Prime Minister, but on 1 November, in Cadogan's words, 'Anthony did not seem to be in a hurry to make one.'<sup>3</sup> The strain on him was proving intense. Dosed alternately with amphetamines and barbiturates, he was obviously far from well. Equally serious for the Prime Minister, many of his own colleagues were not always 'loyal' to him, for that

<sup>1</sup> For the role of the UN see R. Hiscocks, *The Security Council* (1973), pp. 140 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Register*, 1956, p. 53.

<sup>3</sup> Cadogan, Diary, now at Churchill College, Cambridge, 1 Nov. 1956. Cadogan, who seems to have been as impatient with Grisewood as Grisewood was suspicious of him, had written the day before in his diary that Grisewood had 'some strange thought that in the circumstances we must *invite* the PM to broadcast (and the Leader of the Opposition)'. He had asked Grisewood, he said, 'to follow the regular procedure, as modified at the recent meeting between Ian and myself and the Party leaders' (see above, p. 92), and 'to make quite sure that the modification was properly understood on the Government side.'

is how he judged them. Even in his inner Cabinet there were critics, and although his Press Adviser, Clark, put forward the Government's case with 'loyalty and lucidity',<sup>4</sup> he was independent-minded, gossipy, and himself disturbed by what to him was an increasingly alarming course of events, which would inevitably end in his own resignation. It was difficult to brood on events, for, in Selwyn Lloyd's words, there were 'debates, statements, questions, almost every day, including Saturday, 3 November'.<sup>5</sup>

It was on the gloomy evening of that day that Eden gave his Ministerial broadcast direct from 10 Downing Street, claiming that, in deciding to proceed with the landings in Egypt, the Government's first and foremost object had been to separate the Israeli and Egyptian armies and to stop the fighting. He was, he insisted, the same man he had always been—'a man of peace, a League of Nations man'. But until United Nations forces arrived in Egypt, he insisted, Britain and France were called upon to carry out what was essentially a police action until the job was finished. 'I am *utterly* convinced that the action we have taken is right.'<sup>6</sup>

Clark had been told before Eden broadcast that if Gaitskell were to request a right to reply, the Board would probably concede it, and he acknowledged that this was understood, and was indeed expected, by the Prime Minister. Yet things did not work out as simply as they might have done. When on the night of the broadcast, which was listened to by Cadogan—he thought it 'inevitably "controversial"'—Gaitskell telephoned the BBC to demand the right to deliver a reply, he had to wait for an answer. It took time for the 'correct procedures' to be followed. These included reference to the Party Whips, Heath and Herbert Bowden, one a future Prime Minister, one a future Chairman of the ITA.

According to the procedures, it was only after they had disagreed, as they properly felt themselves bound to do—Heath guardedly described the Prime Minister's broadcast as 'the least controversial it

<sup>4</sup> *Spectator*, 10 Nov. 1956: 'After some experiment both by himself and his predecessors' he had 'moulded the functions of this office into just about the right pattern.' For the reactions of ITN, see G. Cox, *See It Happen: The Making of ITN* (1983).

<sup>5</sup> Lloyd, *op. cit.*, p. 107; R. Lamb, *The Failure of the Eden Government* (1987). See also D. Carlton, *Anthony Eden* (1981).

<sup>6</sup> Many viewers wrote letters to support him. Others were angry. One viewer in a high place, Christopher Chancellor, Chairman of Reuters, is said to have hurled his whisky glass at the screen (Kyle, *op. cit.*, p. 432). The BBC producer in charge of the broadcast was David Attenborough, who earlier had directed his broadcast on the Khrushchev-Bulganan visit.



could be in the circumstances'—that, according to the rules, Cadogan was called upon to arbitrate. By 11.30 p.m. he had not been so called upon, and had gone to bed. It was after midnight when the call came to Grisewood, who, to Gaitskell's not surprising anger, refused to awaken Cadogan in order to arbitrate in the night hours.<sup>7</sup> This added to the tension that was already there, for Gaitskell had treated his request, to Grisewood's annoyance, as a matter of form, and Grisewood, who, according to Cadogan, had 'rather funny and muddled ideas',<sup>8</sup> undoubtedly knew which way Cadogan would arbitrate. The rules were clearly unsuited to the circumstances, for events were moving fast.

The sharp clash between Gaitskell and Grisewood continued after Cadogan, awakened at 9 a.m., had agreed at once to Gaitskell making a Ministerial-type broadcast, which he did on the Sunday evening of 4 November.<sup>9</sup> It was a broadcast delivered after a day of great public excitement in London, where an estimated crowd of 30,000 in Trafalgar Square heard Aneurin Bevan attack Eden's policies in the name of 'Law, not War'. Gaitskell, by contrast, seemed in his broadcast, as in his last speech in the House of Commons, to be appealing not so much to members of his own party as to Eden's Conservative critics, 'those who like us are shocked and troubled by what is happening'.

As he saw it—and how he saw it was very important to him—he was making as much of a national appeal as Eden had done, urging his fellow citizens to stop military action that was disapproved of by a very large section of public opinion. The Government's real purpose, he declared, was not that stated by the Prime Minister, but rather the re-occupation of the Suez Canal 'in defiance of the world'. In urging those Conservatives who agreed with him to press hard for the Prime Minister's resignation, Gaitskell offered a 'pledge': 'We undertake to support a new Prime Minister in halting the invasion of Egypt, in ordering the cease-fire and complying with the decisions and recommendations of the United Nations.'

At least one Conservative back-bencher, Nigel Nicolson, who had already made up his mind that he could no longer support the Prime Minister's policy in Egypt, thought that Gaitskell was talking directly to him and to those Conservatives who felt like him, and not to the

<sup>7</sup> In his autobiography (pp. 203–4) Grisewood vigorously defended his action.

<sup>8</sup> Cadogan, *Diary*, 2 Nov. 1956.

<sup>9</sup> Cadogan's decision was subsequently endorsed unanimously by the Board of Governors (*\*Minutes*, 8 Nov. 1956).



great British public: 'I suppose he had an audience of 20 million, but his talk was really addressed to thirty people of whom I was one.'<sup>10</sup> Nicolson's supposition about numbers may have been wrong, as any such suppositions usually are, including the numbers listening to Bevan in Trafalgar Square. It was likely, however, that no fewer than 9 million adults had watched Eden on television and 9 million heard him on radio. The Gaitskell BBC television figures were slightly smaller, but he had a bigger ITV audience in the London area than Eden had had, explicable, perhaps, because he followed on immediately after *Armchair Theatre*, which had a significantly larger audience than he did; the play for that Sunday had the not inappropriate title *The Old Lady Shows her Medals*.<sup>11</sup> The size of the radio figures was significantly less.<sup>12</sup>

Whatever the size of the audiences, Gaitskell's broadcast irritated large numbers of people and inspired—or disturbed—others. Cadogan thought it 'disgraceful', but added in his diary that he did not mind: 'We have given him enough rope.'<sup>13</sup> He had noted in his diary on 1 November that 'the nation is split in two, from top to bottom. If we could have a complete and rapid success, we might get away with it. Otherwise, I don't like the prospect.'<sup>14</sup>

For those who did not approve of the broadcast, it was a betrayal of British forces about to go into battle. For those who approved, it revealed that Britain still stood by law, not war.<sup>15</sup> Inevitably, therefore, the speech caused difficulties at Number 10, from which Clark telephoned the BBC on Eden's behalf, requesting that parts of it not be re-broadcast on the BBC's Arabic Service. A little later, he also passed on an informal, but strongly worded, warning that at this peak of the crisis too much prominence should not be given in that

<sup>10</sup> N. Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson, Diaries and Letters, 1945–1962* (1968), p. 316. Robert Rhodes James argued that the immediate political result of the broadcast 'was to rally doubtful and hostile Conservatives to Eden and to incense others, including the troops steaming towards Port Said' (op. cit. p. 569). There were eight Conservatives wholeheartedly against the operation, including Sir Edward (later Lord) Boyle and Robert (later Lord) Boothby.

<sup>11</sup> The TAM ratings for the London area gave a split of 38 : 33 homes in favour of Eden on ITV and 66 : 14 in favour of Gaitskell (TAM rating for week ending 4 Nov.). Gaitskell's BBC audience in the London area was significantly bigger than the audience for the play that preceded it *Ah, Wilderness*, but was smaller than that for *The Jack Benny* programme earlier in the evening (\*BBC Audience Research daily barometer, 4 Nov. 1956).

<sup>12</sup> \*BBC Audience Research daily barometers, 3, 4 Nov. 1956.

<sup>13</sup> Cadogan, *Diary*, 4 Nov. 1956.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 Nov. 1956.

<sup>15</sup> Lady Violet Bonham Carter, a former BBC Governor and close friend of Churchill, told Gaitskell that he spoke for England (quoted by Kyle, op. cit., p. 433).

Service to describing domestic opposition to the Prime Minister's policy.

That opposition was most strongly expressed in the Press in the pages of the *Manchester Guardian*, then edited by Alastair Hetherington, who had recently taken up the post. (In 1975 he was to become Controller, BBC Scotland.) With a circulation of over 160,000, the *Guardian* had denounced the Anglo-French ultimatum as 'an act of folly'. The *Daily Mirror*, too, with a circulation of over 4½ million, was equally critical—and on party grounds had chosen as the title of its front-page editorial on 1 November 'EDEN'S WAR' in large, black, underlined, capital letters.<sup>16</sup>

How serious the division of opinion was had been made fully clear even in the opinion polls of the *Daily Express*, which then had a circulation of over 4 million and which fully supported Eden's attempt to 'safeguard the life of the British Empire' and 'to keep Great Britain Great'.<sup>17</sup> Their polls of 30 October and 3 November revealed only 48.5 per cent supporting Eden's action, with 39 per cent against and 12.5 per cent don't knows. Meanwhile, the British Institute of Public Opinion poll gave more striking figures on 1–2 November. Forty per cent approved Eden's 'handling of the Middle East situation', 46 per cent were against, and 14 per cent were don't knows. Both polls pointed to 15 or 16 per cent of Conservative voters opposed to Eden's policies.

On the evening of 5 November British and French paratroops were dropped in the neighbourhood of Port Said. According to the BBC's Vice-Chairman, Sir Philip Morris, Vice-Chancellor of Bristol University, it was he, not Cadogan—the latter in Paris on 'Suez business'<sup>18</sup>—who after a long conversation with Grisewood, agreed that there should be 'no changes as regards [BBC] programmes, editorial objectivity or relationships between staff and normal contacts outside' after the paratroop landings. In Morris's characteristically carefully chosen words—though, equally characteristically, they were chosen far later—this view of matters 'occasioned surprised reactions outside

<sup>16</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 31 Oct., 1 Nov. 1956; *Daily Mirror*, 1 Nov. 1956. For circulation figures see the *Newspaper Press Directory* (1957). Epstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 153 ff. gives details of the attitudes of other newspapers.

<sup>17</sup> *Daily Express*, 1, 2 Nov. 1956.

<sup>18</sup> Handwritten note dated 5 Nov. by C. R. A. Rae, at the Foreign Office, on confidential note from P. F. Grey to Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, 2 Nov. 1956 (PRO, Foreign Office file FO 953/1654).

the BBC, particularly at Number 10 and the Foreign Office and, to some extent, within the BBC'.<sup>19</sup>

While earlier and later BIPO polls never showed a majority in favour of military action,<sup>20</sup> after action had started on 5 November, both BIPO and *Daily Express* polls showed an increase in support of 'Eden's Suez policy'. The latter now claimed that a small majority, 51.5 per cent, were in favour, and on 10–11 November the BIPO figure was 53 per cent. All polls now showed a fall in the proportion of Conservatives who were opposed to the Government policy. Doubts had been put on one side; the Forces were being supported. There was a price to pay, however—a strengthening of opposition in the Labour Party. The *Daily Express* polls between 30 October to 3 November and 5–6 November showed a fall in the percentage of Labour voters favouring Eden's policies, from 15 per cent to 11 per cent.

The interest of such figures is limited, in that on 6 November, the opening day of the new Parliament, Eden told the House of Commons at 6 p.m. that he had informed the Secretary-General of the United Nations that the British and French Governments were ordering their Forces to cease fire at midnight unless attacked. They were responding to a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, initiated by Canada, a member of the old Commonwealth—what the *Daily Express* still called the British Empire. The isolation of Britain and France had been revealed starkly in previous resolutions of the General Assembly. On one occasion only Australia, New Zealand, and Israel had supported them. The British abstained, however, on the Canadian resolution, which requested the Secretary-General to submit within forty-eight hours 'a plan for the setting up, with the consent of the nations concerned, of an emergency international United Nations force to secure and supervise the cessation of hostilities'. No one opposed the resolution, which fifty-seven countries supported; nineteen abstained.

On the day of the landings at Port Said, the British Ambassador to the United Nations, Sir Pierson Dixon, took the desperate step of telegraphing Eden to warn him dramatically that unless Britain and France were to suspend all military activities and pass over responsibilities to the United Nations, 'there would be no chance of our

<sup>19</sup> Morris to Sir Hugh Greene, who by then had no connection with the BBC, 26 Dec. 1975.

<sup>20</sup> For tabulated details of polls, which were not taken as seriously in 1956 as they were to be later, see Epstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 141 ff.

being able to move to our objectives without alienating the whole world'.<sup>21</sup>

Such a dire warning was made even more dire as news came in relentlessly about intense American financial pressure on Britain—through pressure on the pound—pressure which alarmed the Cabinet and, in particular, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had previously been a strong supporter of British–French action.<sup>22</sup> It was he, Macmillan, not Butler, who was to succeed Eden as Prime Minister, the most unlikely of political outcomes at the beginning of the year.

With the cease-fire—before any decisive military impact on Nasser had been achieved—the Suez venture was finally over; and on 23 November, eight days after United Nations troops had arrived there, the last British troops began to withdraw from Egypt. Meanwhile, Eden, ill and tired and convinced that it was only American policy that had prevented him from turning Suez into a success, flew to Jamaica to take a complete rest. It was the effective end of his Prime Ministership, which came to a formal end with his resignation on 9 January 1957. More than the fate of a man was at stake. Neither Britain nor France could ever seek again to determine bilaterally the course of world events.

## 5. The Role of the BBC

In its news bulletins, which were listened to by large audiences, the BBC had reported crisis events and crisis talk during every phase, although much of the real news had been concealed, not only from journalists, but also from Parliament and even some members of the Cabinet. News bulletins had revealed nothing, for example, concerning the slow movement of the British invasion fleet towards Port Said before the landings or, of course, of a letter to Eden from Mountbatten, as dramatic as Pierson Dixon's telegram, appealing to him three days before the landings, 'to accept the resolution of the overwhelming majority of the United Nations and . . . turn back the assault convoy before it is too late'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Quoted in Hennessy and Laity, *loc cit.*

<sup>22</sup> Kyle, *op. cit.*, pp. 464–5.

<sup>1</sup> PRO PREM 11/1090, Mountbatten to Eden, 2 Nov. 1956.

Such news would have been dangerous news. Yet even had there been unanimity behind the scenes, the transmission of television news to Britain would have been bound to be slow, for technical as well as censorship reasons. All Forces film had to be despatched from the Mediterranean. Information came in late, even when at various stages during the crisis the centre of the scene of action was not the Mediterranean but London.<sup>2</sup> Ironically, Monckton, who was anxious to resign after hostilities ceased, but who, unlike Nutting, did not do so, was given charge of publicity.<sup>3</sup> It was a lost cause.

None the less, according to the *Manchester Guardian*, television news on the BBC and the ITV had been

quickly geared to the pace of the crisis. So tentative were the beginnings of a television news bulletin not so long ago that its ability to give a comprehensive service, such as it gave on Thursday night, is remarkable. The BBC gave its usual seven o'clock news and newsreel, and late news, but added in the middle of the evening an additional summary, which it will maintain. The ITV had the equally good idea of giving a news flash every hour . . . Both services will find increasing opportunity for films and interviews in events both at home and abroad.<sup>4</sup>

The eventful fifth of November 1956, with all its historical associations, was a Monday, and Monday night, in very recent history, had become thought of as *Panorama* night. Organized completely separately from the news bulletins, *Panorama*, which then included a large proportion of light items—and was understaffed at the time—found itself attracting exceptionally large audiences after events had begun to move fast. It had been off the air in August, when Eden made his first Suez broadcast, but had returned on 17 September, when its first item was a review of Suez developments which in the interim had been reported in *Highlight* and in a documentary by René Cutforth on 30 August.

An extremely interesting note written on 5 November by Goldie has survived, although not the whole of the programme itself, which was produced by Michael Peacock.<sup>5</sup> Cecil McGivern, Deputy Director of Television Broadcasting, had told her that he was anxious that *Panorama* 'should take on a more urgent appearance in view of the world situation', and that 'news flashes' that were normally broadcast

<sup>2</sup> For ITN Robin Day rushed back from the Commons Press Gallery during the key debates and delivered reports live from notes.

<sup>3</sup> Clark, *op. cit.*, pp. 202, 205.

<sup>4</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 3 Nov. 1956. See also J. C. Campbell, 'The Twin Crises of Hungary and Suez', in Louis and Owen, *op. cit.*, pp. 233 ff.

<sup>5</sup> For Peacock's later BBC career, see below, pp. 407–10.

between programmes should be put into the programme.<sup>6</sup> Television was obviously acquiring a new immediacy.<sup>7</sup> Goldie had also arranged that approximately five minutes after the start, whatever the circumstances, *Panorama* would include a switch to the news-room.<sup>8</sup>

This too was a new departure, although the 'men covering the news' abroad in October and November were to be spotlighted in a Press statement:

At present the BBC has thirteen staff news men abroad covering . . . events on the spot and in the United States, and eight other staff foreign correspondents reporting news and reaction from the rest of the world. In addition special teams have been collecting material for *Panorama*, *Highlight* and feature programmes on Sound Radio. The BBC has sent two camera teams to the Middle East for news and newsreel reports, and Aidan Crawley has gone to Baghdad for *Panorama* with a camera.<sup>9</sup>

The staff foreign correspondents, who served both Television and Sound, were over-pressed, however, particularly when it came to reporting trends in world opinion. 'In one or two instances', Norman Macdonald, a producer in the Sound Talks Department, had reported in August 1956, they did not even speak the language. There were also certain areas concerned with the Suez issue where there were no BBC correspondents at all.<sup>10</sup>

It had become necessary both to augment them and to make them more mobile, and in New York the United Nations correspondent, F. D. Walker, had been joined by the reporter John Tidmarsh and by Colin McIntyre, even before what happened at the United Nations came to be an essential part of the daily picture. On the spot, too, Peter Flinn, Cyprus correspondent, had been in Israel since 30 October. The Press Statement also included an example of 'speedy reporting' in a different place. Kenneth Eliot, United Nations Relief Official in Vienna, had been flown over specially for *Highlight*. He arrived at London Airport at two minutes past seven, was hustled through customs and into a BBC studio at the airport, and was on the programme at 7.25 p.m.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> \*Goldie to Peacock, 'Panorama: November 5', 5 Nov. 1956 (T32/1213).

<sup>7</sup> \*Note by Miall, 'Charges Against Panorama in House of Commons 14th November 1956', 20 Nov. 1956 (T32/1213). A request to approach the Foreign Secretary for an interview in *Panorama* on 12 Nov. had been turned down not by the Government but by the Board of Management.

<sup>8</sup> \*Goldie to Peacock, 'Panorama: November 5', 5 Nov. 1956.

<sup>9</sup> \*BBC Press Service Note, 9 Nov. 1956 (R34/1580/2).

<sup>10</sup> \*Macdonald to Green, Controller, Talks (Sound), 13 Aug. 1956 (R34/1580/1).

<sup>11</sup> \*BBC Press Service Note, 9 Nov. 1956.



When it came to the Suez landings, the Ministry of Defence claimed that it was caught 'on the hop', and that the arrangements in Cyprus had 'bordered on the chaotic'.<sup>12</sup> Hardiman Scott, the BBC correspondent, who went out to Port Said from Cyprus, along with a cameraman and 'recorder', had been 'subject to security regulations which prevented him from giving us detailed information'. He had been first assigned, after a ballot on 4 November, to the care of the RAF, but two days later had been transferred to the Army, and had been sent by sea, not by air, to Egypt. Meanwhile, the ITV had done far better. Its cameraman, Cyril Page, formerly a BBC *Newsreel* cameraman, had managed to send back direct to London a film from the scene of action that should, by prior contract, have been transmitted through agreed pooling arrangements.<sup>13</sup> It was ITN, therefore, not the BBC, which secured the only scoop of the war.

More than reporting was involved, for this situation changed rapidly, both in the Middle East and in Eastern Europe. It was right to select as one of the main themes of the *Panorama* programme of 5 November the speeding up of history. Notes used by Richard Dimbleby reveal just how much history was being made in both places during late October and early November:

Ten days ago Gomulka was in power in Poland and the Hungarian Revolution was in full swing. Eight days ago Nagy pressed for Russian troops to leave Hungary. Seven days ago Israel invaded Egypt. Six days ago Britain and France sent the ultimatum to Egypt and Israel and used their veto in the Security Council. Budapest fell to the rebels. Five days ago Britain and France began bombing Egyptian airfields. Four days ago in Hungary Nagy appealed for United Nations support . . . Yesterday a thousand Russian tanks attacked Budapest . . . Today our paratroops drop on the Suez Canal area. Tomorrow almost unnoticed, the American election.<sup>14</sup>

Following months of political uncertainty behind what was still, despite Khrushchev, an Iron Curtain, a new Prime Minister, Gomulka, had taken power in Poland on 21 October. Meanwhile, anti-Soviet riots and street disturbances in Hungary had already begun in Budapest. In the words of Dulles, the weaknesses of Soviet imperialism were being made manifest.<sup>15</sup> Imperialism was not confined to the Middle East.

<sup>12</sup> \*A. E. Barker, Deputy Editor of News, to Grisewood *et al.*, 'Film Coverage: Middle East', 14 Nov. 1956 (R34/1580/2).

<sup>13</sup> See Cox, *op. cit.*, ch. 15: 'The Suez Challenge'. Cox wrote later how, after seeing the film, he 'sensed how powerful was this new force of television in the coverage of war'.

<sup>14</sup> \*Undated and unsigned note, ' "Panorama", 5th November' (T32/1213).

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Horne, *op. cit.*, p. 436.



The Hungarian situation moved faster even than the situation in the Canal Zone. A new Hungarian coalition government, formed in Budapest on 23 October, with Imry Nagy as Prime Minister, was pledged from 30 October onwards to introduce a multi-party system, to proceed to free elections, and from 1 November onwards to proclaim Hungarian neutrality. Poland's changes were thereby completely eclipsed. It quickly became plain, however, that the Soviet Union, which had accepted Gomulka, would use force to suppress what it regarded as rebellion in Hungary; and on 3 November Soviet troops entered Budapest 'to help the Hungarian people crush the black forces of reaction and counter-revolution'. The next day, on the eve of the Allied parachute landings in Egypt, Soviet tanks reached the Parliament House and installed a new Communist regime. The Security Council called for their withdrawal, but the Soviet Union again used its veto, this time very differently from on the previous occasion, and once again the argument moved to the General Assembly. Hitherto the Assembly had been preoccupied with Suez. Now it went on also to condemn Soviet use of force.

Eisenhower's diary, 'a day-by-day, at times hour-by-hour account', is exceptionally interesting in this context, in that it relates the events listed in the *Panorama* programme as they happened in almost the same way. It begins with the Polish crisis, and includes an account of Eisenhower's television broadcast to the American people on 31 October, after he had heard of the British and French bombing of Egypt. While preparing his speech, Adlai Stevenson sent him a wire cautioning him 'against hasty use of our armed forces'. 'Such incidents', he added, 'one could expect at the climax of a presidential campaign.'<sup>16</sup>

The reporting of the last item, the Presidential election, which had strongly influenced the course of American policy throughout the different phases of the crisis, was left to Woodrow Wyatt.<sup>17</sup> 'The spectre of fighting in Hungary and Egypt is going to overshadow those voting machines tomorrow as Americans go to the polls', Wyatt observed, adding that the crises would benefit President Eisenhower rather than his opponent, Adlai Stevenson.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Eisenhower, op. cit., ch. 3: 'Twenty Busy Days'. See also Alibone, op. cit., pp. 362-4.

<sup>17</sup> Wyatt, later Lord Wyatt, and from 1945 to 1955 a Labour MP, was under contract to the BBC from 1955 to 1959. See his autobiography, *Confessions of an Optimist* (1985).

<sup>18</sup> In his concluding remarks at the very end of the programme, Wyatt argued clearly and concisely that 'we have to watch now very closely all American actions in the Middle East, because it is upon America that the peace of the Middle East now mostly depends'.

Meanwhile, in Budapest broadcasts by members of the Hungarian Section of the BBC at Bush House were listened to avidly, and in Bush House the Hungarian national radio was fed into the Section. Indications of change in the situation were carefully noted—for example, delays in presenting incidental music before Nagy spoke. A message of appreciation and solidarity from Free Hungarian Radio was re-broadcast throughout Europe, including the Soviet Union, and in genuine solidarity a BBC message in reply was also given full publicity. The Hungarians, the message ran, had 'written a glorious chapter in the history of Europe'. Free Hungarian Radio had declared to the world 'the supremacy of truth'. Private messages came through also, including two from British undergraduates who had been visiting Budapest. It was gratifying to an Englishman, one of them reported, to hear so many tributes to the BBC.<sup>19</sup>

During the autumn of 1956 there were more tributes to the BBC in the streets of Budapest than there were in the House of Commons in London. Ignoring the evidence from Hungary, Wyatt was to be among those criticized in Parliament when a small number of frustrated Conservative MPs vented their wrath on the BBC once the Suez crisis was over. Complaining that the BBC had been biased throughout the crisis and that it had given undue prominence to the views of the Opposition, they secured an adjournment debate on 14 November.<sup>20</sup> Their spokesmen were Sir Peter (later Lord) Rawlinson and Captain Ian (later Lord) Orr-Ewing, the latter a former BBC employee who had made his mark before 1954 as a keen advocate of independent television. In 1956 he had been in correspondence with Douglas (later Sir Douglas) Dodds-Parker, Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, concerning how 'to spread the use in British colonial territories of radio receivers which cannot receive propaganda broadcast from outside sources'.<sup>21</sup> One of the main co-sponsors of the motion was Sir Robert Grimston, described by Grisewood, after the debate, as 'one of the old enemies of the BBC'.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report by the Director of External Broadcasting, 1 Sept. to 30 Nov. 1956', 27 Nov. 1956.

<sup>20</sup> Before the debate, Orr-Ewing wrote to the Director-General, whom he called 'an old colleague'. The 'slanting of the reporting' had been 'too blatant to be entirely accidental' (\*undated, handwritten letter, WAC file R34/1580/2).

<sup>21</sup> PRO FO 953/1641, Orr-Ewing to Dodds-Parker, 19 July 1956.

<sup>22</sup> In preparation for a lunch with the Chief Whip on 20 Nov. 1956, Grisewood suggested to Bottomley points that might be mentioned: 'There was no thought of calling in question any of the ITA's [*sic*] broadcasts,' Grisewood added; 'they were mentioned only to show the BBC in a yet more lurid light' (\*Grisewood to Bottomley, 19 Nov. 1956 (R34/1580/2)).

The debate was instigated neither by the Whip's Office nor by the Conservative Party Central Office, although in his autobiography Rawlinson was to write that he 'went into an almost suicidal conflict with the BBC on behalf of the Government'.<sup>23</sup> A few weeks after the debate, Gerald O'Brien of the Central Office told the BBC's Parliamentary Correspondent, Roland Fox, that although the Party Office had received many complaints about bias, after having watched and listened himself he did not feel that the Office should back them: 'they would not have a leg to stand on.'<sup>24</sup> In the event, only twenty MPs took part in the debate, ten Conservative and ten Labour.

Two days before the debate, Grisewood had seen Cuthbert (later Lord) Alport, the Assistant Postmaster-General, at the latter's request. Observing that there was a good deal of 'confused thinking and ill-informed indignation', Alport told Grisewood that he did not know what ground Rawlinson and his supporters would cover. He had gathered, however, after talking to many back-bencher MPs, that most of them would accuse the BBC of favouring the Opposition in a time of national emergency. Some would say that Gaitskill should never have been given the right of reply to Eden's broadcast of 3 November. 'Moderates' would complain also, he suggested, as Eden himself had complained, that the BBC was wrong to seek to be 'impartial' 'once our forces were committed'. 'Its duty was to support the Government.'<sup>25</sup> Such expressions of feeling, natural though they were, filled Grisewood with 'foreboding for political broadcasting'. Indeed, he added, it was bound to 'fill with apprehension the mind of anyone who cares for the nature of our public life'.<sup>26</sup>

Grisewood might have been somewhat reassured to know that, according to Cox, Editor-in-Chief of ITN, Sir Kenneth Clark, the ITA's Chairman, had stood up at least as firmly for the independence of broadcasters as the BBC had done when approached by Eden. He had been on his way to give a lecture on Raphael when Eden asked him into Number 10 for a talk. Could not Clark slant the news about Suez? was the question. Clark replied that had he been inclined to

<sup>23</sup> P. Rawlinson, *A Price Too High: An Autobiography* (1989), p. 71. He describes vividly how 'immensely exciting and strangely stimulating' Westminster was in 1956. 'We were all naked partisans' (*ibid.*, pp. 68, 76).

<sup>24</sup> \*R. Fox to Arthur Barker, Deputy Editor, News, 'BBC "Bias"', 18 Dec. 1956 (R34/1580/2).

<sup>25</sup> \*Grisewood, 'Record of Interview with the Assistant Postmaster-General', 15 Nov. 1956 (R34/1580/2).

<sup>26</sup> \*Grisewood to Bottomley, 19 Nov. 1956.

do so—and he was not—he would not have been able to do it. ‘We were working under an Act of Parliament which called for impartiality.’ Clark left the Prime Minister, and went off to give his lecture. He never heard another word about the subject.<sup>27</sup> The ITN staff had their own slant on such questions. Ludovic Kennedy, then a news-caster, has described how he refused to follow guidance given in a Foreign Office memorandum to describe the British landings in Egypt as an ‘intervention’ and not as an ‘invasion’.<sup>28</sup>

The Parliamentary debate, which left out ITV altogether, had its peaks and its troughs, although it was characterized throughout by the same degree of party bitterness that had coloured most Parliamentary debates since the recall of Parliament in September. Thus, when Rawlinson, in his opening speech, referred to a *Radio Newsreel* programme recording crowds outside an Albert Hall meeting chanting ‘Eden must go’, Patrick (later Lord) Gordon Walker immediately called out ‘Hear Hear’. Later in the debate, Gordon Walker said that it would be ‘fatal’ to censor overseas broadcasts. It would destroy Britain’s credibility in the world.

*The Times* that morning had warned Parliament about the possible dangers of the debate. ‘Whatever is right or wrong with the BBC programmes is a matter for the Governors of the Corporation. They are appointed precisely for this purpose . . . [Parliament] should keep clear of trying to interfere with the news . . . The Government spokesman who replies might well say this is none of his business.’<sup>29</sup> Rawlinson brushed aside such advice, describing as ‘threatening’ the heading in *The Times*, ‘Keep Off’; he referred *en passant* to Haley’s move to *The Times* from the Director-Generalship of the BBC.<sup>30</sup> Orr-Ewing asked for an internal ‘inquiry within the BBC’ into all the complaints of bias, many of them relating to the BBC’s reporting of Parliament, its moods and its reactions. He also included complaints about the tone of voice employed by BBC reporters and commentators, as well as what they had actually said. Rawlinson focused largely, though not exclusively, on the Overseas Services, which

<sup>27</sup> Cox, *op. cit.*, p. 92. Clark told the story to Cox in 1975.

<sup>28</sup> L. Kennedy, *On My Way to the Club* (1989), p. 242. Privately, Kennedy, who joined the Liberal Party in 1956, thought the ‘intervention’ ‘one of the most crassly stupid political acts of modern times’ (*ibid.*, p. 244).

<sup>29</sup> *The Times*, 14 Nov. 1956.

<sup>30</sup> Two days earlier (12 Nov), *The Times*, which had maintained a cautious position throughout the crisis, stated more firmly than it had done before that it had ‘never hidden its misgivings regarding the enterprise. That it was misguided and yielded Britain no gains at all becomes increasingly clear.’

particularly, though again not exclusively, had preoccupied the Government itself.<sup>31</sup>

The most extraordinary speech in the debate, a very long, filibustering speech, was that of the Labour MP George (later Lord) Wigg, whose political career, soon to be linked with that of Harold Wilson, was largely still ahead of him. He complained boldly that during the crisis the BBC had been supporting the Government, not subverting it. 'I think it is basely ungrateful for hon. gentlemen opposite to come to the House and complain about the BBC because the BBC has served them well.' Jacob he regarded as a 'Tory stooge', Cadogan 'a Foreign Office "deadbeat"'. Meanwhile, he argued, the country had suffered 'a political and military defeat of the first magnitude'. Another *Times* of that day, the *New York Times*, had memorably observed that in international affairs two things mattered—wisdom and success: 'Unless these facts are got across to the British people, and unless the discussion which has started in the last fortnight goes on, we shall sink to the level of—I will mention it—to the level of, I say, France.' Wigg was nowhere near his peroration when he added:

Before hon. Members opposite make complaints about the slanting of the news which, after all, is another way of saying that the BBC has been telling half the truth . . . they should ask themselves whether the representatives of their party who have stood at the Dispatch Box have told the truth and are now telling the truth.

Wigg collared the debate—though not the reporting of the debate in the Press—and the House was almost counted out. He had one big point to make, however, not about the past but about the future. Having accused the BBC as it then was of bearing the hallmark of reactionary Tories who believed that 'power should be where power seems to be', he pointed to what the BBC might be instead:

I can conceive of no policy-making organ or instrument of public instruction better fitted than the BBC to have the most earnest discussion of the kind of world in which we now find ourselves. . . . The happenings of the last week were, in my judgement, the . . . close of the old era and the beginning of a new. Things will never be the same politically, economically or in any other way.<sup>32</sup>

Drawing on his experience not of politics but of adult education, Wigg maintained that for ten years Britons had been living in a

<sup>31</sup> See below, pp. 116–37. The *News Chronicle*, 15 Nov. 1956, in its report of the debate, chose as its subheading words of Rawlinson: 'It's not the words but the tone, says Tory.' It was through nuances that slant was introduced. Through this debate Rawlinson himself became a broadcaster and eventually chairman of the back-benchers' Broadcasting Committee (Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 81).

<sup>32</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 560, cols. 1064, 1080, 14 Nov. 1956.

dream world, and that the BBC, 'with its huge resources', might have helped 'turn this nation into a vast discussion group, probing, inquiring and examining'.

The Parliamentary debate, in which Alport spoke last but not one, covers nearly eighty columns of *Hansard*; and after it ended, the BBC took Orr-Ewing's advice, and diligently set about examining one by one all the charges that had been brought against it, charges which Bottomley told the Board of Governors were probably all in all unprecedented.<sup>33</sup> They included the selection and ordering of items in news bulletins, slanted broadcast reviews of the Press, biased current affairs programmes, an unrepresentative choice of people for interview, misrepresentation or partial representation by omission, and, the most difficult of all charges to prove, innuendo or exaggeration through the use of voice tone.

The Board of Management, Alport added, had already been asked 'to examine the best ways' of furnishing the Governors with an appropriate report. They did not need a confidential note on the debate from their Parliamentary Correspondent, Roland Fox, to make them decide to find out for themselves.<sup>34</sup> The News Division was already preparing one, and a detailed report was quickly drawn up dealing with *Panorama*.<sup>35</sup> The *Panorama* of 12 November, which ended with a summary by Woodrow Wyatt, had been under particular attack, even though it followed the cease-fire. It had included among other items a film of Aidan Crawley reporting from Baghdad, a report by Edward Ward speaking from the Hungarian frontier, an interview by Christopher Chataway (recently recruited to the BBC screens) of an Australian newspaperman, and an Alastair Cooke broadcast from the United Nations in New York. Cooke had talked to a Yugoslav delegate, to an Indian delegate, and to Lester Pearson, who had spoken from a Canadian vantage-point and in language

<sup>33</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Debate in the House of Commons 14th November 1956: BBC News Broadcasts', 21 Nov. 1956. For Wigg's account of the speech—and of his critical approach to the BBC, as well as to the Government—see Lord Wigg, *George Wigg* (1972), pp. 181–3. At Christmas 1956 he received an anonymous card from a member of the BBC inscribed 'In gratitude for your magnificent and never to be forgotten show on November 14, 1956'.

<sup>34</sup> \*Fox to Barker, 'Commons Debate on BBC', 15 Nov. 1956 (R34/1580/2); Board of Management, *Papers*, 'Debate in the House of Commons, 14 November 1956—BBC Charter: Political Balance: Note by Acting Director General', 15 Nov. 1956. Fox also suggested that the BBC should permanently station a member of the staff in the House of Commons, who could give such immediate information as was possible or be produced according to their needs.

<sup>35</sup> \*Miall to Head of Secretariat, 'Charges against *Panorama* in House of Commons 14th November 1956', 20 Nov. 1956 (T32/1213).



very different from Eden's. 'Great men' had not monopolized the television cameras, however: 'men in the street' abroad had also been interviewed, as they had been on 5 November.

On 28 November a notice was placed on all BBC notice-boards informing the staff that the Board of Governors had found that 'the allegations to the effect that the staff had acted with bias' were all 'groundless'. After reviewing a 'diverse output which they recognized was broadcast during a period of great difficulty', they had come to the conclusion that a 'successful and creditable result' had been achieved. 'The result', the notice claimed, 'fulfilled the BBC's obligations for impartiality, objectivity and for telling the truth.' The staff deserved to be complimented both for their 'competence' and for their 'high sense of duty'.<sup>36</sup>

It was not only the Governors who drew this conclusion. After the BBC had been 'under fire' in Parliament and in some sections of the Press, Woodrow Wyatt, too, had leapt to its defence. In an article called 'Don't Gag the BBC—its doing its neutral best', he reported that Rawlinson had not seen the *Panorama* programme on 12 November. He had relied entirely on hearsay. He had stated erroneously that Wyatt had telephoned a correspondent in New York selecting people whom he could interview in various points of the world. In fact, he, Wyatt, had neither telephoned New York nor interviewed anyone. He had made only one relevant telephone call, a call to Rawlinson after he had read the speech that he had made in the House of Commons. 'Impartiality has got nothing to do with suppressing facts', Wyatt insisted. 'If the BBC did not report the condemnation at the United Nations of Britain's action in Egypt, that would please many people. It would also destroy the integrity and value of the BBC as a trustworthy source of news.'<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> \*Bottomley, 'Debate in the House of Commons, November 14th, BBC Broadcasts: Political Balance', 28 Nov. 1956 (posted on all BBC notice-boards) (T32/1213). See also Sir Ian Jacob, 'The Suez Crisis and the BBC', *Ariel*, Jan. 1957.

<sup>37</sup> *Illustrated*, 8 Dec. 1956. Goldie had defended Wyatt's summing up in *Panorama* as an attempt to 'elucidate and clarify without adding any personal views' (\*Goldie to Miall, 'Panorama: November 12', 12 Nov. 1956 (T32/1213)). Wyatt was engaged in 1956 in a determined television battle to expose Communist management of AEU elections. See Wyatt, pp. 250 ff. See also below, p. 165. Rawlinson had visited the USA in the summer of 1956, and had talked to Stevenson. 'No one wanted to talk about any crisis in the Middle East,' he recalled in his autobiography (op. cit., p. 68), or about 'Nasser and his seizure of the Suez Canal'. On 8 Aug. Eisenhower, after protests from Makins, had rebuked his Defence Secretary, Charles Wilson, for calling 'the Suez thing . . . a ripple' (Eisenhower, op. cit., p. 43).



The quality—and integrity—of the BBC's news reporting, including its radio reporting of Parliament, was, in fact, praised in most sections of the Press during and after the crisis,<sup>38</sup> although in the correspondence columns there were readers who dissented, like a retired colonial doctor, writing to the *Western Daily Press* from a Bristol address. 'Many would agree that the introduction of broadcasting is one of the five major disasters that have befallen the human race in this century', he exclaimed. 'Some years ago, it was asked, if all the beards in the BBC were placed from end to end how far would they stretch. Answer: From Sodom to Gomorrah.'<sup>39</sup>

After the Parliamentary debate, the *News Chronicle*, which had taken an anti-Eden line from October onwards, concluded that the bias lay in the eye of the beholder and in the ear of the listener, rather than in the minds of those who controlled the BBC. Its Editor went further and observed that in its 'anxiety to be fair' the BBC had allowed 'far less force into its commentaries than the situation called for'.<sup>40</sup> Most newspaper comment was not as forceful as this, although the *Daily Mirror* in a lurid editorial 'Is the BBC Committing Suicide?' accused the BBC of 'being scared out of its wits by (1) the advancing politicians, and (2) the vanishing BBC public'.<sup>41</sup>

The main argument used to defend the BBC was an old one. 'The greatest evidence that the BBC can offer of its efforts to capture that elusive goal of complete impartiality is that it is now being attacked from both sides.'<sup>42</sup> Yet the *Huddersfield Daily Examiner* found a different argument: 'More critical Conservatives might consider the fact that, despite the alleged unfairness of the BBC, public opinion in this country (as recorded in the latest Gallup Poll) has swung over in favour of the Government's action during recent weeks. . . .

<sup>38</sup> *World's Press News*, 16, 25 Nov. 1956. The BBC's Parliamentary Correspondents were kept extremely busy. There was a radio studio at Westminster, but there was no TV studio until Oct. 1957, and reports to Television News had to be made live from a small studio in the basement of All Soul's Church next to Broadcasting House.

<sup>39</sup> Letter from G. L. Alexander, 16 Nov. 1956. For a carefully organized local protest see *Derby Evening Telegraph*, 14 Nov. 1956, that describes a resolution passed unanimously by the Derby Borough Women's Conservative Association. All members were told to write to the BBC. See also the *Aldershot News*, 9 Nov. 1956, 'Cannot the nation write?'

<sup>40</sup> *News Chronicle*, 'Prejudice', 16 Nov. 1956. The *South London Press* (23 Nov. 1956) favourably compared the BBC with ITV. 'The BBC has no political or commercial axe to grind, but it is controlled mainly by the middle-class, so it is guided by middle-class conventions. The Independent programme controllers are frankly biased in favour of advertisers.' The BBC was 'trying', and that was more than could be said for ITV. See also the *New Statesman and Nation*, 'A Tangled Web', 28 Dec. 1956.

<sup>41</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 20 Nov. 1956.

<sup>42</sup> *Express and Star*, *Wolverhampton*, 15 Nov. 1956; *Dorset Daily Echo*, 15 Nov. 1956.

Day in and day out the BBC does not abuse its freedom, and its standards of objectivity are remarkably high.<sup>43</sup> Across the Pennines, the *Manchester Guardian*, which Conservative Ministers and backbenchers had attacked more strongly than the BBC, observed that there had been 'a lot of hard and unfair words about the BBC'. 'The Home Service, unlike the External Services, is not subject to any form of Government control—and its senior staff, although it cannot be altogether encouraged [by the debate] need not take the criticism too seriously. But for the External Services the danger of malicious interference is real.'<sup>44</sup>

*The Economist*, which had been critical of Eden's policies throughout the crisis, dismissing him as a partisan rather than a policeman, and which had been equally critical of the BBC's 'Gilbertian rules', uttered a memorable general verdict:

What should be the rules for guiding BBC overseas service broadcasts during a war with which half the population disagrees? There are no rules, because there should not be such wars. Probably the best emergency recipe, however, is that overseas broadcasts to the areas affected can in such circumstances legitimately give more weight than usual to Government policy, but that they should not be obliged to serve the purposes of [mere] propaganda. The recipe seems, with modifications, to have been followed.

*The Economist* went on to attack, not for the first time, the effects of the Fourteen-Day Rule on domestic broadcasting, which by then was more generally regarded as being dangerously restrictive. Fortunately, however, it claimed, the broadcasters had been prepared, despite the Rule, to discuss the crisis, 'nominally merely relaying . . . facts but progressively allowing the distinction between facts and comment to be blurred'. 'Let them go on blurring it. This has been a good psychological moment to get this indefensible fourteen day rule further on the run.'<sup>45</sup>

It was certainly a 'good psychological moment', and in the month of the Parliamentary debate and of *The Economist* article—but before the Allied landings—the question of the impact of the rule figured prominently on one occasion in an *Any Questions?* broadcast. The *Any Questions?* team, chaired, as usual, by Freddy Grisewood, Harman's cousin, was broadcasting from the oldest carpet factory in the country at Wilton, and was described by the announcer, as it always was, not only as a Light Programme broadcast but as a

<sup>43</sup> *Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, 15 Nov. 1956.

<sup>44</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 16 Nov. 1956.

<sup>45</sup> *The Economist*, 10 Nov. 1956.

broadcast for the British Armed Forces Network in Germany. After Grisewood had said in his introduction that some questions that had been submitted by the audience could not be answered because of the Fourteen Day Rule, all four members of the team—two of them MPs, Stephen McCadden (Conservative) and Francis Noel Baker (Labour)—protested so strongly that it was difficult for Grisewood to start the programme.

When the first question was eventually put, 'Does the panel consider carpets in the home to be a necessity or a luxury?', Henry Fairlie, one of the two non-MP members on the team, responded to a challenge by Grisewood that he would be jolly clever to break the Rule in reply to that question by stating (to laughter) 'Carpets are in the home in order to put the Opposition on for their ridiculous attitude to Suez'. In response to a later question on whether or not the proceedings of Parliament should be broadcast (not televised)—both MPs were strongly opposed—he suggested that there would be only one difficulty. If the debates were broadcast, they would be banned under the Fourteen Day Rule.

The programme was quickly cut off the air, and was resumed only when the members had 'calmed down'. Even then, in answering the first question after resumption, put by a coincidence by a questioner named Clark, trouble almost started again. 'When the members of the team are in a really vile temper, what have they found the best method of dispelling it?' was answered first by Noel Baker, who said music, then by Mary Stocks, the non-MP, who replied 'Uniting against the Fourteen Day Rule'. Freddy Grisewood's comment at the end of the programme might have been made by his cousin, 'I will say this, never in the whole of my experience of this programme have I ever taken part in such a session.'<sup>46</sup>

Making the Rule look absurd was the best way of getting rid of it, for whether the Rule was 'defensible' or not had been discussed seriously many times before and after the Suez crisis broke. Although the Select Committee called upon to examine it ended by recom-

<sup>46</sup> *Any Questions?*, 2 Nov. 1956. There was a precedent, however. Boothby, a member of the television *In the News* team had, like the other members, strongly opposed the Rule, and in an *Any Questions?* programme in Dec. 1955 he had protested when told not to discuss the Budget. He had, indeed, gone on to discuss it (see Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, p. 559). Michael Foot, another member of the *In the News* team (which after competition switched to ITV—see below, p. 282) wrote in the *Tribune* (Aug. 1955): 'Break this law, Sir Ian. If need be, let yourself be despatched to the Tower.' See also Briggs, *The BBC: The First Fifty Years* (1985), p. 292.

mending a thoroughly unsatisfactory compromise—a seven-day rule to replace the Fourteen-Day Rule—in December the Cabinet accepted the sensible suggestion of Hill, the Postmaster-General, that the Rule should be suspended for six months if the Opposition agreed.<sup>47</sup> There would, however, be an ‘understanding’ that the broadcasting authorities would ‘do their utmost to avoid anticipation of Parliamentary debate’. Eden himself, having returned from his convalescence in the West Indies, announced the Government’s decision in the House of Commons on 18 December.<sup>48</sup> The following year the Rule was to be suspended indefinitely.<sup>49</sup>

## 6. Events in Perspective

Fourteen days was a long time in politics. As far as the BBC’s External Services were concerned, however, perspectives were necessarily far longer. The Suez story, like the Hungarian story, needs to be related to a longer time-scale than that covered in headlines during the crisis itself, which ended with United Nations troops on the Suez Canal and with Russian tanks in the streets of Budapest. Suez threw little light on how television would deal with future international crises. Nor within a narrower context did it either open or close a period of governmental pressure on the BBC’s external services, which was itself both economic and political.

There had long been a difference of approach behind the scenes between the Foreign Office and the Treasury. The Foreign Office had often argued that ‘Overseas information services’ were necessary and economical instruments of foreign policy. For the cost of a small cruiser you could secure the services of a battle fleet.<sup>1</sup> The Treasury had refused to accept the argument. Looking for cuts, it had treated as marginal the costs of several BBC external services. As a result of this difference, it was difficult for the BBC to plan far ahead. Nor

<sup>47</sup> PRO, *Cabinet Minutes*, 7 Dec. 1956. According to Butler, the ITA had broadly welcomed the Report of the Select Committee, while the BBC had been ‘less forthcoming’ (CAB 129/83, CP(56)248, ‘Broadcasting: The Fortnight Rule: Memorandum by the Lord Privy Seal’, 22 Oct. 1956).

<sup>48</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 562, cols. 1095–7, 18 Dec. 1956.

<sup>49</sup> See below, p. 1019.

<sup>1</sup> The naval comparison was made by Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart, expert on intelligence services (*Time and Tide*, 28 Oct. 1950). Cabinet papers at many points bring out differences of approach between the Treasury and the Foreign Office.

were the issues well known to the public. The 1953 Report of the Drogheda Committee, set up in 1952 'to assess the value of Overseas Information Services', had never been published in full. It still never has been. What it had demanded by way of positive action in external broadcasting—including an increase in Middle East (and Far Eastern) services—had been pushed aside, while what it suggested by way of cuts—among them the end of BBC broadcasting to Western Europe—had been listened to closely.<sup>2</sup>

The view of Eden, Foreign Secretary at the time of the publication of the Report, had been that more money should be spent on overseas information services and that the BBC's French and Italian Services should not be closed down.<sup>3</sup> After he had become Prime Minister, however, there had been no sign that the Government would take action to carry through Drogheda's recommendations, either negative or positive, including a recommendation to increase broadcasts to the Middle East.<sup>4</sup>

The atmosphere was cool at a dinner in December 1955 given for Macmillan, then Foreign Secretary, by Cadogan and senior officials at Bush House. Various subjects were discussed, and the BBC representatives got short shrift when they pointed out that whereas over the previous eight years the overall costs of the External Services had risen by 50 per cent, their funding had only risen by 20 per cent. No further funds, it was made clear, would be available.<sup>5</sup> And soon there were even more ominous signs of a shift of view within the Foreign Office itself. When Nutting, then Minister of State, asked whether some funds within the Government grant to the BBC might be allotted to dealing with Soviet propaganda, Paul Grey, Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, went further than the Drogheda Committee had done on the negative side, and accused the BBC of 'holding on

<sup>2</sup> Cmd. 9138 (1954) consists of extracts only, and even these were not published until nine months after the report had been submitted in July 1953. The Report attached particular importance to capital investment in transmitters and other facilities (see G. Mansell, *Let Truth Be Told* (1982), pp. 224 ff.). Before the Committee met, Anthony Nutting, then Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, had announced the setting up of a Committee of officials to consider the matter.

<sup>3</sup> For Eden's attitude to the Drogheda recommendations, see PRO Cabinet Papers C(54)296, Overseas Information Services: The Drogheda Report: Memo by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 9 July 1954; Memorandum of 23 Sept. 1954; letter from Eden to Sir David Maxwell Fyfe, 1 April 1954; letter from Butler to Churchill, 9 Nov. 1954 (PREM 11/691).

<sup>4</sup> See PRO Foreign Office Papers FO 953/1561, quoted in P. Partner, *Arab Voices* (1988), p. 96.

<sup>5</sup> FO 953/1640, J. B. Clark to P. Grey, Foreign Office, 9 Dec. 1955.

to what is largely a fetish' in its pattern of programming.<sup>6</sup> He was prepared to propose the abolition not only of all foreign language services in Europe, except those to behind the Iron Curtain, but of all Latin American services too, services which the Drogheda Committee had particularly strongly supported.

Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, the Permanent Secretary at the Foreign Office, backed Grey's conclusion: 'I agree,' he wrote, 'but the protests will be loud and angry.' Nutting backed Grey too: 'I have always wanted this kind of redeployment.' He recognized, however, that it could be 'sold in Parliament' only if it were treated as a redeployment and not as a cut. He suggested, indeed, that it would be wise to avoid all talk of money, and cunningly chose the term 'expansion' to cover what he believed to be necessary changes. One part of 'expansion' could relate to the BBC's broadcasting to the Soviet Union and to Eastern Europe. Another could relate to the building of a new relay station in Cyprus, to be financed out of money saved in other places.<sup>7</sup>

The BBC seems to have been kept in the dark about such conclusions, which in early June were summarized by Grey in a draft of a Cabinet paper.<sup>8</sup> By contrast, the BBC produced a paper by Jacob embodying an entirely different approach, although the two papers ended with one conclusion in common—a recommendation to install a medium wave relay transmitter in Cyprus at a cost of £250,000. 'It is not being suggested', Jacob wrote, 'that Britain's relative weakness in this area can be magically corrected by radio, or that the presentation of the *status quo* is as simple or cheap a procedure as a campaign of disruption. Nevertheless, a long-term broadcasting policy in this area would pay dividends even at this very late stage.'<sup>9</sup>

That such a policy would be difficult to achieve was apparent in May 1956 when Dodds-Parker, who had returned to the Foreign Office in December 1955, wrote after the visit of Khrushchev and Bulganin that 'many people, far beyond the confines of the Tory party, believe that there are sinister extreme-left influences in the BBC who since the war have slanted news, etc., against H. M. Government's long term interests. . . . It is high time one or two patriots were put into these key positions.'<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> FO 953/1646, Grey to Stewart, 20 Feb. 1956; FO 953/1641, Grey to Kirkpatrick, 10 April 1956.

<sup>7</sup> FO 953/1641. Notes written on Grey to Kirkpatrick, 10 April 1956.

<sup>8</sup> FO 953/1641, Grey to Dodds-Parker, Nutting, and Kirkpatrick, 6 June 1956.

<sup>9</sup> \*Paper by Jacob, 31 May 1956 (E2/737).

<sup>10</sup> FO 953/1640, folio PB1011/12/G, Dodds-Parker to Grey, 24 May 1956.



At this point in the story, the Treasury re-entered the picture, as well as the Foreign Office, encouraging a change of mood there. At a Cabinet meeting on 14 June 1956, Macmillan, who had only recently moved to the Treasury, proposed a substantial reduction in the BBC's European Services as part of a package of cuts designed to save £100 million in Government spending; and this proposal had the effect of rallying the Foreign Office, including the new Foreign Secretary, Selwyn Lloyd, to oppose Treasury policies.<sup>11</sup> Indeed Lloyd, who pointed out that he was under great pressure to expand the BBC's external services, now proposed that the BBC and the Foreign Office should 'consolidate their views and produce a paper which should be put to Ministers'.<sup>12</sup>

Confronted by Treasury proposals, Grey himself, in what was proving to be a year of trials and tribulations, became careful to stick to the old Foreign Office line, just as within Broadcasting House Grisewood was being careful to stick to the BBC's:

We can restore confidence in the BBC external services, which has clearly been undermined in Whitehall, if not with the public who have, however, no means of judging how effective they are. It becomes important, however, that an attack on some of the services should not result in our casting doubt on the services as a whole. It is not in our interest that the BBC should be regarded as having lost the confidence of the Government.<sup>13</sup>

As late as June and July 1956, therefore, Suez was still not the main factor in the continuing story of how the BBC's external services should be handled.<sup>14</sup>

None the less, it became so very soon afterwards. On 5 July, the Cabinet set up a Committee, chaired by Dodds-Parker, to consider 'the scale and distribution of expenditure on overseas broadcasting', with Grey as one of its members,<sup>15</sup> and on 11 July the Foreign

<sup>11</sup> CAB 129/81, CP(56)144, 12 June 1956; *Cabinet Minutes*, 14 June 1956.

<sup>12</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 12, 19 July 1956.

<sup>13</sup> FO 953/1640, Grey to Dodds-Parker, 19 June 1956.

<sup>14</sup> As late as 26 July 1956 Grey wrote to Selwyn Lloyd's private secretary 'that the Secretary of State would like a note on the method by which the BBC were given the task of broadcasting in foreign languages; the rights and duties of the BBC consequent upon that arrangement; and the machinery whereby the Foreign Office and the BBC keep in contact in order to ensure that the broadcasts are made in the national interest.' This was the most general of requests (FO 953/1643).

<sup>15</sup> FO 953/1641, Dodds-Parker to Kirkpatrick, 10 July 1956; FO 953/1642, Dodds-Parker to Selwyn Lloyd, 2 Aug. 1956. At the meeting of 5 July Peter Thorneycroft, president of the Board of Trade, argued on economic grounds that as far as Europe was concerned 'the maintenance of our influence through broadcasting might become even more important than it had been in the past' (A. R. Low to R. A. Butler, 17 Oct. 1956, FO 953/1644). The Foreign office disagreed with this line (Note by C.C.B. Stewart 17 Oct. 1956, FO 953/1645).



Secretary himself saw Jacob for what was described as a frank discussion. It was frank, but it was also awkward. Jacob complained mainly, as in the past, of financial stringency, Lloyd complained that the BBC was not aggressive enough in its Middle East broadcasting. 'Offensive' broadcasting, he now suggested, might be dealt with better not by the BBC but 'in other ways'. Jacob asked (characteristically, given his views on planning) for a five-year plan, Lloyd was thinking only of the next few months, if not the next few weeks.<sup>16</sup>

The Dodds-Parker Committee met for the second time on 25 July, the same day as a Policy Review Committee, chaired by Nutting, which had overlapping interests. The confusion of committees in the summer of 1956 was itself a disturbing factor in the situation.<sup>17</sup> Both committees were concerned with how the Government could best secure 'a larger measure of control over the content of broadcasts to the Middle East and Far East'. Both committees seem to have agreed, in defiance of the BBC's Charter, that the BBC was attaching 'too much importance to impartiality'.<sup>18</sup> Either BBC broadcasts should be used as an instrument of Government policy, the Dodds-Parker Committee concluded, or, to return to the suggestion made earlier, use should be made of 'another organisation', not specified in the Minutes, with the grant-in-aid to the BBC being cut to allow the switch to be financed.

When Grey, who was learning from experience, was asked by Sir Harold (later Lord) Caccia, who before the end of the year (after an unfortunate delay) was to replace Makins as Ambassador in Washington, what a 'larger measure of control' would imply, he replied categorically that

Direct responsibility for the content of the broadcasts [to the Middle East] could not be vested in HMG without a change in the Licence and Agreement if not of the Charter; . . . It would be strongly resisted by the BBC as

<sup>16</sup> FO 953/1641 Dodds-Parker, 'Record of Conversation between the Secretary of State and Sir Ian Jacob', 11 July 1956.

<sup>17</sup> It was commented on later, in 1986 in a Channel 4 programme *All the Prime Minister's Men*, by Sir Ian (later Lord) Bancroft, who was then Butler's Private Secretary and who became Head of the Home Civil Service in 1978; 'The difficulty about the whole Suez episode was that it wasn't dealt with as part of the normal system of Cabinet government.' See P. Hennessy, 'Suez 30 years on', *The Listener*, 11 Sept. 1986.

<sup>18</sup> PRO CAB 130/119 GEN 542, *Minutes*, 25 July 1956. The Dodds-Parker Committee submitted an interim report on 2 Aug. On 17 Aug. F. Bishop, principal private secretary to the Prime Minister, wrote to C. R. Rae in the Foreign Office, saying that the Prime Minister had not yet had time to study it in detail (FO 953/1642).

destroying their present independence and thereby damaging their reputation abroad; . . . [Moreover] HMG themselves might find that there would be disagreeable consequences, including responsibility, both in Parliament and abroad, for every word broadcast.

Grey had a further point: 'The machinery required to exercise control would have to be elaborate if it were to be effective.'<sup>19</sup> This statement, which had obvious implications for domestic as well as external broadcasting, was written on the day that Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal Company.

One day after the controversial Salah Salem broadcast,<sup>20</sup> Kirkpatrick wrote to Jacob asking him to name a BBC representative to a Committee 'to achieve closer co-ordination between those departments most directly concerned with the Suez Canal question', and went on to suggest as a name that of Donald Stephenson, a former Eastern Services Director, who had succeeded John Morris<sup>21</sup> and who had subsequently moved from Bush House to become Controller of the BBC's North Region in 1949.<sup>22</sup> Instead, Jacob nominated Hugh Greene. It was a sign both of Jacob's trust in Greene and of the direction of BBC managerial restructuring.

Twelve days later, Kirkpatrick saw Jacob, and in an unpleasant, even threatening, interview, he told the Director-General of the direction of Government thinking. There were, he said, two schools of thought among Ministers preoccupied with the state of the BBC's external services. One school favoured governmental control, the other the curtailment of the £5 million grant then being paid. Both were ill disposed to the BBC. Kirkpatrick's tone was as irritating to Jacob as the content of his message, a sign that tone mattered even more in such a private discussion than it did in any public broadcast. Kirkpatrick even raised—quite irrelevantly—the question of whether the BBC was 'lowering its standards' in domestic broadcasting.

Far too satisfied with his own performance, Kirkpatrick, who had worked closely with Grisewood during the Second World War and whose own career was scarcely to end in triumph, wrote in his account of the meeting that 'Sir Ian Jacob looked stricken like a

<sup>19</sup> FO 953/1643, P. F. Grey to Private Secretary, 26 July 1956.

<sup>20</sup> See above, p. 87.

<sup>21</sup> See above, pp. 33–4.

<sup>22</sup> \*Kirkpatrick to Jacob, 16 Aug. 1956; Jacob to Kirkpatrick, 17 Aug. 1956 (R34/1580/1). Stephenson had found it necessary in 1946 to explain to Foreign Office officials that, 'while we would always do our best to interpret British Government policy in our broadcasts, we nevertheless reserved absolute discretion in regard to content and presentation' (quoted in Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, p. 143). For Stephenson's later career, see below, pp. 683, 698, 716.

mother about to be deprived of her child'. 'He denied', Kirkpatrick added, that the Home Service was 'lowering its standards', and claimed that the Overseas Service was 'doing its job'. Moreover, 'he defied any impartial enquiry to come to any other conclusion'.<sup>23</sup> The word 'impartial' was under strain in 1956. It can have been no consolation for Jacob to hear from Kirkpatrick that the subject would not be raised again in acute form until after the Suez crisis. Indeed, it is unlikely that Kirkpatrick believed this himself.

The mood of this meeting must have been particularly chilling for Jacob, for it was Kirkpatrick who at the end of the Second World War had encouraged Jacob to join the BBC, having worked there himself during the War as Controller of European Services. Kirkpatrick was to maintain his unfriendly stance towards the BBC until he retired from the Foreign Office in 1957 and succeeded Clark as an ineffective and unconvincing Chairman of the ITA. During the late summer and early autumn of 1956, however, he seems merely to have been echoing for the most part what the Prime Minister was saying in what was equally unappealing language. For example, on 26 September, three days after Britain and France had referred the Suez dispute to the United Nations Security Council, the Prime Minister told his colleagues that he 'continued to be dissatisfied with the conduct of the Oversea [sic] Services of the British Broadcasting Corporation and . . . considered that the whole basis of the existing arrangements should be reviewed'.<sup>24</sup>

At the same meeting, Butler was given the task of chairing a Committee of Ministers, including Nutting and Lennox Boyd, to carry out yet a further new review of Government publicity and to assess 'arrangements for overseas broadcasting', a procedure suggested not by Kirkpatrick but by Norman Brook, who had hoped that the Prime Minister would chair it himself.<sup>25</sup> The confusion of committees was once again apparent. The Egypt Committee, the proceedings of which were not known to some members of the Cabinet, was being serviced by a web of committees.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> FO 953/1643, Note by Kirkpatrick to J. O. Rennie, Head of the Information Department, 28 Aug. 1956.

<sup>24</sup> PRO, *Cabinet Minutes*, 26 Sept. 1956.

<sup>25</sup> Brook to F. Bishop, 24 Sept. 1956, referring to an earlier Minute of 17 Aug. He noted that it would be unrealistic for Eden, the Foreign Secretary, or the Chancellor of the Exchequer 'to give much thought to this at the present time'; Bishop to the Prime Minister, 24 Sept. 1956 (PRO PREM 11/2732).

<sup>26</sup> See above, p. 86, and A. Gorst, 'Suez 1956: A Consumer's Guide to Papers at the Public Record Office', *Contemporary Record*, Spring 1987.

At the first meeting of Butler's Committee on 9 October Kirkpatrick proposed, in the wake of his talk with Jacob, that there should be a sizeable reduction in the Government grant, 'to administer a psychological shock to the BBC', so that it would consider more seriously the needs of 'national interest'. He added, as Grey had recommended, that while it would be 'unwise' to impose specific Government control over the BBC's external services, 'the Corporation would derive considerable help . . . from the appointment of a competent liaison officer from the Foreign Office'.<sup>27</sup> This idea, which recalled wartime practice, had figured in a plan prepared on 24 September.<sup>28</sup>

Had the Opposition known of the existence of Butler's Committee, which was to continue in being until 12 December 1956, there would have been an even greater row between Opposition and Government than there was during the autumn of 1956; and the row would have been further fuelled had it been also known that at the same meeting on 9 October it was suggested that arrangements should be made for the BBC to include in its overseas broadcasts 'features supplied explicitly by H. M. Government'. At a second meeting of the Committee on 18 October it was agreed that cuts should be made, as the Drogheda Committee Report had proposed, in all European language services except those to the Soviet Union and its satellites—there was increasing evidence of growing instability there—and that the Central Office of Information, a body under direct Government control, should be given the task of preparing transcripts for overseas use, the cost to be borne from the cuts in the BBC's services.

Lennox Boyd, Secretary of State for the Colonies, would have gone further. While approving of the savings, he asked in a paper dated 21 November 1956, 'What exactly do we look for from an overseas broadcasting operation in terms of the furtherance of public policy?' 'As things are,' he went on, 'are we getting it? If not, what are the shortcomings and the reasons for them?' 'I am among those', he added, 'who feel that the BBC has not been giving the service that we want': at best, relations between the BBC and the Government were characterized by 'malaise'. Yet, unlike some of his colleagues, he concluded correctly that if the BBC tried to 'project Britain', as it was called upon to do by its constitution, it had to project British

<sup>27</sup> CAB 130/120, Ministerial Committee on Overseas Broadcasting, Meeting 1, 9 Oct. 1956.

<sup>28</sup> For wartime precedents, see Briggs, *The War of Words*, pp. 303 ff.

opinion as a whole, 'including the very diverse opinions which may be expressed on public policy'.<sup>29</sup>

There was a return to older talk, less of politics than of economics, in the annex of a further paper prepared for the Committee on 'the Present Cost, Distribution and Methods of BBC External Services'.<sup>30</sup> The paper itself, however, included the interesting, if thoroughly misguided, observation that 'in connection with these [overseas] services we would say that the argument that the maintenance of transmissions in peace-time facilitates overseas broadcasting in war is no longer, in view of the character of thermo-nuclear war, one that can carry weight'.<sup>31</sup> A different generalization of a not dissimilar kind, already outdated by October, had been made earlier in the year in the course of a general Cabinet discussion. The Government, a Cabinet Minute read, was engaged in a general readjustment of policy based on their appreciation that the immediate threat to the United Kingdom's position and influence in the world was now political and economic, rather than military. Any drastic reduction of overseas information services might prove to be inconsistent with this changed emphasis in national policy.<sup>32</sup>

Jacob was kept informed of the drift of the Butler Committee's discussions, and at a meeting on 25 October, on the eve of his departure for Australia (referred to in the Cabinet), he and Tangye Lean, J. B. Clark's deputy, who accompanied him, were duly told by Nutting that it was proposed to reduce the Government Grant-in-Aid which financed the external services by one million pounds and to divert the money to other overseas information purposes. It was made abundantly clear also, as had been planned, that this was a punitive action.<sup>33</sup> 'Contrary views' had been broadcast to the world 'to the confusion of people in certain parts of the world' who did 'not understand our political system'.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>29</sup> CAB 130/120, GEN 554/7, Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 21 Nov. 1956.

<sup>30</sup> A view was expressed in the Cabinet in Oct. (*Minutes*, 24 Oct. 1956) that the BBC 'shall not be allowed to suppose' that savings on their services were proposed as a means of finding a subsidy for the ITA. A £100,000 grant was offered and refused (see above, p. 10 n.—*Cabinet Minutes*, 20 Nov. 1956). Butler was then in the chair in the Prime Minister's absence.

<sup>31</sup> CAB 130/120, Ministerial Committee on Overseas Broadcasting, Paper 2.

<sup>32</sup> PRO, *Cabinet Minutes*, 14 June 1956.

<sup>33</sup> FO 953/1644, Note by C. C. B. Stewart at FO on meeting held on 25, 26 Oct. 1956; *Cabinet Minutes*, 24 Oct. 1956. \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 8 Nov. 1956.

<sup>34</sup> Note by Stewart, 26 Oct. 1956.

Jacob, who had started the day with a meeting of the Board of Governors, held unusually not in London but in Birmingham, protested both about the proposal and the way that it had been arrived at. The BBC should at least have been asked to produce a plan of its own, he told Nutting, and, if forced to make savings, it should have been allowed to decide just how it would do so. In particular, the Chairman and the Governors should have been directly involved. There was certainly scope for further argument about the non-European services which had not been mentioned in the Drogheda Report—Afrikaans, Bengali, Marathi, Hindi, and Urdu. As it was, the Foreign Office unilaterally swept them on one side, along with French, Italian, Portuguese, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, and Dutch, and added that if their closure did not produce enough savings, Greek, Finnish, Serbo-Croat, Slovene, and Spanish would have to be closed also in Europe, along with the Spanish and Portuguese services to Latin America.<sup>35</sup>

The sequel to the meeting on 25 October was curious, a sign that little was completely straightforward in the year of Suez. At the end of the meeting, Dodds-Parker, who had also been present, prepared a draft letter for Jacob summing up what the Government had decided.<sup>36</sup> After receiving it, Jacob very wisely stalled, asking for the final version to be sent for further inspection before the BBC could make comments; and then, after he and Cadogan had had a further talk with Butler the next day, he departed as planned for Australia. A draft reply was circulated to the Governors, but they in their turn were not called upon to discuss the matter until their meeting on 8 November, when they asked for the draft to be rewritten 'in a way that would not make it appear that the BBC took it for granted that an official communication of the proposals would be forthcoming'.<sup>37</sup> By then, however, the Anglo-French landings had taken place, and

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Copy of letter dated 26th October 1956 from Mr. A. D. Dodds-Parker, Foreign Office, to the Director-General'.

<sup>37</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 8 Nov. 1956. In the event of the Government deciding to go ahead with the draft proposals, the Governors said that 'they would attach very great importance to the setting up of a joint working party between the BBC and Government departments to consider them in detail'. The draft letter had nothing to do with Suez. It included the proposal to make East Germany the 'principal target' of BBC German broadcasting, and stated with extraordinary obtuseness and lack of foresight that the Government wished 'to consider with the BBC whether the General Overseas Service does not offer some scope for reduction in scale and for redistribution of the emphasis within it'.



the cease-fire demanded by the United Nations had been implemented.

By then, too, there had been three other twists of fortune. First, on 26 October, at the meeting with Butler, the threatened cut had been reduced by one-half. Second, even more unexpectedly, no final letter advising the BBC of the cut was ever sent. Third, Nutting, who had been considered a protégé of Eden and who had been Eden's main intermediary in dealings with the BBC before Allied action began, offered his resignation to the Prime Minister on the ground that he could no longer support the Government's policies. His announcement, in a letter, had been delayed, however, until 5 November, the day of the paratroop landings and the day when the House of Commons debated the United Nations' resolution proposing the setting up of a United Nations emergency force.<sup>38</sup>

The special Foreign Office Liaison Officer stationed at Bush House as a watchdog had taken his place there on 1 November, when the BBC notice announcing his arrival stated simply that his presence there was on 'an experimental basis', and that the Government had declared that the appointment would 'not, of course [another significant 'of course'] be intended to derogate in any way from the existing degree of independence of the BBC and from their own responsibility for the programmes which they transmit'.<sup>39</sup> The watchdog chosen was Lanham Titchener, ex-SOE and ex-BBC television producer—he was then *en poste* in Teheran, where he had acquired the nickname 'Titchener of Tartoum'—and, pending his return, Duncan (later Sir Duncan) Wilson, a future Ambassador to the Soviet Union and a future Master of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, was installed in his place.

<sup>38</sup> See above, p. 105. For Nutting's account of what happened, see his book *No End of a Lesson*. He claims that he told Selwyn Lloyd of his attitude as early as 22 Oct. He was influenced, he wrote, by Monckton, the Paymaster-General, who on 18 Oct. had ceased to be Minister of Defence and had been replaced by Head. Monckton told Nutting that he would have resigned himself if he had not been a member of the Cabinet. Other members of the Cabinet had also been unhappy about the development of policy, although they were unaware of all that was happening. (See Salisbury to Eden, 24 Aug. 1956, in PRO PREM 11/1152.) Macmillan told Nutting on the day of resignation not to make a statement to the House: 'It could easily bring down the Government and for you, dear boy, it will do irreparable harm. Why say anything at all? . . . You have already been proved right and we have been proved wrong.' Efforts were made to prevent Nutting publishing his autobiography in 1967. See P. Hennessy, 'No End of an Argument', *Contemporary Record*, Spring 1987.

<sup>39</sup> FO 953/1644, Clark to Lean *et al.*, 'Foreign Office Liaison Officer', 1 Nov. 1956.



Clark knew Wilson and liked him, but strongly disapproved of the first task assigned to him on arriving on 1 November—that of vetting BBC news bulletins in Arabic to see whether they were suitable for re-broadcasting by Sharq-al-Adna, a nominally private and commercially operated radio station in Cyprus offering mainly entertainment, which had greatly increased its range and impact in May 1955, when a 100-kilowatt medium-wave transmitter was installed. It would have been put at the disposal of the BBC, but instead in late October 1956, the Governor officially requisitioned the station for British Government purposes, and renamed it 'The Voice of Britain'. The Arab staff had walked out and a Psychological Warfare Unit of Allied HQ, headed by Brigadier Ferguson, had taken over.<sup>40</sup>

The station was subsequently used extensively for undisguised propaganda, and the BBC news bulletins in Arabic were suspended from 3 November until after the cease-fire. The tone of its programmes, monitored by the BBC at Caversham until 13 November 1956, was sharply criticized in the House of Commons, notably by Benn,<sup>41</sup> and in January 1957, after the crisis was over, there were to be renewed Cabinet discussions about the role of the station with a view to silencing the 'Voice of Britain' for ever.<sup>42</sup> Meanwhile, it had resumed broadcasting BBC news bulletins in Arabic, four and three-quarter hours of the daily fifteen hours of programming.<sup>43</sup>

The BBC kept its own standards intact throughout the crisis, and refused to keep the Arabs in the dark about what was happening in Britain. Thus, on the day of the first Allied bombardment of Egypt, the day before Wilson arrived at the BBC, they were informed of that day's critical leader in the *Manchester Guardian*. The day before, a talk

<sup>40</sup> The station had moved from Jerusalem to Limassol in the Spring of 1948 (FO 953/398, quoted in Partner, op. cit., p. 90). Details are given in the 'Report by the Director of External Broadcasting' to the Governors, for the period 1 Sept.–30 Nov. 1956, 27 Nov. 1956. There is a well-informed contemporary account by Barbara Castle, 'The Fiasco of Sharq-al-Adna', *New Statesman*, 29 Dec. 1956. See also *Governing the BBC*, p. 215.

<sup>41</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 560, cols. 517–18, 9 Nov. 1956; vol. 562, cols. 1259–60, 19 Dec. 1956.

<sup>42</sup> CAB 129/85, C(57)15, Memorandum by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, 'Overseas Broadcasting', 29 Jan. 1957; *Cabinet Minutes*, 1 Feb. 1957. By then, the Foreign Office was producing over two-thirds of its material, and the BBC the rest. BBC news bulletins in Arabic had been resumed on 13 Nov.

<sup>43</sup> Castle, loc. cit., where she examines the content of the non-BBC broadcasts. News of British opinion was handled highly selectively, and imperial themes were overplayed. As late as 28 Nov. there were comments on the Anglo-American alliance, to which Britain contributed 'the resources of what remains the most powerful empire in the world'. Castle described the content as 'half-hearted, clumsy Government propaganda which tries to get out of its difficulties by ignoring the awkward facts'. See also Waterfield, 'Suez and the Role of Broadcasting', *The Listener*, 29 Dec. 1966.

had been given in Arabic on the freedom of the Press by Robert Stephens, an *Observer* journalist. After the Anglo-French bombardment, listeners were duly told on 1 November of continuing divisions inside Britain in a Press Review, 'The Current Situation in the Middle East as Reported by British Newspapers', and on 2 November of the critical debate in the House of Commons.

There was an immediate clash in Bush House on 1 November, when Wilson was told to complain to Clark that the BBC had reported in its overseas broadcasts details of the critical leader in the *Manchester Guardian* which denounced the Anglo-French bombardment as 'an act of folly without justification in any terms but brief expediency'.<sup>44</sup> The complaint was given short shrift. No honest Press Review, Clark insisted, could ignore the *Guardian* leader. And he was supported 'from above'. Bottomley, who had been informed of the Foreign Office criticism, referred the matter to Cadogan, who ruled that scheduled reviews of the British Press should continue in the 'normal manner', and the Board subsequently endorsed the Chairman's action.<sup>45</sup>

Notwithstanding, the Foreign Office continued to express strong exception to the BBC following what was its 'normal' policy, suggesting that once military action against Egypt had started, it was not necessary to tell the whole truth. Nor did it seem to help when Bottomley and Cadogan recalled in separate talks with Monckton, the Paymaster-General, who had now been given the task of conducting the Government's information services, that for many years it had been the Government's own declared policy that treatment of an item in an overseas news bulletin must never differ materially from its treatment in domestic news.<sup>46</sup> As Haley had put it in 1948:

The BBC does not attempt to have one story for its own people and another for the rest of the world . . . That has been our policy all through. In some ways, curiously enough, it is an easier policy to sustain in war than in peace.

<sup>44</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 31 Oct. 1956. On 24 Sept. Lennox Boyd had written to Tangye Lean, who had sent him copies of translations of BBC Arabic news bulletins, conceding that while they 'put the British view on Suez clearly', in future they should avoid 'giving currency to hostile views that otherwise would be largely unnoticed'. He cited reports in a bulletin of 7 Sept. of speeches by the King of the Yemen and the Syrian Foreign Minister. The Governor of Aden had complained that the inclusion of the reports had been 'gratuitous and calculated to be harmful at this present very critical moment in Anglo-Arab relations' (R34/1580/1).

<sup>45</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 22 Nov. 1956.

<sup>46</sup> \**Ibid.*, 8 Nov. 1956; Cmd. 6852 (1946), *Broadcasting Policy*, para. 59. Benn had stated on 9 Nov. that 'the BBC Overseas Service has always stuck to the truth. That is why it is accepted and why the chimes of Big Ben are known all over the world' (*Hansard*, vol. 560, col. 518, 9 Nov. 1956).

In war, the perils are so great that you dare to tell the truth and everyone applauds. In peace time . . . specious arguments are sometimes put forward to prove that it is in the long-term interest to be not quite so meticulous.<sup>47</sup>

Monckton, who had been opposed to the Suez venture, and who asked to see Cadogan, was clearly sympathetic to what the BBC told him. Cadogan called him 'a helpful contact', and believed that 'he would support the BBC in this matter of the objectivity of its news'.<sup>48</sup> Monckton felt that he could be helpful in other respects also, for he had told Bottomley that 'if at any time the BBC felt in need of special information or advice he would be very willing' to see him or 'his representative'.<sup>49</sup>

With the crisis over, Titchener stayed on unhappily in Bush House, while the arrangement was attacked from time to time both in Parliament and in the Press. In December 1956 he wrote to Grey about 'the extraordinary neutrality of the BBC . . . They carry their resentment of criticism and outside influence, even in the External Services, to a quite ludicrous point. They make it clear that when you discuss the actions of the BBC you are treading on holy ground.'<sup>50</sup> Soon afterwards he left. The Foreign Office retained a presence in Bush House, but as Jacob was to write in 1958, neither the Foreign Office representative, who was 'sometimes termed a liaison officer', nor any other official of the Foreign Office had 'any responsibility for the content of the programmes transmitted'. This responsibility rested with the Corporation itself and its staff.<sup>51</sup>

It was certainly not thanks to the Foreign Office that the BBC's reputation for credibility, established during the Second World War, had been saved during the Suez crisis or its independence asserted. Throughout the crisis the problem of relations with the Foreign Office had been one not of liaison, but rather of difference of outlook. 'What was lacking on the BBC's part was not an awareness of the Government's policies but a readiness to fall in with its wishes.'<sup>52</sup> After the crisis was over, however, things began to appear in a different perspective. Very soon after British and French troops

<sup>47</sup> 'The Responsibilities of Broadcasting', *Lewis Fry Memorial Lecture*, Bristol University, May 1948.

<sup>48</sup> Cadogan, *Diary*, 7 Nov. 1956. On the way to his meeting with Monckton, Cadogan was given a lift by Reith.

<sup>49</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 8 Nov. 1956.

<sup>50</sup> FO 953/1648, Grey to Dodds-Parker, 'Foreign Office Liaison Officer to the BBC', 19 Dec. 1956.

<sup>51</sup> \*Internal note by Jacob on the relationship between the BBC and the Government, 28 July 1958.

<sup>52</sup> Mansell, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

were withdrawn, the view began to be expressed that it had been more in the national interest that the BBC had drawn attention during the crisis to alternative policies to those of the Government than if it had ignored them.

Outside Britain, Eden's policies had had little support, either in the Commonwealth, old or new, or in Europe, and it was easier for the BBC to continue its external broadcasting in the post-Suez world than if it had unequivocally supported them at the time.<sup>53</sup> The same was even more true of the United States. It became a major task of the new Macmillan Government that was formed after Eden's resignation to re-establish Britain's special relationship with the United States, which had been severely strained so long as the crisis lasted; and it seemed to be vindication of the BBC's broadcasting policies during the crisis when Macmillan included in his Government several Ministers who had been critical of Eden's policies in 1956 itself.

In relation to the crisis in Central and Eastern Europe, the BBC had played a part which received far less public attention in Britain than in the Middle East. Its Polish Service had been deemed sufficiently influential for it to be jammed during the summer of 1956 and for the Polish Ambassador to call on Cadogan in November 1956 to suggest that if the BBC were willing 'to moderate the tone of its broadcasts, there might be a decrease in jamming'.<sup>54</sup> The service had first been jammed in December 1951, two years after the first jamming of the BBC's Russian Service, and jamming of the latter had ceased only on 18 April 1956, the date of the arrival of Bulganin and Khrushchev in London. Jamming resumed again on 28 October 1956, five days after the outbreak of the Hungarian Revolution.<sup>55</sup>

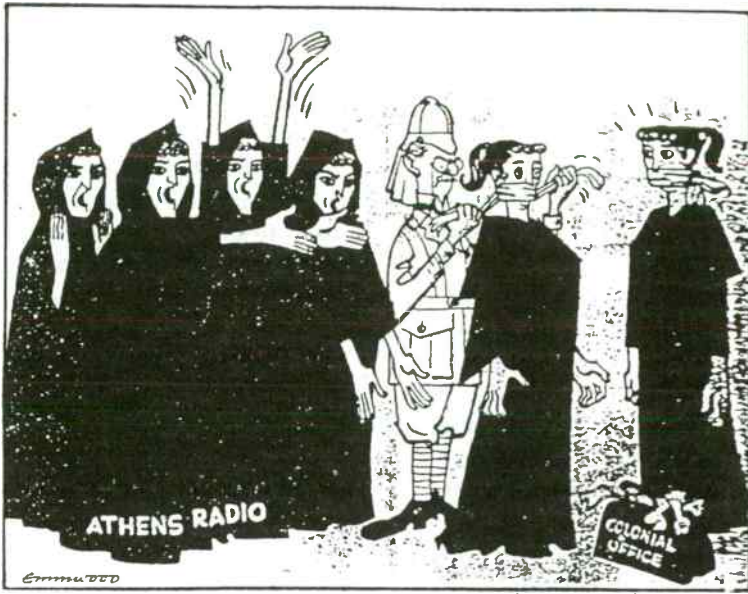
In November 1956 the BBC's Board of Governors supported Cadogan's view that there should be no change in the content and approach of the Polish Service following Polish Government press-

<sup>53</sup> During the crisis, Danish Radio had interviewed Gaitskell, but not Eden. Norway did not summarize Eden's broadcast on 3 Nov. Gallup Polls on 3 Nov. showed 93% of the Norwegian public disagreeing with the action of Britain and France, 82% of Finns, 74% of Germans, 69% of Italians, and 47% of the Dutch (although even in this last case only 24% approved) (\*Paper for the General Advisory Council, 'The BBC's External Services', 4 Jan. 1957).

<sup>54</sup> Cadogan, Diary, 8 Nov. 1956. 'Pharos' reported in the *Spectator*, 8 March 1957, that it was commonly being said in Poland that the previous elections 'were won by Gomulka, Wyszynski and the BBC'. One of the things most admired in Poland, he also reported, 'was the BBC's treatment of the Suez crisis and the fact that it did not attempt to disguise the serious differences of opinion in this country about the wisdom of the Government's policy'.

<sup>55</sup> \*Notes of Soviet jamming, 10 Feb. 1958 (R31/90).

## GREEK TRAGEDY?



Mr. Lennox-Boyd, Colonial Secretary, announced in the Commons yesterday that the Government is prepared to take any necessary measures, including jamming, to combat the "dreadful effect" of propaganda broadcasts to Cyprus by Athens Radio.

2. Greek Tragedy, Emmuwood in *Evening Standard*, 31 Jan. 1956.

ure, the Minute of their discussion of the subject stating cautiously, if correctly, that 'it was preferable for [any] change to be motivated by public opinion in Poland rather than for the BBC to take any sort of action at this end'.<sup>56</sup> Jamming by Poland ceased, however, on 24 November 1956, for a quite different reason. The Poles found it more useful to direct resources from expensive jamming operations to more 'productive' purposes—the expansion of Polish broadcasting, including broadcasting to foreign countries.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>56</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 8 Nov. 1956.

<sup>57</sup> Monitored statement by the Polish Government, Warsaw Radio, 24 Nov. 1956. The statement added that the end of jamming would save sufficient electric power to supply a town of several thousand people, and with a flourish of rhetoric, claimed that 'the principle has prevailed that the foreign broadcasting stations ought to be answered by arguments instead of noise'. The last point was reiterated less whole-heartedly by *Zycie Warszawy*: 'the decision testifies to a break with a method that brought us no credit. It is a victory for . . . principle.'



The Russians were not faced with having to make such a choice. They could do both. Indeed, according to BBC observers, the Soviet jamming operation might well have had 'strategic implications': it enabled large teams to be trained for an operation that had possible military relevance. Jammers might be employed also in dealing with the interception or diversion of guided missiles.

At the beginning of 1956, the British Government, in reversal of all its wartime policies, had itself jammed Athens broadcasts to Cyprus.<sup>58</sup> Once again, the BBC's approach to questions concerning broadcasting in Cyprus was more sensible in the long run than that of the Foreign Office, which when it jammed inevitably weakened its antagonism to jamming elsewhere. It made other mistakes too. With the experience of Suez to draw upon, it was urging at the end of 1957 that the Greek Service of the BBC tone down the presentation of differences of opinion in Britain over Cyprus.<sup>59</sup> Policy there had toughened during the Suez crisis, when there was rigid censorship, and when the crisis was over, both English-language and Greek-language newspapers were ordered in a new Press Ordinance to restrain all comments on the Cypriot situation except for condemnation of terrorism.

It was against the background of a troubled world that in December 1956 Charles Hill, the Postmaster-General, was asked through Norman Brook to carry out yet another review of overseas information services, with the Director-General of the Central Office of Information, Fife Clark, to assist him;<sup>60</sup> and it was he who presided over a conference of all information offices, the first held to consider Suez and its aftermath. After Eden's resignation, Macmillan asked him to continue the task as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, with a place in the Cabinet. In his own words, he was 'washed into the Cabinet by the turbulent waters of Suez'.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Statement by John Hare, Minister of State, Colonial Office, *Hansard*, vol. 550, written answers col. 203, 28 March 1956. In 1951, for cost reasons, the BBC had been forced to abandon Greek-language broadcasts to Cyprus, as short-sighted a measure as the suspension of the Arabic Listener in 1952.

<sup>59</sup> *New Statesman*, 14 Dec. 1957; *Spectator*, 7 Dec. 1956, which described as depressing a BBC-scripted interview with Sir John Harding, Governor of Cyprus, in the programme *At Home and Abroad*. The interviewer had not been hard enough, it said. 'Sir John should not be allowed to go back to Cyprus imagining that his recent measures, such as the gagging of the Cyprus press, would have been acceptable even to the Government here, were it not for its preoccupation with more serious problems.'

<sup>60</sup> *Cabinet Minutes*, 26 Nov. 1956. On 20 Nov. Dodds-Parker had written to Bottomley dealing with the overall figure for grant-in-aid for the 1957-8 year, and Bottomley had replied on 23 Nov. (\*R34/1580/2).

<sup>61</sup> Lord Hill, *Both Sides of the Hill* (1964), p. 179.

While he was still Postmaster-General, Jacob saw him on 8 January, and opened his mind to him, explaining how 'passionately' the BBC believed in its external operations and complaining that throughout the past ten years it had received no effective support from the Government. It had been forced to work through Junior Ministers and civil servants. Citing the appointment of a Foreign Office Liaison Officer, he went so far as to say that either the BBC had to be convinced that the Government believed in the BBC's external services and was prepared to back them, or 'it must put an end to it'. Hill replied in what Jacob thought was an 'encouraging fashion'. He said particularly that he was recommending the setting up of an Overseas Information Services Committee, on which the BBC would be represented. He also intended to recommend that a figure to start television transcriptions would be included in the Grant-in-Aid. He added that if he were asked to continue to take responsibility for information, he would be 'whole time on the job'.<sup>62</sup>

A report on the BBC's external services, dated 4 January 1957, had already been prepared before Jacob saw Hill. It covered at greater length points that he must have raised. Whereas the costs of the external services during the previous eight years had risen by 60 per cent, grants had risen by only 30 per cent. During the same period there had been a dramatic growth in other countries' external services. In the autumn of 1956, the autumn of Suez, output hours per week had been as follows:

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| USA, Voice of America                    | 930 hours |
| USSR                                     | 668 hours |
| Satellite countries in Europe (combined) | 730 hours |
| BBC                                      | 564 hours |

'The leading position held by this country at the end of the War has been lost.' There were even signs of a long-term movement of the audience away from the BBC to Moscow and to American stations.<sup>63</sup>

The grant for 1957-8 still had to be settled, and doubtless would be settled within the framework of a broader governmental review, but the BBC had already made it clear that in the light of the Drogheda Report, it had been disturbed that only the negative side of Droghe-

<sup>62</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 10 Jan. 1957. See also Jacob, 'Notes of a Meeting, 8 Jan. 1956' (E2/651/1). Jacob was satisfied at the end of the interview that 'there seems to be a reasonable hope that our affairs will be put on a sounder basis', although it remained to be seen 'how far the PMG can carry other ministers and the departments with him'.

<sup>63</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Papers*, 'The BBC's External Services', 4 Jan. 1957.



da's recommendations had been taken into account.<sup>64</sup> In reporting to the General Advisory Council, the BBC stated that a grant of £5 million had been asked for, an increase of £1¼ million, £½ million to be devoted to the modernization of equipment, and 'perhaps £¼ million to support a full-scale television transcription service'.<sup>65</sup> Soon afterwards, however, in giving evidence to Hill, the BBC left out the figures connected with the transcription service, and in a later paper reduced the sum required for a television transcription service to a modest £60,000.<sup>66</sup>

Hill promised to work quickly, but before his promised White Paper appeared, its contents were discussed at Chequers on 2 June—with the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer among those present. The subjects raised included the British Council and the Central Office of Information, as well as the BBC. When the Report appeared in July 1957, on the eve of the summer recess, when there could be no Parliamentary debate,<sup>67</sup> *The Economist* praised it both for its crispness and its content.<sup>68</sup> Just a year before, the storm of Suez was about to break out. Now, after the storm was over, *The Economist* claimed that its 'ill winds had blown some good' in influencing the shape of the Report. The daily output in the BBC's Arabic Services was to be doubled. The year before, the Colonial Secretary had been among the BBC's fiercest critics. Now, there were to be more BBC broadcasts to Africa, where one country, Ghana, had gained its full independence in the previous year. Hausa and Somali Services were to be introduced in the wake of a Swahili Service, which had already started in March.

All in all, however, despite BBC pressures, which Hill resisted, the output of the BBC's external services was to be reduced, not increased.<sup>69</sup> In particular, no attention was paid to suggestions made

<sup>64</sup> \*Bottomley to Dodds-Parker, 23 Nov. 1956 (R34/1580/2).

<sup>65</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Papers*, loc. cit.

<sup>66</sup> \*'The External Services of the BBC: Memorandum by the British Broadcasting Corporation', 27 Feb. 1957 (R34/1580/3); \*'The BBC's External Services: Memorandum by the British Broadcasting Corporation', 1 April 1957 (E2/810/2).

<sup>67</sup> Cmnd. 225 (1957), *Overseas Information Services*. The White Paper appeared under an impressive gallery of names: the Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs, Commonwealth Relations, and the Colonies, the President of the Board of Trade, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and the Financial Secretary to the Treasury.

<sup>68</sup> *The Economist*, 20 July 1957. 'It must be confessed that the appointment of the former "radio doctor" to prescribe medicaments for official information evoked certain qualms. Could so articulate a personality resist the temptation to play super-spokesman himself? So far Dr. Hill has firmly and hearteningly eschewed all such temptations.'

<sup>69</sup> Hill objected, as other politicians did (see below, pp. 517–18), that 'whenever a cut was decided on the BBC were not slow to prompt their friends—many in high places, including ministerial colleagues—to campaign against it' (Hill, op. cit., p. 189).

by the BBC—in line with the Drogheda Report—that Latin American services should be restored, and that there should be an increase in BBC broadcasting to India and to China. South-East Asia did not figure either, although within the next decade in Vietnam the Americans would have to face even greater shocks than the British had faced at Suez. The Thai Service was to disappear in 1960.<sup>70</sup>

Meanwhile, Western Europe lost seriously, as it had seemed likely to do since Drogheda—and that on the eve of Macmillan's attempt to join the European Community. 'Western Europe is an area with which we possess many other effective means of communication', the Hill Committee reported optimistically. As the journalist James Cameron put it in the *News Chronicle*, 'Who else but this Government would argue that your friends are the one group you snub?'<sup>71</sup> Ironically, the *News Chronicle* itself was soon to disappear.<sup>72</sup>

Most of the recommendations of the Hill Report were accepted by the Government, so that within a slightly increased total allocation of funds—a net increase of £58,000 more than in 1956, only one-tenth of the increase that the BBC had deemed urgently necessary—there remained serious imbalances. Clearly there was little imagination in Government policy, crisply stated or not; for, while an urgently necessary increase in capital expenditure was provided for, it was offered only on the basis of redeployment of resources and a resultant reduction in the hours of broadcasting, and no attention was paid to the enlightened BBC proposal that Hill had seemed to welcome—that there should be a television counterpart to the Transcription Service which distributed BBC recordings of radio programmes throughout the world. BBC world television was put on hold.

Sadly, more imagination was being shown behind the Iron Curtain, where in July 1957, the month the White Paper appeared, a commentator on Warsaw Radio, having praised Gomulka for stopping jamming, urged that all countries be allowed to explain their views to each other, and praised the BBC as a model broadcasting organization, contributing to the cause of greater understanding between peoples.<sup>73</sup> A British MP, Cyril Osborne, was allowed in the same week

<sup>70</sup> It was later reinstated. See below, p. 679.

<sup>71</sup> *News Chronicle*, 19 July 1957.

<sup>72</sup> Bush House drew to the attention of the Governors (*Minutes*, 26 Sept. 1957) the adverse reaction of the Portuguese. Yet J. B. Clark thought that while this was a special case, 'pressure on the Government for any restoration of the service could most effectively be exerted through independent interests or agencies'.

<sup>73</sup> During the 1960s Poland was to broadcast more than the BBC to Western Europe.

to broadcast from Moscow, and to make an appeal to the Soviet Government to drop its own jamming of foreign broadcasts and to allow the free circulation of foreign newspapers and books. Of course, times had not really changed, for the Russian people themselves could not hear his message. It was transmitted only on Moscow's short-wave English-language programme that was beamed to Britain; and when the BBC went on to broadcast a Russian translation of the text as put out from Moscow, Soviet jammers did their best to stop it getting through.<sup>74</sup>

In the autumn of 1957 there was to be the first BBC postscript to Suez. Cadogan retired from the Chairmanship of the Board of Governors in November 1957, after having had his tenure extended for four months at the Government's request, and was succeeded not by another Foreign Office man, but by the Headmaster of Rugby. There was another, related change also. Kirkpatrick, who had been present at the Chequers meeting in June, had taken over the Chairmanship of the ITA. To leave the 'orbit of the Foreign Office' was 'rather like dying', Kirkpatrick believed, and on the rare occasions when he returned there he felt like a ghost returning to its former habitat.<sup>75</sup> Cadogan had learnt more from his experiences than he had. When he gave a speech at a farewell BBC dinner, his last message had more of an old BBC pre-Suez rhetorical ring about it than any Foreign Office statement: 'If the BBC remains true to itself, maintains (and if possible improves) its standards and keeps its faith, I believe it has little to fear. If it were to abandon those and step down to fight in another arena, all its defences might be down.'<sup>76</sup> There had been differences of opinion in 1956, and some of them had remained, he noted; but he added that there had been no rancour. Hill was to remember the difficulties too, but, above all, the message.<sup>77</sup>

No BBC personnel were to figure among the eighty-five characters with speaking parts in a three-hour BBC-1 television play, *Suez 1956*, broadcast in 1979. Its author, Ian Curteis, who had been a National Serviceman at the time of Suez, was at pains to describe it as 'highly subjective'. It was 'in no way', he added, 'a dramatic documentary or an attempt to reconstruct real events'.<sup>78</sup> By the time he had finished

<sup>74</sup> *The Economist*, 27 July 1957.

<sup>75</sup> Kirkpatrick, *op. cit.*, p. 265. His predecessor, Lord Strang, had been very helpful to Jacob during the last stages of the Suez discussions.

<sup>76</sup> Dilks (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 800.

<sup>77</sup> See below, p. 922.

<sup>78</sup> *Radio Times*, 24–30 Nov. 1979.

the script, he admitted that if he had been Eden, he would have 'acted in the way he did'.<sup>79</sup> The actor who played Eden, Michael Gough, remarked that 'Suez was a fascinating business', but that 'frankly it only confirmed my deep reservations about politics and politicians'. He also regretted that the actors had not had more time to read and to research before they played their roles.<sup>80</sup> There is no evidence that if he had read and researched more for himself, he would have changed his mind about politics and politicians.

<sup>79</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 19 Nov. 1979. The actor who played Nasser, Robert Stephens, felt that 'Nasser was impressive, a man of the people . . . like Mark Antony he could inspire ordinary citizens with words' (\*BBC Press Release, Nov. 1979).

<sup>80</sup> \**Ibid.*



---

## Audiences and Programmes (1955–1960)

This is Our Life . . . to entertain 95 per cent of the people 95 per cent of the time.

RONALD WALDMAN on the 21st anniversary of BBC Television, November 1957

For the majority of viewers . . . *This is Your Life* continues to be a programme not to be missed on any account . . . A minority (but only a very small minority) objected to the programme on the grounds that it was 'in gross bad taste'.

BBC AUDIENCE RESEARCH, 11 May 1959

### *The Battle for Your Favour*

PLACE: Britain's wavebands

TIME: 7 hours a day, 7 days a week

OPPONENTS: ITA v BBC

STAKES: Millions of pounds

PRIZE: Admittance to your home

HOWARD THOMAS, 1958

The importance of free experiment at this stage in order to discover the full potential contribution which television may be able to make to culture, to education and to social welfare in any true sense can scarcely be overstressed; any decisions taken in the next five years should be such as to ensure that those to whom television—and also sound broadcasting—is entrusted are given full freedom to experiment and ample resources to do so.

*Nature*, 5 December 1959

---

## 1. Bills of Fare

'England after Suez' was one of the surprise items in the first number of *Tonight*, a new BBC television programme which was first broadcast on 18 February 1957. The speaker was Ed Murrow, most famous of American wartime broadcasters, a brilliant journalist who in current affairs programmes like *See It Now* illuminated the post-war world.<sup>1</sup> Without interviewing any British politicians, Murrow devoted his attention to one of the most topical themes of the year—'what the English think of us and our policies and what they think of themselves'.

During the six years of introspection between 1956 and the publication of the Pilkington Report in 1962 there were to be many home-made broadcast programmes dealing with what the English thought of themselves. Many of these were radio programmes, still listened to by substantial audiences. 'What is wrong with Britain?' was the subject, for example, of a radio discussion between Anthony Crosland, the Labour MP, and Donald Macrae, Professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics, in July 1962.<sup>2</sup> Malcolm Muggeridge, already a radio pundit, and Donald Tyerman, Editor of *The Economist* from 1956 to 1965, had been the first speakers in an earlier series of discussions which I chaired in the autumn of 1956. Produced by John Brunner, they were called *Our Present Discontents*.<sup>3</sup>

Television was less suited to such discussion, and although *Panorama* never neglected domestic issues, television as a whole offered viewers more of a 'window on the world' than radio.<sup>4</sup> There was not

<sup>1</sup> See his biography by A. Kendrick, *Prime Time* (1970).

<sup>2</sup> *The Listener*, 5 July 1962.

<sup>3</sup> My opening words were: 'What is wrong with Britain? This is a question which has been asked far more frequently during the last few years—and particularly during the last few months—than ever before.' Other speakers in the series included Frank Cousins, Sir Frederick Hooper, Graham Hutton, Sir John (later Lord) Wolfenden, Walter Elliot, Harold (later Lord) Wilson, Stuart (later Sir Stuart) Hampshire, and Bertrand de Jouvenal. For a characteristic introduction in book form to such a debate, see the Pelican book by Michael Shanks, *The Stagnant Society* (1961). His chapter titles spoke for themselves: 'Challenge', 'Prospect', 'Equal and Dynamic', 'Can We Compete?', 'What Sort of England?'

<sup>4</sup> None the less, some radio programmes on international issues were outstanding. The half-hourly programme *From Our Own Correspondent* was introduced on the Home Service, on 25 Sept. 1955. It celebrated its thirtieth anniversary with a special programme,

one week in 1961 when BBC cameramen were not filming in a foreign country. The climax came with the first ever live television transmission from Moscow to London on 14 April, when the cosmonaut Major Yuri Gagarin was seen on his return home after his dramatic flight into space.<sup>5</sup>

By then, Eurovision, based on Western Europe, with Finland and Yugoslavia added, was linking viewers in sixteen different countries. A cable link between London and Dover had been opened on 15 September 1955, one week before the beginning of competitive television, and seven European programmes were broadcast by the BBC between then and Christmas. Two years later, the figure was forty-six. On New Year's Eve 1957 the first live *Round Europe* programme was jointly produced and transmitted simultaneously by all networks on the Eurovision link. Each network contributed one item, and the overall production was handled by a BBC producer from a central control room in Brussels.<sup>6</sup>

Through its leadership role in the European Broadcasting Union, the BBC was more directly involved than the ITA in the development of Eurovision.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, between 1956 and 1960 the ITA, linked in this case with ITCA, was an associate member only. It secured full membership in 1960.<sup>8</sup> During the early years of competitive television, uninformed fun could be made of its non-participation. 'Consider the feelings of a detergent manufacturer', wrote a *Times* correspondent, John Hytch, in 1957, 'when, before his "spot" at 9 o'clock, he finds that for what he has paid he gets not the Tiller Girls from London but peasants dancing on the ramparts of Dubrovnik.'<sup>9</sup>

There was an imbalance in Eurovision in that, during the early years, Western Germany, France, Italy, and the BBC were providing between them 85 per cent of the fare, and there was imbalance for

produced by Zareer Masani and presented by Angus McDerimid, on 25 Sept. 1990, *The World Thirty Years On*. See also R. Lazar (ed.), *From Our Own Correspondent* (1980). *At Home and Abroad* (see above, p. 48) dealt with both international and domestic themes, and brought to the microphone many foreign visitors.

<sup>5</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1962, pp. 48, 51.

<sup>6</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1959, pp. 223–4. Eurovision circuits were used to carry British programmes. *The Brains Trust* was broadcast once from Paris, and *Tonight* from Venice, Copenhagen, and Geneva.

<sup>7</sup> See Briggs, *Sound and Vision* (1979), pp. 456 ff.

<sup>8</sup> J. Potter, *Independent Television in Britain*, Vol. 3: *Politics and Control, 1968–80* (1989), p. 101. Until 1958 the European Broadcasting Union followed the rule that there had to be a three-minute period without advertisements before and after each programme received from or supplied to member countries.

<sup>9</sup> *The Times Supplement*, 28 Aug. 1957. The article was called 'How Europe is coming to view itself'.



Britain too. More European programmes—or parts of programmes—were seen in Britain in 1960–1 than British programmes in Europe—199 as against 116.<sup>10</sup> One European programme that was to become part of an annual calendar of media events was first broadcast in 1956—the Eurovision Song Contest, won by Switzerland. In the first year, however, there was no British entry.<sup>11</sup> It was not until 1960 that the contest was held in London, when Bryan Johnson sang a non-winning entry ‘Looking High, High, High’.

When the mix of television output was being discussed during these years, as it often was in periodicals and in the Press, more attention was usually paid to American imports than to European programmes, although almost all of these were entertainment programmes. Already by the end of 1956 the BBC and ITV were showing, or had shown, no fewer than twelve different American comedy series. They included the by then controversial show, *Amos n’ Andy* (controversial because of its ‘race content’), *The Burns and Allen Show*, *The Jack Benny Programmes*, *I Married Joan*, *Hey Jeannie*, and *Life of Riley* (all BBC) and *The Bob Cummings Show*, *My Hero*, *My Little Margie*, *Topper*, and *Father Knows Best* (ITV). In 1959/60 *The Burns and Allen Show* and *The Jack Benny Programmes* had survived, along with shows that attracted large numbers of viewers, like the *Phil Silvers Show*, *The Bob Hope Show*, and *The Perry Como Show*, top of the ratings for American programmes. There were also westerns like *Wells Fargo* and *Laramie*.

None the less, British television, BBC and ITV, remained essentially British, not American or Americanized, and the top BBC ratings in the schedules of entertainment programmes in 1959 and 1960 were for British, not American, programmes. They included series like *Hancock’s Half-Hour*, Jimmy Edwards in *Whack-O!*, *Charlie Drake*, *Dixon of Dock Green*, shows like *The Billy Cotton Band Show*, science fiction stories like *Quatermass and the Pit*, quiz shows like *What’s My Line?* and, above all, sports programmes like *Sportsview*.<sup>12</sup> ATV’s *Sunday Night at the London Palladium* featured both British and American stars. The BBC’s offer in 1959 of a prize consisting of a fortnight’s holiday for two people on the island of Sark contrasted

<sup>10</sup> *BBC Handbook, 1962*, p. 51.

<sup>11</sup> The following year, at Frankfurt, Patricia Bredin took part for Britain. For the later history of the programme, ‘They sang for Britain’, *Radio Times*, 19 March 1970. The contest was an idea of Sergio Pugliese and Paulo Grilli of Italian Television, RAI.

<sup>12</sup> \*LR/60/547, ‘Review of Some Well-Known Series in Sound and Television in 1959 and in First Quarter of 1960’.

sharply with the offers made on American television of huge sums of money or bundles of commercialized gifts.<sup>13</sup>

By the early 1960s there were the beginnings of a two-way transatlantic traffic in programmes, as some of Britain's distinctive television successes were exported to the United States.<sup>14</sup> *An Age of Kings*, for example, fifteen episodes from Shakespeare's eight history plays, first broadcast in 1960, was sponsored in the United States by Humble Oil and Refining Company in co-operation with National Educational Television, and was later sold for use to more than fifty American educational stations.<sup>15</sup> 'Depicting the turbulent reign of seven monarchs', it won wide acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic.<sup>16</sup> Tom Fleming, later to become a leading television outside broadcasts commentator on ceremonial occasions, played Henry IV, Sean Connery (007) Harry Hotspur. The theme music was specially composed by Sir Arthur Bliss, Master of the Queen's Musick, who described the series as 'one of the peaks yet attained in the medium of television'.<sup>17</sup>

The living representatives of the British royal family adopted television in these years, beginning a process which was to shape their own 'images' and transport these images around the world. The Duke of Edinburgh introduced the International Geophysical Year in 1957, in an appropriately named BBC programme *The Restless Sphere*, which included live outside broadcasts from Vesuvius and the Jungfrau. Queen Elizabeth appeared on the television screen for the first time at Christmas 1957, when she made what had already come to be regarded as a traditional Christmas broadcast.<sup>18</sup> The first royal

<sup>13</sup> *Daily Mail*, 8 Dec. 1959.

<sup>14</sup> Hugh Greene, then Assistant Controller, Overseas Services, had been sent to the USA as early as 1952 to discuss sales of BBC programmes, and produced a report considered by the Board of Management on 28 April 1952. He suggested a series built around a central character—'Lord Peter Wimsey, if one could buy him from Miss Dorothy Sayers' ('Board of Management, *Papers*, 'Report on the Setting Up of an Overseas Television Service', 10 April 1952). For the later history of programme selling, see below, pp. 712–3.

<sup>15</sup> \*BBC New York Office Press Release, 20 March 1961 (WAC file TS/610/1). Its producer, Peter Dews, won an award from the Guild of Television Producers and Directors, later known as BAFTA.

<sup>16</sup> Brochure 'An Age of Kings', with a Foreword by Michael Barry, then Head of Television Drama, and an article by Peter Dews called 'The Producer's View'. The series, spread over seven months, was based on an idea of Barry and Dews, a 30-year-old Yorkshireman who had produced *Henry V* at Oxford (\*M. Barry to M. Webster, 30 Oct. 1959 (TS/610/1)). The programmes were also sold to Australia.

<sup>17</sup> \*Bliss to Secretary to Gerald Beadle, 9 Nov. 1960 (TS/610/1).

<sup>18</sup> Queen Elizabeth had made her first Christmas broadcast in 1952, twenty years after her grandfather, George V, made the first such broadcast. She was subsequently to broadcast every year except 1969, the year when Richard Cawston's film *Royal Family* was made and was shown several times.



3. 'I suppose we could still negotiate a non-aggression pact between Malcolm Muggeridge and the Director-General of the BBC...'; [artist not known], *Southern Daily Echo*, 6 Jan. 1958.

wedding to be televised, that of Princess Margaret, in May 1960, was said to have been seen by 300 million people. A combination of television tape machines and jet aircraft enabled recordings of the event to be broadcast hours later in the United States, Canada, and Australia.<sup>19</sup>

One of the critics of the royal family in the late 1950s, Malcolm Muggeridge, had been in difficulties with the BBC in 1957 after writing an article on the Queen for an American periodical, the *Saturday Evening Post*. Entitled 'Does England need a Queen?', it talked of a 'royal soap opera', and inevitably created a clamour in what was then a pro-royal British popular Press.<sup>20</sup> The appearance of the article coincided with a visit by the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh to the United States. On long-term contract with the BBC, for which he had just completed a major documentary on *The Thirties*, Muggeridge was the sole topic on the agenda of a special meeting of the Board of Governors, a rare event, that was called for 16 October 1957.

At the meeting Sir Ian Jacob criticized what he called an 'untimely invitation' that had been offered to Muggeridge to appear in *Panorama*, and at the next regular meeting of the Board on 24 October the Governors decided that when Muggeridge's overall contract, which included *Panorama*, expired at the end of 1957 it would not be renewed. Already, Cadogan, the BBC's Chairman, who was about to give way to Sir Arthur fforde, had decided, with the subsequent approval of the Governors, that another critic of the royal family, Lord Altrincham, should not take part in an *Any Questions?*

<sup>19</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1961, pp. 28-9.

<sup>20</sup> Muggeridge did not choose the title. With the Dutch royal family in mind, he called it 'No Bicycle for Queen Elizabeth II'.

programme on 1 November. No objections were raised, however, to Muggeridge appearing in the same programme on 6 December. It had been thought 'probable that the position of the monarchy would [by then] be stale' and that no questions concerning it would be put by members of the audience.<sup>21</sup>

Muggeridge was not 'blacklisted' in 1957, for with fford as Chairman, the Governors agreed that 'it was against Corporation policy to impose a ban on anyone's engagement'. The BBC's General Advisory Council also supported the line taken both in cancelling broadcasts by Muggeridge during the week after the publication of extracts from his article and in refusing to place any ban on his appearance in future programmes.<sup>22</sup> By then, Muggeridge, who had been hurt by what had happened, had told the Press that he would not work for the BBC again. He had started discussions with Granada.

Like the monarchy, Muggeridge survived. Indeed, he was to appear on both BBC sound and television so many times during the 1960s that he seemed like a fixture. By the end of 1959, when the BBC asked him for permission to have his documentary *The Thirties* repeated, he already felt that all his troubles were through. 'It was a great joy to see you again and to feel that this silly BBC row was now over,' he wrote to Michael Peacock. 'Like all rows it led me into saying some pretty silly things, but, looking back I feel as Luther did—I could no other [sic].'<sup>23</sup>

In 1957 Muggeridge had far more critics than the Queen, and their numbers were to increase during the 1960s, a decade when monarchy itself was to remain relatively unscathed while most other venerable institutions were under attack. The Board and Management of the BBC also emerged relatively unscathed in 1957. Muggeridge focused his criticism on Jacob. Managers and producers were exonerated. Meanwhile, royal ceremonies remained a BBC staple. Analysis was out. One of the decisions that the Board took on 24 November 1957 was that 'with regard to suggestions that one or two serious programmes should be mounted in which the functions and

<sup>21</sup> On 9 Dec. Muggeridge's agent had been told that his long-term contract would not be renewed, and that the BBC would be 'content to negotiate *ad hoc* for any appearances in programmes that may be desired' (\*W. Streeton, Head of Programme Contracts, to Jean LeRoy, 9 Dec. 1957 (WAC Television Contributors: Malcolm Muggeridge, File 1b) ).

<sup>22</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 19 Dec. 1957; General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 16 Oct. 1957.

<sup>23</sup> \*Muggeridge to Peacock, 11 Nov. 1959 (Malcolm Muggeridge, File 1b). He appeared on *Tonight* on 29 Dec. 1959 discussing the Fifties.

circumstances of the monarchy would be expounded or argued, the Board felt that nothing should be done in the near future'.<sup>24</sup>

Television itself did not go unscathed during the late 1950s. For many lovers of print or of the spoken word, its advance was viewed with suspicion. 'There is something about television', *The Economist* wrote, 'that prompts many eminent men to strike many illiberal attitudes about it.'<sup>25</sup> For Oxford's Sir Maurice Bowra, for example, 'all television corrupts and absolute television corrupts absolutely.'<sup>26</sup> In the *New Statesman*, which had rallied to Muggeridge's defence in an article called 'The Humbug State',<sup>27</sup> Tom Driberg spoke of people who watched a lot of television as looking as though they had glass eyes or took drugs or were sleep-walking. 'They stare vacantly, they move with the cramped, uncertain gait of rescued speleologists, they mumble infantile ditties in honour of *cornflakes in the morning* or *brightness women want*. They are completely passive, lacking all initiative.'<sup>28</sup>

Muggeridge himself, who had appeared regularly on television in 1954 and 1955, was more positive in his approach—at least in his use of the word 'eagerly'—when he described television as 'something evanescent, like newspapers, eagerly perused and then pitched aside'.<sup>29</sup> Yet he claimed also that its influence had been 'largely exercised irresponsibly, arbitrarily and without reference to any moral, or intellectual, still less spiritual, guidelines'. Television was 'good news for Satan's kingdom'.<sup>30</sup>

Three well-known men with Establishment reputations and with a secure place in the history of broadcasting were exceptionally critical when they contemplated the effects of viewing. The first two of them, Reith and Haley, ex-Director-Generals of the BBC, remained true to their own established philosophies. Television had to be kept in its place. The third of them, Lord Beveridge, Chairman of the most

<sup>24</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 16, 24 Oct. 1957.

<sup>25</sup> *The Economist*, 10 March 1962.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in M. Secrest, *Kenneth Clark: A Biography* (1984), p. 196. Bowra's version may have been derived from J. B. Reston's more pointed 'All cameras tend to corrupt and television cameras corrupt absolutely'.

<sup>27</sup> *New Statesman*, 19 Oct. 1957.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 Jan. 1957.

<sup>29</sup> *Muggeridge Ancient and Modern*, an autobiographical series televised in eight parts beginning on 25 Feb. 1981.

<sup>30</sup> M. Muggeridge, *Christ and the Media* (1977), p. 1. See also *The Listener*, 22 Sept. 1977, 'Good News from Mr. Muggeridge'. Muggeridge appeared in his first religious television programme, *Meeting Point*, in Oct. 1956.

recent official inquiry into the future of broadcasting, had no doubts, as they too had none, that while broadcasting and television were ‘among the greatest forces at present available for affecting the minds of the people of this country’, television had to be put into a category of its own.

After admitting unashamedly that his own personal knowledge of television was ‘extremely limited’, Beveridge cast television on one side after by chance, rather than by intention, he had tried briefly to extend his knowledge:

My wife and I decided some time ago that, with growing inflation, [he stated in January 1957] we could not afford television, but it so happened recently that, having to take a course of convalescence, I stayed for ten days in an hotel in Bournemouth. I can only say that, though there were one or two really good programmes which we watched in the hotel, to us the main thing we saw (I refer to the programmes of the BBC) was hideous shouting by hideous people. We could not understand why people with such voices should be chosen to appear on the BBC. I would add that our conclusion, from our week of strenuous watching in the Bournemouth Hotel, is that we have both decided that we would not have television, even if it were offered us as a gift.<sup>31</sup>

The fact that Beveridge was more upset by voices than images suggests that he cannot have been looking too closely at the screen.

Beveridge was speaking in a House of Lords debate in January 1957, a debate initiated privately by a Labour peer, Lord Lucas, soon after Suez. This was the first time that the Lords had debated the subject of ‘sound and vision broadcasting’, as they called it, since the end of the BBC’s monopoly, and Beveridge was not the only peer to confess that his knowledge of television was small. Indeed, Lord Iddesleigh generalized with confidence that ‘their Lordships’ did not know ‘anything about television’: they had not seen it ‘at really close quarters’. ‘The same disadvantage’, he added, applied to himself: he was using ‘imagination’, not knowledge, to guide him.

Lack of knowledge did not inhibit Iddesleigh from contributing nearly three columns to *Hansard*.<sup>32</sup> It did lead him also, however, to ask for more ‘research’. This was a point taken up by Lord Simon of Wythenshawe, a former Chairman of the BBC, who referred to the Himmelweit inquiry without mentioning her name.<sup>33</sup> Lord Winster

<sup>31</sup> *House of Lords, Official Report*, vol. 201, col. 61, 23 Jan. 1957. Reith was to be offered—and to accept—a television set as a gift at a dinner to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the BBC (*Diary*, 21 Nov. 1962).

<sup>32</sup> *House of Lords, Official Report*, vol. 201, cols. 66–8.

<sup>33</sup> For the inquiry, see above, p. 25.



told the House that the reason why he did not own a television set was not inflation. The simple fact was that he did not like watching a screen. He devoted his speech, therefore, to sound, praising *At Home and Abroad* and the BBC's music policy. Similar opinions were held outside the House, where many non-owners were at best suspicious of television. They would willingly have subscribed to a book of a later period, Jerry Mander's *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television*.<sup>34</sup> By then, however, television was ubiquitous.

The debate was on broader lines than Mander's book—to draw attention to the broadcasting services, both sound and vision, provided by the BBC and ITA, . . . and to ask Her Majesty's Government for a statement of their policy regarding the extension of the television services provided by the BBC'.<sup>35</sup> The events of Suez were not mentioned once. Nor was the role of broadcasting during the crisis. Indeed, external broadcasting was almost entirely left out of the debate, on the grounds that Lord Strang, Kirkpatrick's predecessor at the Foreign Office, would be raising the question later.<sup>36</sup> He had been in correspondence for some time with Jacob about future debates on broadcasting in the Lords, and he was to introduce a debate on his own on 6 February.

On 23 January only one peer, Lord Lucan, said anything substantial about the BBC's overseas role, and he did not once mention television and its impact on the British audience. He had intended to introduce a motion of his own, he began, but had deferred to Lucas. His approach was not new. Picking up a point made at the end of a brief speech by Lord Gifford on BBC broadcasts to Latin America,<sup>37</sup>

<sup>34</sup> J. Mander, *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television* (1978).

<sup>35</sup> *House of Lords, Official Report*, vol. 201, col. 41, 23 Jan. 1957. Roland Fox telephoned the Director-General on 10 Dec. 1956, referring to a provisional fixing of the debate for 23 Jan. (\*Record of Telephone Message to Mrs. Torry, the Director-General's Secretary (R34/1580/2)).

<sup>36</sup> *House of Lords, Official Report*, vol. 201, col. 42, 23 Jan. 1957. Strang, a member of the BBC's General Advisory Council, had written to Jacob (\*1 Dec. 1956 (R34/1580/2)) after he heard of Lucas's motion: 'If at any time you think that I could say anything useful, please let me know, and I will see what I can do.' During the debate several peers described the value of the BBC's overseas services as 'incalculable'. *The Economist* (16 Feb. 1957), in criticizing this assessment, described its value as 'considerable and varying', and strongly supported the idea of a review by Hill. See above, p. 132. In the Lords debate, initiated by Strang, he stressed that external broadcasting programmes 'cannot be turned on like water out of a tap.' (*House of Lords, Official Report*, vol 201, cols 537ff.)

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 78, 23 Jan. 1957. A businessman in Chile had complained of 'heavily subsidised' BBC programmes giving details of 'petty troubles and mishaps in the UK'. Gifford suggested that overseas broadcasts should be 'more selective', and should take account of their impact on people who in the words of his correspondent 'have not the British mentality or outlook'.



Lucan claimed that Gifford had asked for 'something very like a censorship of news'. His own response was as firm as Jacob's had been. This would be 'completely contrary to BBC policy as it has been since 1923. The BBC do not give out propaganda . . . What they give out is the truth.' Lucan hoped that it would 'never be seriously suggested that there shall be censorship of news going out from this country'.<sup>38</sup> He knew, of course, that it had been seriously suggested only a few months before.

Despite some revealing remarks like this—and this particular remark was fascinating because of its source—the House of Lords debate was not an important debate either at the time or in retrospect. It is interesting, however, in that it focused on competition, and because of this it can, and should, be related to the later arguments of the Pilkington Committee.<sup>39</sup> Lucas, who spoke of commercial television 'breaking in' sixteen months before, returned to the then familiar terminology of Gresham's law. 'While competition . . . is set on the consideration of mass audiences, the quality is bound to get lower and not higher.'<sup>40</sup> Lord Chesham, from the Government benches, did not agree. He refused, he said, to share the view, expressed in a different metaphor, that 'the ITA was leading a downhill race with the BBC following'. The BBC had 'reacted with vigour to competition'. 'Many people would claim that their programmes are all the better for it.'<sup>41</sup> Lord Bessborough, rare in the House because of his knowledge of television—he was a director of ATV—spoke directly of ITV which, he asserted, was producing more 'balanced' programmes than most people believed.<sup>42</sup> He did not develop his point in detail.

There was some further discussion as to whether the Independent Television Act had envisaged an 'alternative' or an 'additional'

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, cols. 87–8. Strang reiterated the point in the later debate (cols. 542–3). There were things that the BBC could not do, he said. One was 'to meet untruth with untruth and hate with hate'. He quoted a remark made by a sheikh in the Aden Protectorate: 'I listen to the "Voice of the Arabs" and I like these broadcasts because they come from an Arab country, and I am an Arab, but afterwards I tune into the BBC in order to find out if what they say is true.'

<sup>39</sup> See below, Ch. IV, *passim*.

<sup>40</sup> *House of Lords, Official Report*, vol. 201, col. 47, 23 Jan. 1957. He referred specifically to only two programmes, to the 'ridiculous' *This Is Your Life* and the 'sordid' *Is This Your Problem?* In *Is This Your Problem?* Edana Romney and Edgar Lustgarten examined the personal problems of a number of troubled volunteers.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 56.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 80. For Bessborough's later role in discussions of educational broadcasting and related matters, see below, p. 476 n.

programme to that presented by the BBC. Lord Swinton, who had been involved in the drafting of the legislation, noted, with the backing of Lord Woolton, who had been involved in the campaign to fight for it, that both adjectives had been used. He claimed, however, that 'alternative' had not necessarily meant something different: it merely 'meant that there would be two programmes in competition, and that the general public would have the choice of listening [*sic*] to one or the other'.<sup>43</sup>

This was an entirely different view from that of the BBC when it pressed the case for a second television programme of its own. It was seeking to offer its own 'genuine' alternative, different in programme content and in approach, including the scheduling of what was on offer. 'In a purely competitive system,' it argued, 'the programmes that are not repetitive entertainment tend to get poked away into the less convenient viewing times, and experimental work is hampered. Two services planned together provide the only means of removing these disabilities.'<sup>44</sup>

In the Lords debate Lord Goschen stood out among his fellow peers in claiming boldly, as the Duke of Wellington had claimed of regiments, that there were no 'really bad television programmes'. At the far end of the spectrum Beveridge, however, ventured on a very different generalization. Broadcasting and television could not be 'civilizing' unless 'we can make certain that the makers of programmes are themselves civilised, or that, if they are not civilised, they can be brought to book'.<sup>45</sup>

It was a hard test. The makers of British television were scarcely distinguished by their belief in 'civilization', although a few of them might already have been prepared to talk of 'popular culture'. They were more concerned with what happened on the day, 'today', than any of their predecessors—and in what might happen 'tomorrow', although they knew from their own experience what 'generation' meant, and they realized that everything in Britain had a historical dimension. They were different in background from their American, if not from their European, counterparts. It was they—and many of them were young—who were responsible for many surprises in the way British competitive television had taken shape since 1955.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 54.

<sup>44</sup> Jacob in the *Observer*, 24 Aug. 1958. Cf. Sir Arthur Forde, 'The Future of Broadcasting in Britain', in *The BBC Looks Ahead* (1960), p. 5.

<sup>45</sup> *House of Lords, Official Report*, vol. 201, col. 64, 23 Jan. 1957.

Ratings always mattered, and ITV's share of the growing audience remained high. The TAM ratings were 72 : 28 in 1959, 67 : 33 in 1960, 66 : 34 in 1961, and the comparable BBC ratings 65 : 35, 62 : 38, and 60 : 40.<sup>46</sup> Yet fears that the BBC might lose out in entertainment and in sport had been quickly dispelled after 1955. So, too, had fears that ITV would totally neglect drama. None the less, the future seemed uncertain, as it did for the country. 'Cultural leadership' was no longer exclusively in the hands of the BBC, wrote Kenneth Baily in the *Television Annual for 1959*, but it might well recapture it. 'The saving factor for the BBC may be in the youthfulness of ITV. It is only experimenting with serious-minded programmes; it may yet find that they do not pay the advertiser.'<sup>47</sup> Britain would then go 'American'.

## 2. In the News

Baily had little to say about news programmes which were assuming a new place in television output. So, too, were television journalists, who were becoming increasingly important in BBC affairs. The ITN remained proud of its initial lead in news, but, as in current affairs and political broadcasting, the BBC's response was far-reaching enough at the time to seem revolutionary. After taking over the whole of the BBC's news and current affairs output from Tahu Hole in August 1958, a move of decisive importance, Hugh Greene, a journalist himself, was given authority to set up a small study group to produce a frank report on what was already on offer on television and what should be provided in future. The people who were asked to write it—Ian Atkins, Michael Peacock, and Donald Baverstock—were all producers. Equally important, they were all young. Their names had been given to Greene by McGivern, and Peacock's name had been substituted for that of Aubrey Singer.<sup>1</sup> Beadle made it clear that the Television Service regarded the matter as very important.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>46</sup> W. Phillips, 'Trends', *Television*, journal of the Royal Television Society, Sept. 1990; \*BBC Audience Research Quarterly bulletins.

<sup>47</sup> K. Baily (ed.), *The Television Annual for 1959* (1958), p. 21.

<sup>1</sup> \*Television Controller's Meeting, *Minutes*, 2 Dec. 1958. Aubrey Singer, then a 30-year-old producer in Television Outside Broadcasts, was eventually to become Managing Director of Radio in 1978 and Managing Director of Television from 1982 to 1984.

<sup>2</sup> \*Ibid., 18 Nov. 1958. Beadle said that he had told Greene that three experienced Television Service producers would be 'made available to News at different times' to help

The person who drafted the report, Colin Shaw, not a journalist, was himself to have a distinguished career both in the BBC and in the IBA and ITCA.<sup>3</sup> No report that he ever drafted in the future, however, was to have such a revolutionary feel to it. Completed with speed between December 1958 and April 1959, its distinctiveness lay both in its language and its proposals, both very different from the Audience Research Report that had been commissioned so recently by Hole.<sup>4</sup> 'The impersonality of normal report writing' was deliberately abandoned, and a 'more personal approach' substituted. No previous report in the history of the BBC had included words like 'We were disturbed by the "BBC-ish" flavour of many of the [news] bulletins. We decided that this was the result of a number of factors which, taken together, cumulatively work to the detriment of BBC News by creating the wrong "public image".<sup>5</sup> Not surprisingly, the report was to recommend that news presentation also should become more 'personal'. All stiltedness should go.

Old news scripts were duly analysed for content and style. 'The emphasis placed on the arrival and departure of Cabinet Ministers' was noted, along with 'the inclusion of quotations from nondescript officials and semi-official figures'. Examples were given. On 29 December 1958, for instance, the BBC in its 10 p.m. bulletin had 'ignored the engagement of the athlete Christopher Brasher (but included it the *following day*)',<sup>6</sup> the death of a Scottish MP, a 'King Midas' discovery of treasure, and the lack of incoming news about the 'Small World' balloon. All these items had been covered by ITN and were prominent in the Press the following morning, *The Times* placing the first three items on its main news page. In their place, the BBC bulletin had carried 'a dull story about a traffic light

improve production. There would be a further possibility of extending the arrangement to cover Regional news bulletins.

<sup>3</sup> Shaw rose to become Chief Secretary of the BBC in the 1970s, then left to become Director of Television at IBA in 1977. He was subsequently Director of the Programme Planning Committee at ITCA, and from 1988 Director of the Broadcasting Standards Council.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 70.

<sup>5</sup> 'Presentation of News in the BBC Television Service: Report of a Study Group', 24 April 1959, para. 10(f) (T16/482/2). In the same paragraph there was a pejorative reference to a 'BBC look'.

<sup>6</sup> Brasher, who had represented Britain in the Olympic Games in 1952 and 1956, when he won a gold medal for the 3,000 metres steeplechase, was then Sports Editor of the *Observer*. He subsequently worked for BBC Television from 1964 to 1965 as an Editor in Science and Features, having been a *Tonight* reporter from 1961 to 1965. He rejoined the BBC as Head of General Features from 1969 to 1972.

experiment in Leicester and some out-of-date film of the Sydney to Hobart race'.<sup>7</sup>

In retrospect, it cannot be said either of ITN or of the BBC that they were at their best on 29 December 1958. If that was news, why have more of it? There was, in fact, no discussion in the report of how much 'news' the public actually wanted or how much the BBC should seek to provide. Nor was there in Greene's own comments on the report. Like the writers of the report, he was concerned above all with 'news values', relating them directly in journalistic fashion to what he called 'the public's interests'.

'News values' were involved in a criticism in the report of another BBC news bulletin, that of 1 January 1959, which was condemned for beginning its announcement of the New Year's Honours List with the names of two Barons on a day when ITN started with Alec Guinness's knighthood. No criticism was made, however, of the relative lack of attention to international news.<sup>8</sup> Leaving on one side 'news values', the report paid more attention to style than to anything else. Newsreaders were said to have a manner of reading that was 'often soft and tentative',<sup>9</sup> and few of the reporters who were used mainly for interview work were said to be 'very effective': 'some were very poor indeed.'<sup>10</sup>

Changes of personnel were not enough for the working group. 'In our view', it concluded, 'the present system does not—and cannot—provide a clearly-defined level at which leadership and effective control can be exercised.'<sup>11</sup> For that reason, organizational changes were deemed imperative. There were too many delays within the system, and too substantial a degree of control was exercised over television news by people in the BBC who were not employed

<sup>7</sup> \*Report of Study Group, para. 10(g). A far more interesting comparison of two bulletins had been set out in *TV Mirror*, 8 Sept. 1956. A strike at the British Motor Corporation works in Birmingham had been covered very differently by BBC and ITN. 'The BBC treated the subject with scrupulous fairness. A few brief newsreel shots were supplemented by long carefully modified verbal reports of what people involved had said, and what the management and unions were going to do. Factual, but to the great majority of people dull. The ITN version consisted largely of lively, gripping film shots of the picket lines outside the factories (the part which, let's face it, had the greatest appeal for the mass of the public) backed by a simple lucid commentary giving the main facts.'

<sup>8</sup> \*Ibid., para. 11(b)(ii), did note that projects involving foreign filming or the use of the BBC's Foreign Correspondents had to be approved by the Head of Foreign News at Egton House.

<sup>9</sup> \*Ibid., para. 10(j).

<sup>10</sup> \*Ibid., para. 10(m).

<sup>11</sup> \*Ibid., para. 11(b)(iii).

themselves in television. For example, all approaches to 'important' people to be interviewed, it was claimed, had to be routed through the Head of News Talks.<sup>12</sup> 'Comparatively detailed editorial control' was exercised by 'various units at Egton House'.<sup>13</sup> Already Greene had appointed a new Editor of News, Donald Edwards, who had joined the BBC from the *Daily Telegraph* in 1940, and from 1948 had been Head of External Services News. He had already made some changes, but in the opinion of the working group he needed to go much further.

The favourite word 'professional' was introduced at this point.

We believe that, to have an effective impact on the screen, a television programme must convey to the viewer the professional enthusiasm of the people responsible for its production. We expected that the interest, curiosity and drive of good journalism would be the source of such enthusiasm in communicating News. This expectation was disappointed. We encountered an atmosphere of discouragement and lack of dynamic, creating an attitude of 'when in doubt, don't'.<sup>14</sup>

In future, reporters should be allowed to write their own commentary, and 'speak it into the bulletin'.<sup>15</sup> Above all—and this was the crucial point—sound and television should be clearly separated. 'As long as people who have little or no first-hand experience of working in Television News continue to control vital aspects of the Television News operation and as long as editorial decisions have to be arrived at in committee with sound, then most of the present faults will continue.'<sup>16</sup>

Revolutionary though the thrust of this report obviously was, it reflected strongly held views on the presentation and substance of television programmes in general that were already current in the Television Service, and, not surprisingly, it won their plaudits.<sup>17</sup> It was much in line with Greene's own thinking too, although he found, also 'perhaps not surprisingly', that the 'remedies' suggested

<sup>12</sup> \*Ibid., para. 11(b)(i). Previously scrutiny had been exercised by the then Editor, News, Tahu Hole.

<sup>13</sup> \*Ibid., para. 11(b).

<sup>14</sup> \*Ibid., para. 11(c).

<sup>15</sup> \*Ibid., para. 40.

<sup>16</sup> \*Ibid., para. 57.

<sup>17</sup> \*Television Controllers' Meeting, *Minutes*, 28 April 1959, where congratulations were given to its writers for the 'competence and style of the report'. Sir Gerald Beadle said that he admired it (\*Beadle to Atkins, Baverstock, and Peacock, 'Your Report on Television News', 11 June 1959 (T16/482/2)). Miall described it as a 'brilliantly written and penetrating analysis' (\*Miall to Atkins, Peacock, and Baverstock, 'Presentation of News in the BBC Television Service', 20 May 1959 (T16/482/2)).



in the Report were less valuable than the criticisms.<sup>18</sup> He proceeded at once to implement its main proposals.<sup>19</sup> A direction was set that was to be maintained.

Already in 1957–8 the total cost of news to the Television Service on the eve of the report was £1 million, but in Greene's view and in that of the study group, what was then being offered did not look like a 'million pound operation'.<sup>20</sup> How could it acquire a new look? Among the most important of the study group's proposals soon implemented were that Television News should have its own newsroom, that a post of Editor-for-the-day should be created, and that a new Head of Television News should be liberated from outside control by other departments. Almost immediately, therefore, Stuart Hood, the Deputy Editor, who had recently moved from Bush House to Broadcasting House with Edwards, moved in June 1959 to Alexandra Palace to take overall charge.

Some of Hood's first words to his staff were: 'What we want to achieve in a television bulletin is, first of all, professional gloss and secondly, pace.'<sup>21</sup> His senior colleagues as Assistant Editors were Stephen Bonarjee, who had joined the BBC in 1946 and moved into television news from radio current affairs talks,<sup>22</sup> Waldo Maguire, and Tom Winter. S. W. Smithers, formerly in charge, remained as Television News Manager. Smithers, a journalist of experience, had little sympathy with Hood's view that the News Division should be 'as good as the *Daily Mirror*', which was at that time a serious popular paper with a circulation of over 4½ million, larger than the audience for BBC television news.<sup>23</sup>

Greene was loath to admit that the developments in BBC News after 1958 owed much to competition. It might have been a spur, he admitted, 'but one cannot be sure that they would not have attained

<sup>18</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Television News', 15 July 1959.

<sup>19</sup> In an ITV interview by Eamonn Andrews in 1976 (22 Sept.) he was to claim that he had seen his first task in the BBC as that of 'restoring freedom to the News Division'.

<sup>20</sup> \*Report of Study Group, para. 58.

<sup>21</sup> \*Hood to all Newsreaders and Production Staff, 'Television News: Presentation', 22 July 1959 (T31/106/2).

<sup>22</sup> He had been the key figure in the development of *Topic for Tonight*. See above, p. 47. In 1953 he moved to Television, where he took part in a *Press Conference* series before returning to Broadcasting House at the end of 1953 to run *At Home and Abroad* in the Topical Talks Unit. When he moved over to Television in 1956 to become Assistant Head of Television News, Pharos in the *Spectator* complained (on the basis of information from people working in BBC Television) that BBC Television News had already suffered too much from 'misconceived experiments in presentation initiated by old brooms exported by sound radio' (*Spectator*, 28 Dec. 1956).

<sup>23</sup> \*Hood interviewed by John Cain for the Oral History Project, 29 Aug. 1988.



today's standard even without competition'.<sup>24</sup> It remained the case that ITN continued to attract more viewers than the BBC even after the new developments, although Geoffrey Cox from the other side of the fence had no doubt now of the reality of BBC competition. One sign of the change that was immediately apparent to viewers was the appearance on the screen of a four-man team of regular newsreaders—Robert Dougall, Richard Baker, Kenneth Kendall, and Michael Aspel—who replaced the old rota of readers, and very quickly established their own very different identities in the eyes of BBC viewers.<sup>25</sup> Dougall, then aged 43, was the only one of them to have made the change from radio to television news. Aspel described the other members of the team as 'Bob the patriarch, Kenneth the immaculate, Dickie the resonant', while Dougall had described him as 'ebullient'.<sup>26</sup>

Television news bulletins, BBC and ITN, both remained short. Indeed, the BBC's main evening bulletin was cut from fifteen minutes to twelve when in October 1961 it moved from around 10 p.m.—the exact time was not fixed—to 9.15 p.m.<sup>27</sup> A great deal depended, therefore, on what items of news were selected. It was not until 1967 that ITN, after protracted argument within the ITV system, began its half-hour programme *News at Ten*,<sup>28</sup> and by then, viewing habits had settled down. According to one American observer, writing in 1960, 'opinion leaders—or to use the British expression Top People—are more apt to watch BBC news, as they are in fact to view the BBC at all times.'<sup>29</sup> It was *The Times* that was to proclaim itself as the paper for 'Top People', not the *Daily Mirror*.

One point still stood out after the changes of the late 1950s. For all the developments, news bulletins in Britain—either on television or in sound—did not become like American news bulletins.<sup>30</sup> Of the

<sup>24</sup> Greene, 'BBC Television and Commercial Competition', 12 March 1958, at Bad Boll (R78/1564/1).

<sup>25</sup> Two very different identities are revealed in R. Dougall, *In and Out of the Box: An Autobiography* (1973), and M. Aspel, *Polly Wants a Zebra: The Memoirs of Michael Aspel* (1974).

<sup>26</sup> Aspel, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

<sup>27</sup> Six weeks later the main Sunday television news bulletin moved from around 10 p.m. to around 9 p.m. For changes in the timing of sound news bulletins, see below, pp. 325–31.

<sup>28</sup> G. Cox, *See It Happen* (1983), p. 137, chs. 37 and 38.

<sup>29</sup> B. Paulu, *British Broadcasting in Transition* (1961), p. 93.

<sup>30</sup> Comparisons were drawn in an ITV television programme of Oct. 1984, *Television News Programmes*, with a script by Michael Beckham. In it Paul Fox expressed the view that 'in many ways American television news is ahead of our own, and always has been. It is much more reporter-based and of course they were the first people with the half hour news.'

various BBC bulletins on television, the main evening bulletin at 10 p.m. on Mondays to Fridays attracted the largest audience (13.9 per cent) in the first quarter of 1959, and the 7.25 p.m. bulletin the largest audience (13.2 per cent) in the first quarter of 1960. On Saturday nights the audience reached 16.9 per cent in each year, although the time was switched from 9 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. The Home Service bulletin on sound at 9 p.m. was listened to by audiences of only 3.2 per cent and 2.7 per cent in the two quarters, and the biggest audience for a sound bulletin was now at 8 a.m., significantly at a time when the television screens were blank. The figures for the two quarters were 11.3 per cent and 11.1 per cent.<sup>31</sup>

Each BBC and ITV programme, including weather forecasts,<sup>32</sup> tagged on to the news, had its own history, and each successful programme built up its own loyal audience within a bigger audience. Within the BBC, there were radically different ways of interpreting the opportunities that were open to BBC Television during the first years of competition; and there was to be more than one clash between News and Talks and Light Entertainment—with even bigger clashes ahead as part of a new pattern of broadcasting history. There were also to be demarcation disputes.<sup>33</sup> None the less, for all the differences in departmental attitudes, between 1955 and 1960 all sections of BBC Television were eager to take advantage of increases in the total hours at their disposal.

To the perpetual surprise of Americans, the British Government was still regulating the number of television hours in 1960, although it had permitted increases from about forty hours a week in 1955 to sixty hours a week five years later. It was not until January 1972 that one of the best-known television presenters of the 1950s, Christopher Chataway, by then Minister of Posts and Telecommunica-

<sup>31</sup> \*LR/60/547, 'Review of Some Well-Known Series in Sound and Television in 1959 and in First Quarter of 1960'.

<sup>32</sup> Before 11 Jan. 1954 only maps and charts had been used in weather forecasts. Weathermen then appeared. The first of them was George Cowling. Most of the history of subsequent changes in format, like the introduction of new weather symbols in 1975, comes after the end of the period covered by this volume.

<sup>33</sup> See below, pp. 358–9. Ned Sherrin, a key figure in the satirical broadcasting of the 1960s, who joined the BBC in June 1957 as a temporary Production Assistant in Light Entertainment, continued to work in Light Entertainment on a short-term contract when making *Tonight*. In 1960 he joined the BBC staff as a producer in Television Talks. See his engaging account of the BBC and the restrictions imposed upon programming from inside and outside the BBC in *A Small Thing Like an Earthquake* (1983).

tions, was to end all Government restraints on the hours of broadcasting.<sup>34</sup>

The Governors of the BBC—and its top management—were always less anxious to increase hours than the ITA was, and they considered that they had good reasons. Obviously the advertising revenues of the contracting companies would increase if there were more hours of programming on the screen. The BBC's programming costs, however, would increase without any corresponding increase in revenue.<sup>35</sup> Costs per hour had already risen in the aftermath of competition: total costs had to be watched carefully. Phrases like 'round-the-clock television' and even 'perpetual television' were used pejoratively, therefore, in Broadcasting House. There was also an older view, expressed forcefully, for example, by Mary Stocks, a prolific sound broadcaster, that there could be a surfeit of television even if the BBC alone was responsible for the medium.<sup>36</sup> Several of the speakers in the House of Lords debate had agreed. So, too, did some television critics.

In March 1955, agreement had been reached about the initial allotment of hours in somewhat awkward talks between the BBC, which accepted any new arrangement reluctantly, the ITA, which was pressing for the end of all curbs, and the Post Office, which was caught between the two. Sir Robert Fraser might predict rightly that restriction would soon come to be regarded as 'a quaint antiquity',<sup>37</sup> but it was not until the end of 1956 that the next significant extension of hours was granted, when the 'toddlers' truce', a period from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m., previously without television transmissions, was now allowed to be 'filled in'.

The 'truce' had been defended paternalistically on two counts: the first, that this was the time when parents could put their children to bed without distraction; the second, that this was the time when children should be getting on with their homework even if they were not being put to bed. Such defences were seriously weakened when, as Fraser pointed out, the hour was frequently filled in by outside broadcasts of sporting events during the summer. There was another

<sup>34</sup> See below, p. 952.

<sup>35</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 19 July 1956.

<sup>36</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 16 Jan. 1957.

<sup>37</sup> PRO HO 256/159, Notes of Meetings at Post Office Headquarters, 22 Dec. 1954, 12 Jan. 1955. B. Sendall, *Independent Television in Britain*, vol. 1 (1982), p. 96. Sir Ben Barnett, Deputy Director-General of the Post Office, 'questioned the right of the BBC or the ITA to set themselves up as controllers of the public will in such a matter' (Notes of Meeting, 12 Jan. 1955).

ITA argument. In effect, Fraser also claimed, by blocking out television the BBC was boosting its monopoly services in sound.<sup>38</sup>

The Postmaster-General, Charles Hill, cast aside all opposition to change in the autumn of 1956, claiming, in language more familiar at a later date, that 'it was the responsibility of parents, not the State, to put their children to bed at the right time'.<sup>39</sup> He had earlier ruled out a BBC compromise that the length of the truce should be cut to half an hour. There had been BBC resistance to the last to filling in the gap. One Governor, Sir Edward Benthall, an accountant, complained that the increase was being imposed on the BBC at a cost of between £500,000 and £600,000 a year, with no provision for this in the estimates, at a time when the Government was 'urging the Corporation to make reductions in its estimates'. Another Governor, however—Mrs. Cazalet-Keir—wished to go on record as saying that she approved of Hill's decision.<sup>40</sup>

Whatever the official views in Broadcasting House might be, BBC programme makers in Lime Grove were prepared to respond even more competitively to the change in hours than the contracting companies that had been pressing so strongly for it. In consequence, the period between 6 and 7 p.m. soon saw some of the toughest struggles in the early history of competitive television. 'Both sides' recognized clearly that if viewers tuned in to one particular channel in the early evening, there was considerable likelihood that they would stay with it for a large part of the evening that followed.

For the BBC, however, the decisions that were taken about what to offer during the newly opened-up hour had a further significance in the history of television. The nature of the programmes that were devised was to influence not only viewing patterns later in the same evening, but the whole BBC approach to the content and style of programming offered at other times of day, later and earlier. The *Daily Telegraph* had not been alone in complaining of 'the drive lacking in early evening TV'.<sup>41</sup> Now there was a new thrust in BBC programming, and it affected the late evening too.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup> HO 256/159, Notes of a Meeting at Post Office Headquarters, 13 June 1956.

<sup>39</sup> Lord Hill, *Both Sides of the Hill* (1964), pp. 170 ff. One BBC Governor who supported Hill urged that the interests of adults coming home from work had to be taken into the reckoning too ('Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 13 Sept. 1955).

<sup>40</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 22 Nov. 1956.

<sup>41</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 19 Feb. 1957.

<sup>42</sup> The Governors themselves accepted realistically that once they had lost the battle to keep the toddlers' truce, they would have to make the best of the newly offered time. On 10 Jan. 1957 McGivern told them of plans to provide 'a programme designed for intermittent viewing'. 'They felt it showed imagination and wished it success' (*Minutes*).

### 3. Five Programmes

The thrust began with the launching of a new magazine programme, *Tonight*, which was itself inspired by an earlier programme, *Highlight*, produced with minimum facilities from 22 September 1955 to 15 February 1957 by Donald Baverstock, a rising star in the television firmament. Then aged 31, he had joined the BBC in 1949 as a producer in Overseas Talks. He sold the idea of *Tonight*, which was first broadcast on 18 February 1957, to Grace Wyndham Goldie. McGivern's ideas of how to fill the slot, largely with repeats, had been unadventurous. *Tonight* began at 6.05 p.m., and ran for forty minutes. Like many other programmes with a future, its success was not quite immediate, for the *Daily Telegraph*, usually shrewd in its criticism, declared after its opening night that it 'lacked compelling interest and gaiety' and seemed 'slightly reminiscent of those interminable repetitious morning programmes in America designed to catch successive waves of the breakfast audience'. None the less, even then the *Telegraph* praised its 'variety, spice and . . . pace'.<sup>1</sup>

A month later, the *Tribune*, appealing to a very different readership, began an article called 'Filling the BBC Gap' with the sentence 'To the surprise of all concerned *Tonight*, a *Topical Programme* has muddled through to its third week on television.' While it was within 'the best BBC tradition of compromise', the BBC had the makings of a good programme in it. All that its producers had to do was to 'exercise a little more judgement and a great deal more humour in picking their items'.<sup>2</sup>

Within three years of starting in 1957, the programme, which at first had been planned to run for three months, was attracting 9 million viewers, and the critics now took it for granted. It was a programme which was both devised and presented by young BBC staff, many of whom were to have impressive BBC careers, if of varying lengths and, ultimately, of varying fortunes, and, not surprisingly, the atmosphere was not always 'easy'.<sup>3</sup> Baverstock was its

<sup>1</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 19 Feb. 1957.

<sup>2</sup> *Tribune*, 18 March 1957. Faced with the problem of filling the gap, Eleanor Wintour added, the BBC had 'thought of more sport, or more news, and a few lightweight TV types apparently pushed for more variety'. *Tonight* included 'the lot'. For a later judgement see the *Observer*, 28 Sept. 1958.

<sup>3</sup> Goldie, to McGivern, 25 July 1960 (Goldie Papers), referred to a 'psychological casing' of the situation after new contract negotiations had been completed.

editor, Alasdair Milne its producer, and Tony Essex its film editor. The first programmes were produced not at Lime Grove, where there was no studio available, but in a small outside studio in St. Mary Abbott's Place, Kensington, renamed Studio M.<sup>4</sup> The engineers responsible for it were Marconi engineers, not BBC engineers. All this added to the sense of creative freedom.

Through its magazine mix, which included music, *Tonight* deliberately blurred traditional distinctions between entertainment, information, and even education; while through its informal styles of presentation, it broke sharply with old BBC traditions of 'correctness' and 'dignity'. It also showed the viewing public that the BBC could be just as sprightly and irreverent as ITV. Not surprisingly, therefore, the programme influenced many other programmes, including party political broadcasts.<sup>5</sup> It even figured in the report of the study group on television news: 'it was felt that News should go more for the off-beat story and "be more like *Tonight*".'<sup>6</sup>

Cliff Michelmore, its main presenter, who had been an interviewer on *Highlight* before joining *Tonight*, established a quick rapport with his audience, and in 1958 was chosen by the Guild of Television Producers as the 'television personality' of the year. For the *Evening Standard*, which at that time, like the programme itself, eschewed all flattery, 'this avuncular, pink-faced, middle brow with middle-class accent, occasional squeak in the voice and mild-as-cocoa manner' had secured 'a very warm place in the hearts of Britons'. He had become the 'John Bull of the Small Screen'.<sup>7</sup> In his autobiography Michelmore gives other quotes from the Press about himself, including the remarkable phrase 'He is no quivering Presley or capering Hughie Green'.<sup>8</sup> Michelmore had his own clearly identified personal tastes. He was, in fact, among the most versatile of broadcasters, as well known as a sports commentator—first for radio and then for television—and took part in the reporting of general election results.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The *Tonight* team used office space at Lime Grove.

<sup>5</sup> See below, pp. 249–50.

<sup>6</sup> 'Presentation of News in the BBC Television Service: Report of a Study Group', 24 April 1959, para. 11(c) (T16/482/2). This was an opinion said to have been expressed by television news staff at Alexandra Palace.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in G. Watkins (ed.), *BFI Dossier 15: Tonight* (1982), which includes within it M. Macdonald, 'Tonight, a Short History'. Michelmore and Jean Metcalfe, who met as co-presenters of radio's *Two-Way Family Favourites*, have described their lives in *Two-Way Story* (1986), their joint autobiography.

<sup>8</sup> *Two-Way Story*, p. 145.

<sup>9</sup> See below, pp. 451, 556–7.



Behind every *Tonight* programme—and the title projected immediacy—there was team effort, always busy, often frantic; and after every programme there was always a searing, sometimes cruel, post-mortem. From above, Cecil McGivern did not always approve. Nor did Kenneth Adam. But that did not matter to Goldie, who, writing in the firm but self-conscious style that she always favoured, claimed that the success of the programme rested on the fact that it stood Reithian BBC attitudes on their heads. ‘The opinions of those in high places did not have to be accepted.’ The programme ‘looked at those in power from the point of view of the powerless, it examined the effect of the judgements of experts upon specific cases, and of administrative policies upon the human beings who were at the receiving end of the administration.’<sup>10</sup>

This judgement was made in retrospect, and was influenced by what happened after *Tonight* had disappeared from the screen and after *That Was The Week That Was* had appeared and disappeared also.<sup>11</sup> As a judgement, it made too much of the tautness of *Tonight* and not enough of its capacity to relax, or at least to appear to do so. It also made too much of what went on in the studio between 6.05 and 6.45 p.m. and far too little of what went on in the home.

The tone was set when Cy Grant appeared on the screen singing topical calypsos (some of the words were written by Bernard Levin). He was one of the first black faces to be seen on the screen, and at a time when there was the first talk of Britain becoming a multi-cultural society, his attractive presence was reassuring.<sup>12</sup> Derek Hart, who later in the programme interviewed the good, the great—and, sometimes, the wicked—was reassuring too. Both Grant and Hart became television personalities in their own right. So, too, did Rory McEwen, Fyfe Robertson, Kenneth Allsop, Geoffrey Johnson Smith (who, like Chataway was to become an MP), and Alan Whicker, already brilliantly effective as a reporter, who was to go on to travel everywhere, making the real world a ‘Whicker’s World’ of his own.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> G. Wyndham Goldie, *Facing the Nation* (1976), p. 216.

<sup>11</sup> For *That Was The Week That Was*, see below, pp. 350 ff.

<sup>12</sup> The first of a 1992 series of television programmes on BBC-2 ‘celebrating the contribution of black and Asian people to TV’ included details of the stories of Cy Grant and Carmen Munroe. Produced by Colin MacCabe and narrated by Professor Stuart Hall, it was called *Black and White in Colour: Television, Memory, Race, 1936–68*.

<sup>13</sup> See his book *Within Whicker’s World* (1982).



All had their own individual appeal. So did the people they interviewed, who included Brigitte Bardot and Jayne Mansfield.<sup>14</sup>

The viewers, who did not necessarily think of themselves as ‘powerless’, welcomed into their homes all these ‘celebrities’ and other ‘personalities’, curious to learn more about them, particularly when they were speaking ‘off the cuff’. In Michelmores’s words, ‘viewers wanted *Tonight* and wanted it that way’.<sup>15</sup> The success of the programme, as Baverstock remarked, rested ultimately on the fact that it proved that the notion ‘that television programmes should be either serious or entertaining’ was false and ‘rather insulting to the audience’.<sup>16</sup>

*Tonight* was deliberately different from *Panorama*, the other BBC magazine programme that increasingly concentrated on ‘topicality’, the topicality not of day or night but of the week. ‘There never was any love lost, won or exchanged between *Tonight* and *Panorama*’, Michelmores recalled.<sup>17</sup> As a ‘weekly window on the world’ the role of *Panorama* during the Suez crisis has already been outlined.<sup>18</sup> During the years after Suez, it became a major weekly event in itself, whatever might be happening on any continent. People stayed at home to see it: public figures, British and foreign, sought to appear on it.

Unlike *Tonight*, it had a formality about it. Its opening music, taken from Rachmaninov’s Symphony No. 1 in D Minor—so different from a Cy Grant calypso—set the tone. So, too, did the voice of Richard Dimbleby, always far more than an anchorman.<sup>19</sup> ‘*Panorama* without Richard Dimbleby is apparently unthinkable to most viewers in the sample’, an Audience Research Report of 1958 stated. ‘A television personality in the grand manner, he handles the programme with

<sup>14</sup> Jonathan Miller was a performer on the first programme. With an extraordinarily versatile career ahead of him, he was described then in the *Daily Telegraph* (19 Feb. 1957) as ‘a new style comic narrator who seems to be a “learner-noon”’.

<sup>15</sup> *Two-Way Story*, p. 140.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Watkins, op. cit., p. 18. Goldie herself made the same point. ‘To move easily from entertainment to politics’ was for the first time possible in ‘an electronic age’. People could ‘like both and both could be combined in a single programme’. ‘This was the idea of *Tonight*’ (*Facing the Nation*, pp. 210–11). Baverstock, according to her, listed forty different kinds of programme ingredients (ibid., p. 212).

<sup>17</sup> *Two-Way Story*, p. 142.

<sup>18</sup> See above, pp. 103–5.

<sup>19</sup> There is a long-playing record ‘The Voice of Richard Dimbleby’ issued by Music for Pleasure Ltd. The commentator was another well-known BBC sound broadcaster. Wynford Vaughan-Thomas.

intelligence and efficiency.<sup>20</sup> Thoroughly briefed, he seemed to be presiding, genially but authoritatively, over what Granada in a topical programme with a very different tone called a 'World in Action'. He addressed his viewers 'in terms of decency, human feeling and, on occasion, of righteous indignation'.<sup>21</sup> According to one member of an Audience Research Panel, 'he is and will always be funereal, but no-one else would do.'<sup>22</sup> In time, Dimbleby became an institution, and his memorial service was to be held in Westminster Abbey.

Just as significant in relation to his continuing influence, Dimbleby won the respect and affection of his colleagues, 'those who . . . had the good fortune to know him personally'. Like some members of the Audience Research Panel, Goldie tried to put him in place in the context she knew so well. 'He never questioned the authority of even the youngest producer. He never quibbled about details of content and would happily accept linking words written for him and make only minor changes. Yet he would never accept a programme which cut across the grain of his personality.' Comparing him with Murrow, she called him 'a great television professional'. It was the highest compliment she could offer.<sup>23</sup>

Lasting for fifty minutes, *Panorama* dealt highly professionally with a wide range of items, several in one number, usually contrasting rather than complementary items, as were the reporters who presented them—Francis Williams, who had been Public Relations Adviser to Attlee and who made his way to the House of Lords in 1962; Woodrow Wyatt, former Labour MP and another future Lord, battling with malpractice in trade unions; Christopher Chataway, who went into Parliament as a Conservative in 1959 and who in 1970 became the Minister in charge of broadcasting; Ludovic Kennedy, a Liberal Party candidate, who called *Panorama* 'the flagship of the BBC', a phrase that stuck; John Freeman, ex-Minister and future leader in independent television, who graduated to *Face to Face* from it; Robert Kee, who had stepped out of Oxford and *Picture Post*, and who asked more difficult questions than Goldie did about the relationship between journalists and producers;<sup>24</sup> James Mossman,

<sup>20</sup> \*VR/58/505, 'The Return of Panorama, 22 September 1958', 9 Oct. 1958.

<sup>21</sup> Stuart Hood, 'Everyman', an obituary article in the *Spectator*, quoted in L. Miall (ed.), *Richard Dimbleby, Broadcaster* (1966).

<sup>22</sup> \*VR/58/505.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in *Richard Dimbleby, Broadcaster*, p. 134.

<sup>24</sup> See R. Kee, 'Look! No Hands!', *Twentieth Century*, Nov. 1959. 'The concept of the producer for television', he complained, 'has grown out of sound radio rather than been evolved especially for television.' Warning of 'stereotyped formulae', he asked in the article just what the role of a producer in a current affairs story was meant to be.

who had stepped out of Cambridge and M.I.6; and Robin Day, who had stepped over from ITN.

What was seen on the screen by viewers included reports both from distant parts of the world and from what to most viewers were unfamiliar parts of their own country. There were also interviews of varying length and depth. The interview technique, imperfectly developed before competition, had now come into its own, outside as well as inside news bulletins. Indeed, Robin Day, above all others, perfected his own variety of probing interview until it became an art-form, like most art-forms, intrinsically controversial. It did not always appeal to the people being interviewed, particularly to Cabinet ministers who were used to more reverential treatment and to questions being given to them in advance.<sup>25</sup>

A good example of what a politician who was also an aristocrat expected and was prepared to do in the mid-1950s can be found in the Foreign Office's archives. In February 1956 the Foreign Office cabled Lord Salisbury who was in Venice: 'BBC Radio Newsreel have asked whether you grant interview London Airport. William Clark advises acceptance and suggests you prepare short (two minute) statement to be given as answer to question to be arranged by you with BBC on arrival. Grateful to know your decision. Television not (repeat not) involved.' Salisbury's reply—after three days—read 'If thought desirable will give two minutes interview at London Airport. Will bring draft questions and answers for consideration with BBC on arrival.'<sup>26</sup>

The organization behind *Panorama* was at least as efficient as that of the Foreign Office. Behind the scenes, Leonard Miall was far more than a clever recruiting officer: he knew how to handle people, and he was experienced himself in the kind of operations that were carried out by those employed in his own department. Also behind the scenes, first Michael Peacock and then Paul Fox, who joined the *Panorama* team from sports television, were skilful and determined editors. They had no doubt about their own role, although they interpreted it in different ways. Peacock, who had David Wheeler as his deputy, wrote eloquently about the programme in the BBC's house magazine in 1958 after *Panorama* in its weekly form was 100

<sup>25</sup> See an important article by R. Day, 'Troubled Reflections of a TV Journalist', *Encounter*, May 1970; and for his personal account of changes in personnel and outlook, *Grand Inquisitor* (1989).

<sup>26</sup> PRO FO 953/1640, cables of 17, 20 Feb. 1956. For the origins of the interview, see D. Boorstin, *The Image* (1961), pp. 14–17.

editions old. 'A topical programme lives in the present', he insisted, 'and producing one is a hand-to-mouth existence in which flexibility and improvisation are central virtues. Neat and tidy schedules for future projects are usually the first symptoms of *rigor mortis*.'<sup>27</sup>

There were no dangers of *rigor mortis* in another new programme of the period, a greatly prized programme which had its critics both in the *Tonight* and *Panorama* teams. The arts programme *Monitor* was a programme that did not attract—and was never expected to attract—large audiences. 'When the *Monitor* people met the talk was not of competition from ITV but from other BBC programmes and from print.'<sup>28</sup>

Devised in 1957 as a 'highly sophisticated type of magazine without necessarily appealing only to Third Programme types',<sup>29</sup> *Monitor*, described in one memorandum as a 'culture corner', was first broadcast on Sunday 2 February 1958, when the items, as set out in a BBC summary, read tersely 'Amis: Comedy Theatre: Epstein: Circus: Musique Concret [*sic*]'. The second programme turned to 'Young Writers: Sam Wanamaker @ Liverpool: New York reactions to John Osborne's "The Entertainer"'.<sup>30</sup> The critic Mary Crozier described the first programme, which lasted for forty-five minutes, as 'more Network Three than Third Programme', which did it no harm; but Peter Black, one of the outstanding critics of television then and since, had more serious doubts. 'He needs to check on all his facts', he wrote of the programme's presenter, Huw (later Sir Huw) Wheldon, 'if he is going to intrude on every subject.'<sup>31</sup>

The fact that now stands out is that the success of the programme owed much to Wheldon, who always wrote his own material and who controlled the pace of the programme as well as its content. *Monitor* was, indeed, to use the newly fashionable language of the

<sup>27</sup> *Ariel*, Jan. 1958. The article, one of an interesting series on television programmes, included a photograph of Peacock, Dimbleby, and Wyatt, who had just received the *News Chronicle* programme award for the best regular programme on any channel.

<sup>28</sup> P. Black, *The Mirror in the Corner* (1972), p. 134.

<sup>29</sup> \*K. Adam to Miall, 'New Magazine Programme', 19 March 1957 (T32/937/1).

<sup>30</sup> \*Undated list, 'Monitor' (T32/937/3).

<sup>31</sup> Quoted in \*Adam, 'A Key to Many Doors', 14 Nov. 1962 (T32/937/5). The Audience Research Report estimated an audience for the first programme of 9%, as against 17% six weeks before for *Tuffy*, a Swedish film about a duckling with Johnny Morris, a familiar broadcaster, as English narrator. The ITV audience for *Armchair Theatre* which began half an hour before *Monitor* was 35%. The audience reaction index was 51, 'far below the average (69) for all magazine programmes televised during 1957' (\*VR/58/68). *Monitor* followed Shaw's *Heartbreak House*.

period, a programme in his image. Yet Wheldon preferred to call himself 'the cement to hold the thing together',<sup>32</sup> and he knew that it was others, not he, who had been involved in its birth. Kenneth Adam conceived of the idea of the programme in 1957, although he never liked the title, but when the programme reached its 100th edition in 1962, he paid tribute to Goldie as its 'Earth Mother'.<sup>33</sup> Once on the screen, *Monitor* owed much to its co-producer, Peter (later Professor) Newington. The other co-producer involved from the start in the protracted preparations leading to the first edition was Catherine Dove. She dropped out after an accident. She had not found it easy to work with Wheldon.<sup>34</sup>

Among the other pioneers of *Monitor* were John Schlesinger, who in 1961 was to produce one of the most remarkable—and influential—films of the period seen in the cinema, *A Kind of Loving*, and Ken Russell, a free-lance whose remarkable career was to span television and the cinema. Russell presented two early *Monitor* 'stories': one on John Betjeman and one on the composer Gordon Jacob. Before joining *Monitor*, he had made an imaginative film about Lourdes. Norman Swallow, Assistant Head of Films, Television, pressed Russell's claims to make a whole film for the BBC,<sup>35</sup> and in 1962 he directed a film biography of Elgar for the 100th edition of *Monitor* which won the highest audience reaction index of any *Monitor* programme since the launching of the series.<sup>36</sup> The film was produced by Humphrey Burton, who had read music at Cambridge and who had his career before him.<sup>37</sup> He had come to television via radio, and had begun as a sound mixer. His interest in music stimulated Wheldon, who provided the Elgar commentary.

<sup>32</sup> D. Robinson, 'Monitor in Profile', 1961.

<sup>33</sup> \*Adam, 'A Key to Many Doors'.

<sup>34</sup> Her account of the relationship is set out in P. Ferris, *Sir Hugu: The Life of Huw Wheldon* (1990), pp. 116 ff. A Note from Goldie mentions the move of the trainee Karl Miller from *Tonight* to *Monitor* (\*Goldie to Miall, 'Staffing of the Arts Magazine', 2 Dec. 1957 (T32/937/1)).

<sup>35</sup> \*Swallow to Jack Mewett, Head of Films, 'Ken Russell', 7 April 1959 (T32/1033/1). In 1963 Swallow was to leave the BBC to form an independent company with Denis Mitchell. Part of the time they made programmes for Granada and part of the time for other broadcasters, including the BBC.

<sup>36</sup> \*Audience Research Report VR/62/636, 3 Dec. 1962. For Russell's later work, see below, p. 801.

<sup>37</sup> In 1965 Burton became Head of Music and Arts Programmes, BBC Television, but left abruptly in 1967 when a consortium he had joined won the London Weekend ITV franchise. He was for a time presenter of LWT's *Aquarius* programme, but rejoined the BBC in 1975.

Others who were involved behind the scenes in the development of *Monitor* included its assistant producer Nancy Thomas, who had been secretary successively to Kenneth Clark and to Haley before producing programmes like *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral*, a favourite quiz show, and *The Sky at Night*, the highly successful and long-surviving astronomy programme with Patrick Moore. There was a limit to Wheldon's interest in music, and Burton had difficulty in persuading him in 1960 to include an item about the Allegri Quartet, yielding only when Burton told him that there was a family tradition within the Quartet—'like a guild of Mastersingers, the torch was handed from father to son.'<sup>38</sup> In 1962 Burton was to become editor of the programme when Wheldon moved over to become Assistant Head of Talks.<sup>39</sup>

There was no ITV counterpart to *Monitor*. Nor was there a counterpart to another distinctive BBC programme of this period, *Face to Face*, the first number of which was broadcast on 4 February 1959. It bore some of the same marks as *Monitor*, and involved some of the same personalities; and it was broadcast on Sunday evenings in alternate weeks when *Monitor* was not shown. Hugh Burnett, its young producer, had joined Television Talks in the autumn of 1955, at the same time as Baverstock.<sup>40</sup> While at Bush House, where he worked from 1949 to 1955, Burnett had created and produced *Personal Call*, an impressive series of long radio interviews in depth,<sup>41</sup> and when at the age of 29 he turned to television production, he worked with Richard Cawston, as well as Wheldon and Catherine Dove. Murrow was an influence on him too, as he was on Dimbleby; Burnett was deeply impressed, for example, by Murrow's interview in depth with President Truman. Yet his own programme was to be as British in style and content as *Monitor* was—or *Panorama*.

Those interviewed by Freeman in *Face to Face*—and most of the thirty-five interviews were shown live—included Dame Edith Sitwell, Augustus John, Evelyn Waugh, Bertrand Russell, Henry Moore, Stirling Moss, John Osborne, Albert Finney, Cecil Beaton, Adam Faith, Lord Shawcross, Roy Thomson, Reith, Tony Hancock, Danny Blanch-

<sup>38</sup> Quoted in Ferris, op. cit., p. 143.

<sup>39</sup> Wheldon became Assistant Head of Talks in May 1962.

<sup>40</sup> Whatever the ratings, Baverstock was unimpressed by *Monitor*. 'What rubbish are you putting on this week?' he is said on one occasion to have asked Newington, then its producer. (Ferris, op. cit., p. 121.)

<sup>41</sup> These programmes featured Dr Stephen Black as interviewer. His subjects included many of those subsequently interviewed on the screen in *Face to Face*.



flower, and Gilbert Harding. Not all these characters, particularly the 'television personalities', deserved treatment in depth of the kind that he offered or could respond adequately to it. Some could and did. So, too, could many of the non-British personalities who were interviewed. Burnett could not tempt President Kennedy, Aristotle Onassis, or Marilyn Monroe to take part in the programme, but he did persuade, among others, King Hussein, Adlai Stevenson, Carl Gustav Jung, Otto Klemperer, Jomo Kenyatta, Dr Hastings Banda, Sir Roy Welensky, Martin Luther King, and Nubar Gulbenkian. It was a sign of the times that only two of the subjects in *Face to Face* were women. One man not interviewed, the conductor Sir Malcolm Sargent, came at the top of an audience research poll to discover whom the public would most like to see on future programmes.<sup>42</sup>

Gulbenkian, the mysterious oil millionaire, who arrived in his Rolls-Royce and refused to sign a contract or to accept a fee,<sup>43</sup> deliberately slandered the Trustees of the Gulbenkian Foundation in his interview, and when the BBC refused to hand over to him a copy of the programme containing the defamatory passage, he brought a High Court action against the Corporation. On 27 July 1962 Mr. Justice Glyn-Jones decided to order the BBC to hand over the film, but Gulbenkian had to be content with nominal damages of 40 shillings without costs.

Trying though all this was for Freeman and the BBC, Gulbenkian's interview raised fewer problems than Gilbert Harding's, whose distressed reactions to deep questioning about death and dying created a great stir at the time, and have lingered most in the mind since.<sup>44</sup> 'Torture by television' was one verdict. The comedian Tony Hancock found himself in difficulties also in his interview, and when the scripts of thirteen of the interviews, including the Harding interview, were published a generation later—after a series of rebroadcasts—the

<sup>42</sup> He won fifty-two votes. Television personalities figured prominently in the names suggested by the panel of 400. Dimpleby came second in the poll, and Michelmore tied with Viscount Montgomery and Wilfred Pickles, and Cliff Richard with Eden, now Earl of Avon ('Burnett to Miall, 'Face to Face', 18 Oct. 1961 (T32/640/2)).

<sup>43</sup> The fee for those interviewed in the series was 100 guineas for the first transmission. Evelyn Waugh asked for and obtained 250 guineas, but since in his case this covered all rights, including repeats, he received less than the other contributors. *Face to Face* was sold extensively overseas, and gramophone records of six interviews produced by Pye sold well.

<sup>44</sup> Exceptionally, the Harding interview was not live. Recorded on 3 July 1960, it was not transmitted until 18 Sept. 1960. Harding asked to view the recording of the programme before transmission. He made no complaint about the interview or about the question and answer on dying which had driven him to tears and which had caused most regret to many of his audience when it was transmitted.



Hancock family decided that they did not wish the interview that he had given to be published.<sup>45</sup>

Freeman's first guest was the great counsel turned judge, Lord Birkett, a familiar broadcaster during and after the War, who had already figured in *Personal Call*. 'He promised to be frank,' Burnett wrote after the first series of *Face to Face* had been broadcast, 'and, in line with his candour, the cameras pushed him close, to carve his wise old head against the black velours.'<sup>46</sup> Over 4½ million viewers saw this programme, which was an immediate success. In celebrated cases in the lawcourts Birkett had skilfully drawn out many of the characters in the dock. He had now appeared in the dock himself—by choice.

Clever use of three candid cameras with different lenses (zoom lenses were not then used in the studios) along with close interviewing ensured that many of the individual *Face to Face* programmes would become source materials for historians, providing the kind of evidence through cross-examination in which Birkett himself specialized.<sup>47</sup> The main impact of such programmes, however, was immediate. Like the best of Ken Russell's films, they completely captured the attention of fascinated audiences. The camera focused exclusively on the subject's face, revealing candidly all its contours, and viewers never saw Freeman's own face, though it was well known to many of them from his appearances on *Panorama*. Words sometimes seemed unnecessary. Reith was surprised that Freeman did not ask him about his scar.<sup>48</sup> If he had been asked, he would have been better prepared than Harding when asked about dying or Hancock when asked about breakdowns in his health.

<sup>45</sup> J. Bakewell (introducer), *Face to Face with John Freeman* (1989). The Hancock *Face to Face* was broadcast on 7 Feb. 1960. It was repeated on 9 Oct. 1988. The first interview published in the 1989 book was one with Freeman himself, tackled by a very different interviewer of a different generation, Anthony Clare. Freeman said that he was surprised by the public interest in the repeats. In 1961 he had refused at first to be associated with an earlier published version of a number of interviews, on the grounds that he did not consider 'the scripts as they stood worthy of publication' ('Freeman to Burnett, 24 July 1961 (T32/640/2)'). Eventually, however, he agreed to write a preface.

<sup>46</sup> H. Burnett, *Face to Face* (1964), p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> The programmes provided a different kind of visual evidence. Before their interviews the guests visited the studio of Feliks Topolski, who drew portraits of them. These appeared on the screen at the beginning of the programme. Burnett said of a Topolski portrait of G. B. Shaw that it gave him 'my first glimpse of the face behind the public face' (Burnett, op. cit., p. 3).

<sup>48</sup> Reith described the interview in his diary, 30 Oct. 1960: 'a long dreaded day'. He wrote in the BBC visitors' book 'John Charles Walsham Reith, late BBC and regrets he ever left it'. The interview itself is less revealing than *Lord Reith Looks Back*, filmed interviews with Malcolm Muggeridge in 1967.

Freeman spoke of the camera's 'unwinking scrutiny',<sup>49</sup> and knew how much he depended upon it. With a distinguished political career behind him and an equally distinguished career outside politics before him, Freeman was able to get to the point with most of the people he interviewed. Yet, good-mannered though he was—and never abrasive—he discovered how hazardous removing familiar masks could be. He had not been Burnett's first choice as interviewer. Among others considered were Edgar Lustgarten, Ludovic Kennedy, and Randolph Churchill.<sup>50</sup> What Churchill would have made of the programme raises one of the tempting *ifs* of history.

After Freeman withdrew from the programme in 1962—at his own insistence—the interesting idea of keeping *Face to Face* and using the experienced Robert Kee as interviewer was dropped.<sup>51</sup> Man and programme went together, as they did in the case of *Monitor* and *Panorama*. And Freeman himself was proving that he would be just as interesting a subject as he was an interviewer. His first marriage had ended in divorce in 1948, and his second wife died in 1957. In 1962 he married Catherine Dove, the divorced wife of the BBC correspondent Charles Wheeler. In 1961 he had become Editor of the *New Statesman*, and four years later he was to become High Commissioner in India. In 1966 he was made a Privy Councillor, and from 1969 to 1971 he was British Ambassador to the United States. In 1971 he was to return to television from Washington in a different role—as Chairman of London Weekend Television; after that, he married his fourth wife, the daughter of Denis Mitchell, the documentary film producer.

The last subject to be interviewed by him in *Face to Face* was the great footballer, Danny Blanchflower, who was the first man to refuse to appear in a very different, but equally characteristic, programme of the period, Eamonn Andrews's *This Is Your Life*. This was a programme which by then (February 1961) had built up as big an audience—13 million—as the other popular programme with which Andrews was associated, *What's My Line?*, and Adam called it 'one of the most

<sup>49</sup> Burnett, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>50</sup> \*Burnett to Goldie, 'Programme Idea', 27 Feb. 1958; Burnett to Miall, 'Programme Idea: Second Quarter', 13 March 1958 (T32/640/1).

<sup>51</sup> In his article on television in the special television number of *Twentieth Century*, Nov. 1959, 'Look! No Hands', Kee praised Granada's programme *Searchlight* for a 'breakthrough in technique'.

valuable properties' of the Television Service.<sup>52</sup> Its success depended on Andrews as much as the success of *Face to Face* depended on Freeman, but he was backed by 'the skill and hard work of a devoted team'.<sup>53</sup> The first person scheduled to appear in *This Is Your Life* in 1955 had been a footballer too, Stanley (later Sir Stanley) Matthews, but his name was leaked, and Andrews himself was substituted.<sup>54</sup>

Audience Research noted in June 1959, when the programme was already well established, that while some viewers found Andrews too smug—he could 'turn charm on and off like a tap'—almost all of them considered him 'absolutely right for this job... His infinite tact, patience and sympathetic understanding undoubtedly contributed much to the success of a series which was sometimes inspiring, sometimes annoying, sometimes intriguing and always of the greatest possible human interest.'<sup>55</sup> Those who took part in it as 'victims' usually expressed their own thanks. The cricketer C. B. Fry said that he was 'much honoured'; the veteran BBC announcer Stuart Hibberd called it, as did the stage and screen actress Dame Flora Robson, 'the most wonderful evening of my life'; Richard Todd, the film star, stated simply that he could 'well see why it is such a tremendous attraction to viewers... and more than deserves its interest and popularity'.<sup>56</sup>

As for the life of Andrews himself, he had been very surprised in 1955 when he had been subjected to interview by Ralph Edwards, the inventor of the American version of the programme,<sup>57</sup> at the very beginning of his own programme; but he cannot have been surprised when six years later he was placed third in the poll to discover whom the public most wanted to see in *Face to Face*. 'Why do I appear so often on your screen?' he asked in the first sentence of an article

<sup>52</sup> \*Adam, Controller, Programmes, Television to Beadle, Director of Television Broadcasting, 'The Future of "This Is Your Life"', 27 Feb. 1961 (T16/590). For the early history of *What's My Line?*, which had first been broadcast in 1951 and which had been restored after a gap in 1956, see above, p. 7, and Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, p. 655.

<sup>53</sup> \*Adam to Beadle, 27 Feb. 1961.

<sup>54</sup> Another leak in 1959, regarding the comedian Tommy Trinder, who was to appear in the 100th edition, did not prevent his appearing. Twenty people were dropped as subjects between 1955 and 1961 because their relatives did not wish to proceed or because medical advisers were against it. Only Blanchflower refused to take part. (\*Adam to Beadle, 27 Feb. 1961.)

<sup>55</sup> \*VR/59/258, 'For the 100th Time *This is Your Life*', 8 June 1959.

<sup>56</sup> \*Adam to Beadle, 27 Feb. 1961.

<sup>57</sup> Alan Brien described the experience well in the *Observer*, 31 July 1955. Cf. Maurice Wigg in the *Sunday Times*, 31 July 1955: 'The British series if it comes off will be run by Mr. Eamonn Andrews, and there is no doubt that he will be a great improvement on the unctuous, gushing Mr. Ralph Edwards.'

describing his life in television in Kenneth Baily's *Television Annual for 1958*. It was, he said, because the BBC pressed him to do so.

Andrews had made his mark in Ireland as a boxing commentator, and he continued to comment on boxing bouts for the BBC. He was also for thirteen years compère of the radio programme *Sports Report* and of the Overseas Service *Sports Review*. A highly professional and highly versatile performer—and versatility was much in demand during the late 1950s—he was more caught up in the world of television than John Freeman.

Some of the BBC's Governors had expressed uneasiness about the content and the appeal of *This Is Your Life*; it always had enemies as well as friends in Britain.<sup>58</sup> Yet Andrews, fully at ease on the screen and accessible and agreeable off it, further extended his own highly prized versatility in 1960. While still appearing on BBC television, he took over the kind of task the Governors of the BBC themselves performed, and, at the invitation of the Irish Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, became part-time Chairman of the Irish Television Authority.<sup>59</sup>

There was to be a final switch in his life which followed the BBC's dropping of *What's My Line?* in 1964. It was Baverstock again who was responsible; by then he was Chief of Programmes, BBC-1.<sup>60</sup> Until then Andrews, in his own words, had been 'sailing along happily with the BBC'; now there were signs of a tempest.<sup>61</sup> In 1961 Adam had warned that if *This Is Your Life* were ever to be dropped, audiences would be lost to commercial television and that the loss would be very considerable indeed.<sup>62</sup> Yet three years later, while the programme was as popular as ever—and was to have an ITV future—Baverstock dropped it, and Andrews signed an exclusive £120,000 contract with ABC as presenter of its *World of Sport* programme.<sup>63</sup> 'On BBC TV I'll never appear again', he told the *Daily Mail*, 'unless I happen to pass in front of a camera at some royal event.'<sup>64</sup> Andrews had been approached by two ABC execu-

<sup>58</sup> None the less, they always endorsed it (\*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 27 Feb., 8 May 1958). Andrews told the story of his life in an autobiography, unpublished in his lifetime, which superseded his *This Is My Life*, published in 1963. After his death the autobiography was converted into a published book by his wife, and appeared as Eamonn and Grainne Andrews (with Robert McGibbon), *For Ever and Ever, Eamonn: The Public and Private Life of Eamonn Andrews* (1989).

<sup>59</sup> *For Ever and Ever, Eamonn*, pp. 216 ff.

<sup>60</sup> See below for his changing role in the 1960s, pp. 385–94.

<sup>61</sup> *For Ever and Ever, Eamonn*, p. 294.

<sup>62</sup> \*Adam to Beadle, 27 Feb. 1961.

<sup>63</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 15 Jan. 1964.

<sup>64</sup> *Daily Mail*, 15 Jan. 1964.

tives who themselves had left the BBC—Brian Tesler and Howard Thomas—and in new surroundings he now began his own *Eamonn Andrews Show*, a project which had long appealed to him.

One BBC *This Is Your Life* programme which Andrews would like to have done but failed to do would have centred on the Irish writer Brendan Behan, but he did manage to get Brendan to appear—sober—in a *This Is Your Life* programme about his father, Stephen, a roguish Dublin house-painter. On another occasion Andrews succeeded, however, in successfully interviewing Brendan, who had been incoherent in an interview with Muggeridge and ineffective in an interview with Murrow, and he was rightly proud of his success.<sup>65</sup> He was also fascinated by his first commercial—made for American viewers. 'There is nothing that brings you closer to eternity', he wrote extravagantly, 'than making an advertisement for television.'<sup>66</sup>

#### 4. Children's Audience

It is significant that the versatile Andrews, like the equally versatile Michelmore, was well known to children's audiences in Britain, for these were the years when a new generation was growing up with television.<sup>1</sup> The two appeared together on the fortnightly children's programme *Playbox*, and when he left the BBC, Andrews was still appearing on *Crackerjack* which had first been broadcast in September 1955.<sup>2</sup>

How children were initiated into television was a subject of even greater interest to programme makers than it was to researchers.<sup>3</sup> It was also a subject of immense interest to parents and to teachers, many of whom felt from the start that it would do more harm than good. In 1958, therefore, 700 people watched children's television 'closely and continuously for at least three weeks' at the invitation of the Council for Children's Welfare. No fewer than 84 per cent were agreed that television increased children's general knowledge

<sup>65</sup> E. Andrews, *This Is My Life* (1963), pp. 185 ff.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203.

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 25–6.

<sup>2</sup> Michelmore was expected to 'change gear' completely for the current affairs programme *Highlight* and later for *Tonight*. See above, pp. 162–4.

<sup>3</sup> See above, pp. 25–6.

and widened horizons, and 31 per cent praised it for relaxing and entertaining children as 'a sort of disciplinary assistant'.<sup>4</sup>

The 'effect' of television on children has now become a subject of special interest to social and cultural historians, for the children's audience of the 1950s accepted television quite naturally as an element in their lives. To them it was neither a novelty nor an intruder. Their reactions were inevitably different from those of their parents, even when they were watching together, often in small homes where the television set was a new piece of furniture. One early by-product may have been less play with other children. Yet not all the early by-products lasted. There is strong evidence that the effects of television on children changed during the 1960s.<sup>5</sup>

As in later years they have looked back on their first television experiences, it is often the children's programmes of the 1950s and 1960s that the first television children have singled out as meaning most to them. Yet most of them watched adult programmes, too, when they were very young, which was a matter of concern at the time to many of their teachers and to their parents. Andrews made his mark on them by insisting on treating them 'as adults, as equals'. 'Once we got that bit of spadework done, the rest was less of a problem.'<sup>6</sup> Not all performers were as successful.

The process of child viewing began very early in life, and during the late 1950s BBC Audience Research began to collect figures about the extent of children's viewing. *Watch with Mother*, devised by Freda Lingstrom, who had moved in 1951 from radio to television, had begun with *Andy Pandy* in 1950.<sup>7</sup> On 9 September 1955 *The Woodentops* joined the cluster of programmes for which she was responsible, along with *Bill and Ben the Flowerpot Men*, which had first been broadcast in 1952. These were programmes that during the 1960s were to be criticized for their 'soft centredness' and 'middle-class' slant, but at the time they appealed to 'children everywhere'.

There was no uniform pattern of viewing, as was shown by the social psychologist Hilde Himmelweit, chief author of *Television and the Child* (1958). What was primarily displaced by television, she

<sup>4</sup> *New Statesman*, 5 July 1958.

<sup>5</sup> Views of children in the early 1970s were quoted by Alasdair Clayre in his illuminating book *The Impact of Broadcasting* (1973), pp. 13 ff.

<sup>6</sup> *This Is My Life*, p. 165.

<sup>7</sup> In 1951 Freda Lingstrom was made Head of Television Children's Programmes within the overall Television Production Department, after having been Assistant Head of Schools Broadcasts in radio. Two years later the Department was made independent. See Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, p. 645.



explained, was 'non-purposive activity', including 'doing nothing in particular'. Children listened to less radio, went to fewer films, and read fewer comics. Dr Himmelweit defended her findings in a *Panorama* programme in December 1958.<sup>8</sup> She had been supported earlier by Ursula Eason, one of the first producers of children's television programmes, who confirmed her views on diversity: 'the greatest fascination of producing for children is, of course, the children themselves. One has constantly to bear in mind the enormous variety of background, knowledge, and comprehension of the age range, five to fifteen.'<sup>9</sup>

There were not many child 'addicts', and while the average number of hours viewed, twelve and a half, was considerable, among the individual children who, like their mothers, kept diaries for the Himmelweit project, there were some who could explain convincingly how they could put it into place:

I went out with my friend. I had my tea. After I had finished I watched *Children of the New Forest* on TV. I did my homework, then climbed trees with some boys and girls. After that I went home and did my half-hour's practice with my elder brother who helped me. I read my *School Friend* and then read the paper. I tidied my needlework box and my brother's toy cupboard. When my father came home I showed him Mummy's birthday present and watched *Newsreel* on TV. I had my supper and went to bed.<sup>10</sup>

One 'adult' programme which had little interest for most children was *Panorama*: 'I don't like discussions especially when they get angry and all talk at the same time,' said one little girl aged 10. 'I think *Panorama* is boring when they talk about things I don't know anything about.'<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *The Listener*, 25 Dec. 1958, which also includes a review of Himmelweit's book by Geoffrey Gorer. Sir Brian Robertson, Chairman of British Railways, who appeared in the same *Panorama* programme, was less successful than Dr Himmelweit: 'he could hardly have done much', wrote *The Listener's* critic, K. W. Gransden, 'to inspire confidence in the difficult future of British Railways.'

<sup>9</sup> U. Eason, 'Producing for Children', *Ariel*, Sept. 1958: 'Do we in fact really know what children want from their programmes?' Eason asked. 'Are we not too often assuming that a child enjoys a programme when in fact it is enjoying what its parents enjoy.'

<sup>10</sup> Quoted by Tom Driberg in the *New Statesman*, 20 Dec. 1958, under the title 'Father of the Man'. It is interesting to compare such children's diaries with some of the adult diaries collected by Mass Observation. (See 'The Housewife's Day', *Mass Observation Bulletin*, June 1957.) Of the two housewives quoted, one 'had tea' and 'cleared away the tea things while watching TV' between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. but did not watch it later. The other watched it from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Of the housewives interviewed who had television sets (55% of the total), most watched more frequently and for longer just after they had acquired their sets. Monday, Saturday, and Wednesday nights were the most popular nights, in that order, for 'looking in'.

<sup>11</sup> H. T. Himmelweit et al., *Television and the Child* (1958), pp. 14, 121.



What became perhaps the best known of all children's programmes, *Blue Peter*, a programme for older children, dealt with many things children did not know much about. Yet in this case, this was part of the fascination. First broadcast on 16 October 1958, it must have been seen by large numbers of children who not long before had made up the child audience for *Watch with Mother*; but it was not until 1964 that it became a twice-weekly feature. With the 21-year-old Leila Williams (Miss Great Britain 1957) and the 25-year-old actor Christopher Trace as its first presenters—and with John Hunter-Blair as its first producer—it lasted only fifteen minutes. It promised its viewers 'toys, model railways, games, stories and cartoons'. Leila played with dolls; Chris played with trains.

The programme, like the successful adult programmes of the period that survived into different times, has its own history, a history of extraordinary initiative and enterprise, well told by two of the producers who did much to make it so successful, Biddy Baxter and Edward Barnes.<sup>12</sup> The title *Blue Peter* is the name of a flag which is raised as a signal that a ship is about to set sail on a voyage of adventure. The same metaphor of voyaging had been used in the 1920s by Reith about broadcasting as a whole, and it was particularly appropriate for one of the BBC's most adventurous programmes of the late 1950s and early 1960s.<sup>13</sup> Owen Reed, who succeeded Freda Lingstrom as Head of Children's Programmes, Television, in 1956, was enterprising enough to steer the voyage. He had previously been a drama producer in the West Region.

In devising *Blue Peter* and other new BBC programmes, Reed, a perfectionist, had to meet the challenge of competition both directly from ITV and indirectly from American children's programmes, which several ITV companies happily drew upon. In an early paper on the subject of children's programmes presented to the BBC's General Advisory Council in 1957, children's television was described as 'placing the BBC in its greatest competitive dilemma'.<sup>14</sup> None the less, as in competitive television in general, there were linkages as well as contrasts between BBC and ITV during the late 1950s. There was certainly nothing American about AR's *Adventures of Noddy* series, which were produced by Michael Westmore, who had moved over to ITV from the BBC.

<sup>12</sup> B. Baxter and E. Barnes, *Blue Peter, the Inside Story* (1989).

<sup>13</sup> J. C. W. Reith, *Broadcast Over Britain* (1924), p. 23. He chose some of the same metaphors in *Into the Wind* (1949).

<sup>14</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Papers*, 'Programmes for Children', 16 Sept. 1957.

It did not help Reed that he faced obstacles in the BBC itself, where some of the people most prominently associated managerially with the rapid development of television—and even those involved in production—were not sympathetic to children's television as such, and were not prepared to allocate adequate resources to it.<sup>15</sup> It needed a completely unorthodox approach to Baverstock on the part of Bidy Baxter to ensure that resources were made available for *Blue Peter* badges and stationery at a time when only £180 was being allocated for each *Blue Peter* programme.<sup>16</sup>

In responding to competition, Reed seemed to have struck the right note, although ITV often won the ratings battle. As Adam observed in 1960, 'the ITV formula of Popeye, Mickey Mouse and episodic adventure programmes (repeated over and over again) in massive doses, is clearly much more difficult to counter than we had thought.'<sup>17</sup> It was a blow to Reed then, from which he never recovered, when, towards the end of his 'reign' in 1963, drama and light entertainment production for children was removed from the Children's Department.<sup>18</sup> With producers like Shaun Sutton, Rex Tucker, Dorothea Brooking, and Joy Harington, the Department had produced still memorable programmes like *The Secret Garden*, *The Box of Delights*, and a Sunday evening version of *Treasure Island*.

*Blue Peter* continued to be produced by a slimmed-down Children's Television, however, and over the years developed a wide range both of programme content and of activities designed to promote child participation, beginning with an appeal in 1962 for toys for children who would otherwise have had no Christmas presents. It was on the last day before Christmas in that year that Owen Reed himself appeared on the screen with a large cardboard box which he presented to Trace and to Valerie Singleton, who had joined the BBC that year as an announcer and had taken Leila Williams's place as a *Blue Peter* presenter. The box contained a brown and black mongrel puppy, who sadly died before it was due to appear again and had to be replaced, with children being none the wiser, by another dog, who after a children's poll, was called Petra. Valerie Singleton was in no danger of being replaced. Indeed, she was to take part in many

<sup>15</sup> For complaints made at the time, see \*Reed to Stuart Hood, 'Children's Television', 28 Nov. 1961 (T16/45/3).

<sup>16</sup> Baxter and Barnes, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>17</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report by Director of Television Broadcasting, November and December 1959'.

<sup>18</sup> See below, p. 346.

*Blue Peter* 'special assignments' before joining *Nationwide* in 1972.<sup>19</sup> In 1980 she was to pass over to *The Money Programme* and through that to other programmes, including a return to radio.

Animals themselves, even outside the confines of natural history programmes like *Look*, had an interesting and versatile BBC future before them.<sup>20</sup> They had already figured prominently earlier in *Blue Peter* and other children's programmes before 1962, at first cartoon animals like the elephants drawn by Tony Hart, whose later programmes *Take Hart* and *Hartbeat* were to win many awards. Petra was a real animal, but by then there were well-established favourite puppet creatures, who seemed to have a life of their own, like Harry Corbett's Sooty and Michael Bond's Paddington Bear, first shown on the screen in October 1958.<sup>21</sup> Lenny the Lion entered the scene in 1956, and Pinky and Perky in 1957, the year when the BBC started broadcasting television programmes to schools.<sup>22</sup> Basil Brush came later—in 1965, ten years after the first *Look* programme which dealt with real foxes.<sup>23</sup> In time, puppets, including muppets and 'spitting images', were to graduate to quite different programmes—as successfully as Valerie Singleton.

Surprisingly, ITV led the way in relation to television for schools, although there had been much talk about it inside the BBC since 1951.<sup>24</sup> The managing director of AR, Paul Adorian, was unintimidated

<sup>19</sup> *Blue Peter's* 'special assignments', many of them subsequently produced in book form, introduced children to the world. See, e.g. V. Singleton, *Blue Peter Special Assignment, Rome, Paris, Vienna* (1973).

<sup>20</sup> *Look* was first broadcast on 14 June 1955. For Bristol as a centre of specialization in natural history programmes, see below, p. 625. A BBC Natural History Unit was formed at Bristol in June 1957, 'a logical development of the West Region's tradition of programme making in this field' (\*Board of Management, *Papers*, 'BBC Natural History Unit', 18 Sept. 1962). See also C. Parsons, *True to Nature* (1982), and *Radio Times*, 29 May–4 June 1982, P. Oakes, 'Wildlife Jubilee, A Natural Selection'. Desmond Hawkins, Head of West Region Programmes in succession to Frank Gillard, was responsible for natural history programmes in both sound and television, as were his producers. The first senior producer was Nicholas Crocker.

<sup>21</sup> The first programme entitled *Sooty* was broadcast on 10 Sept. 1953. In 1968, when *Sooty* ended as a BBC programme, it was taken over by Thames Television.

<sup>22</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Papers*, 'Programmes for Children', 16 Sept. 1957.

<sup>23</sup> The first *Look* programme was based mainly on films shot by Heinz Sielmann, whose work had been discovered by Peter Scott at the 1954 International Ornithological Congress in Basle. In 1960 the BBC and the Council for Nature sponsored a Natural History Film Competition. The winner was G. H. Thompson and R. Skinner's *The Life History of the Alder Woodwasp and its Insect Enemies*.

<sup>24</sup> See above, p. 26. Even before the Second World War, Sir Cecil Graves, Controller of Programmes, had stated in 1937 that it was 'obvious that the future of School Broadcasting is bound up with Television' (quoted in B. Smith, *BBC School Television, How it Began* (1978)).

ated either by the talk or by the BBC's long and distinguished record as a producer of school radio programmes; and in December 1956, while the BBC was still carrying out experiments in schools, he announced confidently that his company would transmit a trial series of broadcasts for schools in the following spring. 'We are not under obligation to go through an elaborate series of hoops as the Corporation inevitably is', an AR spokesman said.<sup>25</sup>

Impressed by the BBC's well-established apparatus for dealing with schools, with local education authorities, and, above all, with teachers, the ITA was more cautious, and gave the project only a conditional blessing: 'whilst welcoming the initiative and enterprise of the company in undertaking such an important venture, the [ITA's Children's Advisory Committee] was obliged to place emphasis on the need for careful consultation with representatives of the principal organisations which speak for these [educational] interests.'<sup>26</sup>

After the ITA had suggested that televised discussion of the role played by the Press, television, films, and advertising in influencing the public mind—even if there were educational intention behind it—might run the danger of breaking clauses in the 1954 Act, changes were made by AR in a series of programmes called *Judge for Yourself*, which were shown in the autumn of 1957. Yet all AR's early problems were on the way to being overcome when in March 1959 it appointed as its Head of School Broadcasting Enid Love, who had previously been in charge of BBC Schools Television. The remaining difficulties now seemed logistic. Schools were short of television receivers, and the Ministry of Education was giving only limited help. That, indeed, had been one reason why the BBC had hesitated for so long.<sup>27</sup> As late as the autumn of 1960, only 2,000 of the 23,000 schools in the country were in possession of television sets.

The BBC's first 'regular' television broadcasts for schools, backed by pamphlets and teachers' notes, were transmitted in the autumn of 1957. Most of them were addressed to secondary modern schools,

<sup>25</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 3 Jan. 1957. 'We are going to shock auntie', another spokesman said, 'by showing how fast things can be done if you try.' For the difficulties in programming and their consequences, see Sendall, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 279 ff.

<sup>26</sup> ITA, *Annual Report and Accounts, 1956-57* (1957), p. 9.

<sup>27</sup> 'John Scupham, who had been Head of Schools Broadcasting since 1950, had written on 16 Dec. 1954 to Mary Somerville, Controller, Talks, and previous Head of Educational Broadcasting, that he believed that 'the onus of . . . further delay . . . should patently lie with the Ministry' (R16/554/12). See also *The Times Educational Supplement*, 3 Dec. 1954.

but one series was for primary schools. They were still described as 'experimental', and Enid Love, while still employed by the BBC, emphasized that it could not be assumed 'at the first success that we need search no further for the best permanent provision'. The appeal of the service, she emphasized, would depend not only on the quality of the programmes but on the skill and imagination with which the teacher used them.<sup>28</sup>

The School Broadcasting Council for the United Kingdom, chaired from 1954 by Sir Charles (later Lord) Morris, brother of the BBC's Vice-Chairman, had appointed its own Television Sub-Committee since 1951, and the Sub-Committee and the Council were given a very favourable report on the experiment in 1958. Yet it was not until a year later that the word 'experimental' was dropped from the BBC programmes. As in the older case of radio, the object of school television, as seen by the School Broadcasting Council, was 'not to provide lessons, but to supplement established methods of classroom teaching by exploring the education[al] possibilities of the medium'.<sup>29</sup>

In adult education, which from the start interested some of the new commercial companies, radio was still the staple; and the Further Education Unit, founded in 1952 and now unwillingly imprisoned in Network Three, had no access at this time to television.<sup>30</sup> It was left to James McCloy, then working in Television Talks, to plan *Science on Saturday*, a series which drew on science programmes already produced in different sections of the BBC and described in the *BBC Handbook* as 'a forecast of the kind of educational provision' that it hoped 'to develop further when additional channels became available'.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 10. Love was succeeded at the BBC by Kenneth Fawdry, who subsequently wrote an account of his BBC work in *Everything but Alf Garnett: A Personal View of BBC School Broadcasting* (1974). See below, p. 934.

<sup>29</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1962, p. 78.

<sup>30</sup> See above, pp. 49–50, below, p. 467. See also J. Robinson, *Learning Over the Air: 60 Years of Partnership in Adult Learning* (1982). The Unit was located in the Talks Division. Before the introduction of Network Three, it had put on a so-called Wednesday Series at 7.30 p.m. on the Home Service, supported by published brochures which dealt with topics as different as the Industrial Revolution, in a series called *Where We Came In* (1957), chaired by myself, and *Style and Vision* (1957), in a series arranged by Eric Newton. The emphasis throughout was on raising questions and stimulating argument. The provision of information came second. Meanwhile, *Talking about Music*, a highly successful series chaired by Antony Hopkins, launched in 1954, was concerned with increasing public interest in music, and a second music series was added in 1958, *Background to Music*. There was also a *Painting of the Month* series. *Russian for Beginners* made a good start in 1959; more than 50,000 copies of its primer were sold to the public.

<sup>31</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1962, p. 79. For science programmes in general, see below, pp. 466–7.

It was still the philosophy of the BBC, to be revived during the 1960s, that 'the BBC's educational responsibility to its adult public' was 'discharged mainly through its general programmes', although, with Jean Rountree in charge of the unit,<sup>32</sup> its Liaison Officer, Joseph Trenaman, consulted adult educationists on 'current trends of interest' and 'collected opinions' from intended audiences. Trenaman was also deeply interested in research into the comprehensibility of programmes designed for different groups of listeners, and in 1959 left the BBC to become the first holder of a Granada Research Fellowship in communications at Leeds University.<sup>33</sup>

## 5. The Advent of Media Research

The idea that Trenaman had of examining the issues raised by Press, television, films, and advertising—and the language they used—was a good one, for these were years when the effects of television on other media, notably evening newspapers, the periodical Press, and the cinema, were just as great as the effects of television on sound. Moreover, Trenaman was by no means alone in seeking to develop an organization to pursue it. A number of adult education tutors and youth leaders were keenly aware of what was happening. So, too, were key people inside the Workers' Educational Association, the National Institute of Adult Education, and the British Film Institute. The Society of Film Teachers became the Society of Film and Television Teachers, and the title of its journal *Film Teacher* was broadened to become *Screen Education*.<sup>1</sup>

The media were beginning to be thought of as a cluster during the late 1950s, and there was increasing public interest in their interdependence.<sup>2</sup> Relevant statistics were watched carefully, particularly statistics covering the sharp drop in the sales of evening newspapers in the period between 1953 and 1960, a drop which continued

<sup>32</sup> Rowntree worked under John Scupham, with the title from 1955 to 1960 of Assistant Head, Further Education.

<sup>33</sup> His *Communication and Comprehension* (1967) was published posthumously. He also published a study of the general election of 1959, *Television and the Public Image* (1961). (See below, pp. 247–8.) His co-author was Denis McQuail, who published his *Mass Communication Theory* in 1983.

<sup>1</sup> This occurred in 1959. From 1968 it was incorporated in *Screen*. For film and history, see P. Smith (ed.), *The Historian and Film* (1976).

<sup>2</sup> See J. Tunstall, *The Media in Britain* (1983), and C. Seymour-Ure, *The British Press and Broadcasting since 1945* (1991), pp. 91 ff. See also Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, p. 883, and below, p. 461.



throughout the 1960s; and the closest attention of all was paid to the sales of *Picture Post*, which had established the highest standards of pictorial journalism during and after the Second World War and which ceased publication in May 1957. The start of *Tonight* and the demise of *Picture Post* came within a few weeks of each other, and a number of pictorial journalists from *Picture Post*, among them Gordon Watkins, Slim Hewitt, Fyfe Robertson, and Cynthia Judah, joined the *Tonight* group. Tom Hopkinson, most famous of the editors of *Picture Post*, believed that it was not television but the policies of the proprietor of *Picture Post* that were responsible for its demise;<sup>3</sup> and, as often in media history, there were bitter arguments about the relationship between proprietors, editors, and journalists.

The Sunday newspapers seemed safer than *Picture Post*—indeed, the circulation of some of them rose between 1955 and 1960<sup>4</sup>—but five national daily and Sunday newspapers were to disappear between 1960 and 1962.<sup>5</sup> The colour supplement of the *Sunday Times*, the first Sunday newspaper to produce one, in February 1962, came after colour television was being seriously mooted but before it reached people's screens. It attracted large-scale advertising, but it was not until three years later that the *Sunday Times's* old rival the *Observer* followed suit. Its new rival the *Sunday Telegraph* (1961) had by then secured a strong footing in what had become a growing market. All 'the Sundays', including the popular papers, devoted substantial space to television.

Cinema statistics were usually studied in more melancholy mood than newspaper statistics, for by 1960 the cinema had lost two-thirds of its 1950 audience.<sup>6</sup> Already by 1957 average weekly admissions to cinemas were almost a third fewer than in 1951, and the 1957 decline set a new annual record. During the previous five years 678 cinemas had closed.<sup>7</sup> One influential figure who did not believe

<sup>3</sup> See the Introduction by T. Hopkinson to *Picture Post, 1938–50* (1970). Hopkinson had been dismissed as Editor of *Picture Post* in 1950 after a disagreement with its proprietor, Edward Hulton. Hopkinson's view was shared by the journalist James Cameron; see his *Point of Departure* (1967).

<sup>4</sup> There were sharp rises in the circulation of both the *Sunday Times* and the *Observer*. The circulation of the *Sunday Dispatch* fell sharply, however, as did that of *News of the World*.

<sup>5</sup> Among them the *News Chronicle* had been losing circulation steadily before the rise of television, while the *Sunday Graphic*, which gained circulation between 1945 and 1955, lost it after 1955.

<sup>6</sup> See J. Spraos, *The Decline of the Cinema* (1962), for an analysis made at the time of causes and consequences.

<sup>7</sup> Board of Trade figures quoted in PEP, 'The British Film Industry, 1958' (*Planning*, 23 June 1958).



that television was the killer in this case was Sidney Bernstein of Granada, who had dual interests in both film and television and who was responsible more than anyone for giving Granada TV its highly distinctive identity.<sup>8</sup> In his view, there was 'no need for TV to rob the cinema industry of its product . . . TV should be capable of producing its own forms of entertainment.'<sup>9</sup>

The relationship between the decline in cinema attendances and the spread of television could be examined regionally and in 1957 it was measured statistically over a period of six years and presented in a table.<sup>10</sup> It seemed to show that, with the major exception of London and the South-East, those regions which had received television first were those where cinema attendance had fallen most sharply. It seemed to show also, however, that the opening of ITV stations had had more effect on cinema attendance than the opening of BBC stations.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Television Transmitters and Cinema Attendances 1951-57*

| Region          | Percentage decrease after start of TV | Date of start of TV |            |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|------------|
|                 |                                       | BBC                 | ITV        |
| Wales           | 28.6                                  | Aug. 1952           | -          |
| Northern        | 30.8                                  | May 1953            | -          |
| South-Western   | 31.6                                  | Aug. 1952           | -          |
| Eastern         | 33.3                                  | Feb. 1955           | -          |
| Southern        | 33.3                                  | Nov. 1954           | -          |
| Scotland        | 34.2                                  | March 1952          | Aug. 1957  |
| London and SE   | 34.6                                  | June 1946           | Sept. 1955 |
| North Midland   | 42.3                                  | Dec. 1949           | Feb. 1956  |
| Midland         | 44.4                                  | Dec. 1949           | Feb. 1956  |
| North-Western   | 44.4                                  | Dec. 1949           | May 1956   |
| E. & W. Ridings | 44.4                                  | Oct. 1951           | Nov. 1956  |

<sup>8</sup> It owed much also to Denis (later Sir Denis) Forman, who joined it at the start, and to David Plowright. BBC-2 broadcast *From the North*, an interesting film on the early history of Granada on 15 Feb. 1993, following the death of Bernstein. It was a repeat of part of a larger tribute to Granada broadcast on BBC-2 on 28 Dec. 1992.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in the *Annual Report of the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association*, 1958.

<sup>10</sup> PEP, loc. cit.

<sup>11</sup> Some attention was paid too to the attendance figures at football matches. First Division Soccer attendances rose between 1961 and 1971, although attendances for Lower Division matches fell (B. S. Duffield *et al.*, *A Digest of Sports Statistics* (1985)). The Central Council for Physical Recreation in its evidence to the Pilkington Committee complained that 'regular live sports television broadcasts' were reducing attendance at sporting events on Saturday afternoons and active participation in sport (Cmnd. 1819-1 (1962), *Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960: Memoranda Submitted to the Committee*).

This was a table which was of even more interest to advertisers than it was to the BBC. As early as 1955, before ITV started, the Newspaper Proprietors' Association had enforced a twenty-eight-day period of notice for cancellation of specially placed advertisements in newspapers. They had been afraid of a withdrawal of business.<sup>12</sup> The same protectionist spirit was even stronger in the case of the film industry, where money was scarce, and it was a spirit that was shared by the trade unions.<sup>13</sup> Both producers and exhibitors were uneasy. In the year that the table appeared, 1957, a Cinematographic Films Act was passed, establishing a statutory British Film Fund Agency to replace the voluntary British Film Production Fund; but at a time when costs were increasing, no extra financial resources were made available. There had always been differences of interest between film producers and film distributors, and the latter, too, had their own lobby. Under serious financial pressures during the late 1950s, they remained in difficulties after 1960, when at last the government scrapped the Entertainments Tax.<sup>14</sup>

In the circumstances of the late 1950s it was impossible for the BBC or ITV to establish the kind of relationship with the cinema that was to develop later. Films were not yet a staple item in television programming. 'Few films or programmes on film are available from industrial or outside sources', the BBC's 1955 *Handbook* stated tersely.<sup>15</sup> If you wanted to see a 'feature film', you had to go to the cinema. The fact that far fewer people were going to the cinema could not be attributed to home viewing of new—or even old—films. Both BBC and ITV were trying to introduce films into their programme schedules, if only because, as Howard Thomas of ABC put it in 1957, films provided 'breathing space for television programme planners', who were finding it simply not possible 'to provide 50 hours a week of "live" programmes all the year round'.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> B. Henry (ed.), *British Television Advertising: The First Thirty Years* (1986), p. 35.

<sup>13</sup> See, e.g., *Kinematograph*, 2 Jan. 1958, for a characteristic headline 'Unions Alarmed at TV Deals'.

<sup>14</sup> For the complex story of the internal problems of the film industry and its complicated relations with Government, see M. Dickinson and S. Street, *Cinema and State: The Film Industry and the British Government, 1927–1984* (1985).

<sup>15</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1955, pp. 27–8. For a later survey, see V. Porter, 'Television and Film Production Strategies in the European Community', in H.-Z. Fischer and S. R. Melnik (eds.), *Entertainment, a Cross-Cultural Examination* (1979).

<sup>16</sup> Letter to the *New Statesman*, 25 May 1957. Thomas, who had secured a number of Korda films in 1957, was replying to critics of the use of films in television, including Tom Driberg, who wrote an interesting article 'The Resurrection Men', *ibid.*, 11 May 1957. Later in the year, negotiations between ABC and Ealing for the right to televise over 100 old films broke down (\**Commercial Television Notes*, 18 Oct. 1957).

The BBC always put out feelers to key members of trade associations before entering into what until the end of 1957 were abortive efforts to secure even a modest number of old films.<sup>17</sup> 'I am very sorry to tell you', John Davis, Managing Director of the Rank Organisation and President of the British Film Producers' Association, had told the BBC in January 1955, in pre-competition days—after what had seemed to be promising discussions about a limited deal with the major British film producer, Rank—'that although three Associations agreed to your suggestion [to show a strictly limited number of listed films] as an experiment, one did not.'<sup>18</sup> The one that did not, the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association, was adamant that no compromises should be made. It was equally adamant in 1956, when the BBC seemed to have the chance of obtaining a limited number of American films for Christmas showing, possibly *Meet Me in St. Louis* and *The Wizard of Oz*,<sup>19</sup> and in 1957, when the BBC had actually been offered both American and British films by those owning their distribution rights.<sup>20</sup>

In December 1957 and May 1959 the first deals were made—with the RKO Film Library in 1957 for 100 old films (the Library held 742 films) and with the Selznick Corporation in 1959 for twenty-four.<sup>21</sup> It was stated categorically, however, in 1957 that the agreement—in each case the deals had been with American organizations—would not involve any increase in the proportion of films used in the Television Service.<sup>22</sup> Viewers were clearly thought to be sensitive. There was also, however, a strong sense of competition with ITV. When Thomas was attacked for placing a batch of films that ABC had acquired, *Great Movies of Our Time*, on alternate Saturdays at exactly the same time

<sup>17</sup> McGivern realized how important it was to keep a record. 'I am, of course, keeping a complete record of all our negotiations', he wrote to Sir David Griffiths, influential President of the Kinematograph Renters Association ('Letter of 28 Nov. 1956 (T46/2707/1)'). Griffiths had been given his knighthood in the Coronation Honours List. He died in Oct. 1957.

<sup>18</sup> \*Davis to G. Barnes, Director of Television Broadcasting, 23 Jan. 1956 (T46/2707/1).

<sup>19</sup> \*TV Controller's Meeting, *Minutes*, 6 Nov. 1956; *Today's Cinema*, 16 Nov. 1956, 'It's "No No No" All the Way for CEA'; \*McGivern to Griffiths, 28 Nov. 1956.

<sup>20</sup> \*G. Smith, Assistant Head of Films, Television, to McGivern, 'Feature Film Agreement', 24 Jan. 1957 (T6/360); McGivern to Griffiths, 18 Feb. 1957 (T6/360); McGivern to Beadle, 'Agreement with Four Trades Association', 28 March 1957 (T6/360); Board of Management, *Papers*, 'Films in Television', 27 Feb. 1958.

<sup>21</sup> Press Release, 18 Dec. 1957; *The Cinema*, 19 Dec. 1957; \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 18 May 1959. The RKO 100 included *Top Hat*, *Angel Face*, *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon*, *The Three Musketeers*, and the Marx Brothers film *Room Service*. The films were to be shown over seven years.

<sup>22</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 16 Dec. 1957.

as the BBC was placing its RKO films, he responded by defending ABC on the grounds that it was in no way offending against 'conventions of competition'. 'If a feature film is necessary to divert viewers from a similar entertainment on the BBC it has to be done.'<sup>23</sup>

By 1959, the BBC had gone through 'endless worry and inconvenience' in the interpretation of the RKO agreement, which had cost it £215,000,<sup>24</sup> and in Britain itself there had been new worries of a more familiar kind. A new protective body, FIDO, had been set up in 1958 by a depressed film industry—five trade associations were involved—to stop any more feature films being sold either to the BBC or to ITV and, at the same time—this was a new departure—a fund had been created to buy up and sterilize any television rights that producers or others held of backlogs of old films.<sup>25</sup>

Despite cracks in FIDO, its restrictions held for the rest of the decade, and the BBC had to depend solely on its limited American stock until 1960, when in a deal without precedent and without sequel Associated-Rediffusion agreed to share with the BBC a package of fifty-five British films which it had acquired as a result of a recent purchase of a controlling interest in Independent Film Distributors Ltd.<sup>26</sup> The BBC paid £260,000 for its share in a deal, signed jointly by Adorian and, for the BBC, Ronald Waldman, which was bitterly criticized by FIDO. The films included Olivier's *Richard III* and Humphrey Bogart and Katherine Hepburn's *The African Queen*.

Before the deal was signed, Waldman, who was then Business Manager, Television Programmes,<sup>27</sup> raised a number of interesting questions. Assuming that FIDO would collapse and that 'further British feature' material might become available for television, should the BBC open negotiations with 'say British Lion' to secure other British feature films? Given that the RKO deal had included distribution rights in cinemas, should the BBC seek to exercise them?

<sup>23</sup> \*Commercial Television Notes, 10 Jan. 1958. Such complaints continued to be made. See Porter, loc. cit.

<sup>24</sup> \*G. Smith to L. P. R. Roche, Assistant Solicitor, 14 March 1959; Beadle to Nicolas Reisini, New York, 7 Aug. 1959 (T46/3111). The agreement covered distribution rights as well as BBC screening. See \*Board of Management, *Papers*, Beadle, 'The RKO Film Library', 9 Oct. 1957, and idem, *Minutes*, 16 Dec. 1957. Smith, who had joined the BBC in 1952, was Assistant Head of Films, Television, from 1955 to 1957, Film Bookings Manager, Television, from 1957 to 1960, and Purchasing Manager, Television Productions, from 1960 to 1961.

<sup>25</sup> *The Economist*, 2 Aug. 1958, 'Fido in the Manger'. For the moves leading up to FIDO, see also *ibid.*, 8 Feb. 1958, 'Desperate Measures'.

<sup>26</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 11 Jan. 1960; Press Release, 13 Sept. 1960.

<sup>27</sup> For other phases in his BBC career, see above, p. 24 and see below, pp. 194–6.

Last, and in the long run, most significant of all the questions, 'Do we need to go further, if possible, in the direction of Pay-TV?'<sup>28</sup>

An answer to this third question was to exercise the BBC—and successive governments—over the years, and even in the short run it was to be raised on more than one occasion in the near future.<sup>29</sup> The British cinema industry had not yet considered its side of the question—exhibiting outside cinemas—nor had it examined all the possibilities in Waldman's second question. In consequence, neither BBC nor ITV viewers had seen, or were to see, on their home screens any of the interesting new British films that were being produced—despite all the financial difficulties—in what quickly came to be called 'New Cinema'.<sup>30</sup>

In the context of the cultural history of the late 1950s and early 1960s, one of the most interesting of the new films was *Room at the Top*, released in January 1959. Based on a novel by John Braine, published in 1957, it dealt with status and class, sex and lust, and life in the provinces in contemporary language that, if it did not always shock, was designed to do so.<sup>31</sup> Films like this anticipated the BBC's own cultural initiatives during the 1960s. 'If you want to know the way in which the young products of the Welfare State are feeling and reacting,' Ronald Lister wrote of the novel, '*Room at the Top* will tell you.'<sup>32</sup>

The year 1959 was in some ways as interesting a year in the history of popular culture as 1956 had been.<sup>33</sup> It was the year also of *I'm All Right Jack*, a film that dealt pointedly with industrial and family relations. Unlike the Ealing comedies, it was representative of an earlier and quite different phase in British film making, and it reflected as much as any television programme many of Britain's maladies and discontents. Another film of social importance, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, was to follow in 1960; it was based on Alan Sillitoe's novel, published three months before the film of *Room at the Top* was first shown.<sup>34</sup> It was produced by a new independent

<sup>28</sup> \*Waldman to Beadle, 'British Feature Films', 5 Jan. 1960 (T36/5).

<sup>29</sup> See below, p. 305.

<sup>30</sup> After 1960 they could see, however, as part of the AR deal, Olivier's *Richard III*, which won the British Film Academy prize for the best British film of 1955.

<sup>31</sup> The film was advertised as 'a savage story of lust and ambition' (BFI, Publicity Material Files). See J. W. Lee, *John Braine* (1968), and K. Allsop, *The Angry Decade* (1958).

<sup>32</sup> The film was reasonably true to the novel, although Laurence Harvey was no Joe Lambton, and Simone Signoret had to be imported into the North of England from France.

<sup>33</sup> See above, p. xiv.

<sup>34</sup> D. Gifford's *The British Film Catalogue, 1895–1970* (1973) is an invaluable source.

film company, Woodfall, set up by Tony Richardson and the playwright John Osborne; the first film the company made was *Look Back in Anger*.<sup>35</sup> There were no intimations at the time that independents would play a strategic role in the new television of a later period.<sup>36</sup>

## 6. Drama

Although some BBC programmes provided the basis for films—two Ted Willis television plays, for example, became films in 1957 and 1958—there were fewer links between BBC Television and film than there were between BBC Television and the theatre. Michael Barry, who was Head of Drama from 1952 to 1961, was, above all, a man of the theatre. He had been an actor, stage manager, designer, and producer in repertory before becoming a BBC producer. He kept a diary, and he has told the story of the beginning of television drama in an informative book, *From the Palace to the Grove*, which was completed in 1987 and published by the Royal Television Society in 1992. Unfortunately, the story ends before the period covered in this volume, a period of change in the theatre as well as in television.<sup>1</sup>

BBC Television Drama policy under Barry and his Assistant Head of Drama, Norman Rutherford, was less adventurous than the policy that ABC was pursuing after 1958 under the direction of Sydney Newman, who was to be lured from ABC to the BBC in 1963.<sup>2</sup> Yet Barry's approach could not be called conservative. It was very different from that of his colleague in sound, Val Gielgud, who would never have objected to being so described. Gielgud's published book *British Radio Drama, 1922–1956* (1957), which contrasts at every point with Barry's manuscript, was dedicated to Reith, and had a foreword by Haley. Gielgud did not retire until 1963—after thirty-five years of service—and it was he who was responsible for long-standing programmes like *Saturday Night Theatre*. There was also a

<sup>35</sup> An even newer independent company, Bryanston, set up in 1959, had links with British Lion, and was chaired by Michael Balcon, creator of the Ealing comedies.

<sup>36</sup> See below, p. 795.

<sup>1</sup> In a letter to me (30 Nov. 1987) he wrote that he had little to say of the period after 1961. He described how he had visited New York and Los Angeles in April 1958, when the talk was all of the 'new American drama'.

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 395.



*Monday Night Play*, pitched at a different audience, and a *Thursday Play*, along with Sunday evening serials, which in 1960 included *Lorna Doone*, *Framley Parsonage*, *Little Dorrit*, and *Anna Karenina*. In 1958 there had been a place for L. P. Hartley's *Eustace and Hilda* and Galsworthy's *Soames Forsyte*. The highest appreciation rating was for the version of Trollope's *Framley Parsonage*.

Barry was particularly proud of the number of new writers he attracted to television drama, among them John Mortimer, N. F. Simpson, and Johnny Speight, and the number of new directors, among them Elwyn Jones, in charge in 1960 of Drama Documentary, but to be best known later for *Z Cars*, one of the new programmes of the 1960s.<sup>3</sup> Another was Don Taylor, straight from Oxford: one of his first tasks in 1960 was to direct two episodes of an earlier police serial, *Scotland Yard*. Donald Wilson was Head of the Script Department, and he was a key figure in the system, although his job was to circulate scripts, not to judge them.

Not all television critics appreciated just what was at stake. The television playwright must remember, Maurice Wiggin wrote, 'that he is writing for the least co-operative audience in the whole history of entertainment. . . . Writing for television is a self-denying exercise, quite possibly intolerable for a young man, or woman, brought up with an overdue regard for the beauty of words . . . This is a department of literature, I suppose, but the word "literary" is an insult to a television playwright.'<sup>4</sup>

Fortunately there were young playwrights who were not intimidated, just as there were young producers who were excited by the possibilities of television. Don Taylor fitted into both categories. He had already written three plays before he joined the BBC, and had produced four undergraduate productions at Oxford. He was still only 23. Very quickly after joining, he was directing new kinds of television play, among them David Turner's *The Train Set*, which had as its central character a 13-year-old working-class Birmingham boy with a strong Brummie accent. The play had extremely good reviews. 'Whether it realises it or not,' Peter Lewis wrote in the *Daily Mail*, 'television has created an art-form that did not exist before: the one-hour play. It is, so to speak, the short story form of drama.'<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See below, pp. 426–34.

<sup>4</sup> M. Wiggin, 'Writing for the Dreamer's Dustbin', in *The Armchair Theatre* (1959). C. Innes, *Modern British Drama, 1890–1990* (1992), deliberately leaves out television drama.

<sup>5</sup> *Daily Mail*, 6 Jan. 1961. Maurice Richardson in the *Observer* (8 Jan. 1961) less enthusiastically called it 'a usefully rugged proletarian family episode'.



Ken Tynan even went so far as to say that the theatre audiences for such plays as *Look Back in Anger* had been prepared for what they were seeing by what they had already seen on television, although he did not necessarily restrict the preparation to what they had seen in television drama.<sup>6</sup> The world seemed to be turning into a theatre. Ironically, given the proclaimed differences between Barry and Newman, it was Barry who took Newman, then still working in Canada, to see *Look Back in Anger* on one of Newman's visits to London before he joined ABC.<sup>7</sup> One playwright who saw the possibilities of a huge new television audience as early as 1960 was Harold Pinter. He calculated that in order to match the audience of 6,380,000 viewers who saw his play *A Night Out* on *Armchair Theatre*, his stage play *The Caretaker* would have to run for thirty years.<sup>8</sup>

ABC's *Armchair Theatre* deliberately picked out new playwrights who were in the news. Barry wanted, as he put it, to advance on as many fronts as possible, from *Quatermass* to *An Age of Kings*,<sup>9</sup> and although, like Gielgud, he believed that the BBC had a special responsibility for the classics, he wrote later of prodding and pushing the margins of tolerance and of encouraging writers and producers with questioning minds, some of whom would be drawn to documentary, not to stage-type drama.<sup>10</sup> He was also aware of the appeal of detective drama, and in 1960, against competition, helped the BBC to secure from Georges Simenon the television copyright to adapt his novels for television.

The *Maigret* series, the first of which was transmitted on 31 October 1960, soon built up a large and enthusiastic audience.<sup>11</sup> Rupert Davies, who played Maigret, met the Simenons before he made the

<sup>6</sup> Interview between Barry and John Cain, 1987. See also J. R. Taylor, *Anger and After* (1969 edn.).

<sup>7</sup> Black, op. cit., p. 143. Newman had good BBC links before he joined ABC. In 1957 the BBC purchased for transmission thirty-five drama productions from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, thirty of which had been produced by Newman.

<sup>8</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 30 May 1960.

<sup>9</sup> *Quatermass*, a 1953 science fiction play with sequels like *Quatermass and the Pit* (1958), written by Nigel Kneale and directed by Rudolph Cartier, was described as 'undoubtedly the most revolutionary television drama event to that date' (I. Shubik, *Play for Today* (1975), p. 34). See also below, p. 423. For this and other television plays and playwrights, see also G. W. Brandt (ed.), *British Television Drama* (1981), and S. Sutton, *The Largest Theatre in the World* (1982). For *An Age of Kings*, see above, p. 423.

<sup>10</sup> *From the Palace to the Grove*, pp. 67–9.

<sup>11</sup> For first, welcoming reactions see *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*, 1 Nov. 1960. At the end of the first series, Audience Research reported a general reaction of 'wonderful'. Monday, the night the programmes were presented, had become 'the best night of the week' (\*VR/61/49).

first programme, and later showed them the first two programmes. They were so pleased that they gave him a bottle of Himbergeist, inscribed 'for the English Maigret from the French Maigret'.<sup>12</sup> It was doubtless a greater tribute than a Guild of TV Producers and Directors' Award. Another tribute that he would have appreciated came from a viewer quoted in an Audience Research report of 1962: 'In our house *everything* stops for Maigret.'<sup>13</sup>

*Maigret* was well produced by Andrew Osborn, who himself won a Guild award for the series, as did its script-writer, Giles Cooper. They were fortunate in that *Maigret* themes, like *Maigret* music, appealed to enough viewers to give them a sense of rapport with their concealed audience. It is clear from Audience Research reports, however, how restive—or hostile—many people were when they saw plays on the screen which focused on themes that did not appeal to them. 'I didn't like either the theme or the way it was presented', one viewer, wife of a chartered shipbroker, wrote, for example, of John Osborne's *A Subject of Scandal and Concern* (1960). She was speaking for a quarter of the panel that reported on it. 'Cannot the BBC tear itself away from the dreary, boring round of plays which are being inflicted on the public Sunday after Sunday?' asked another. 'Turn the BBC off!' was the exclamation of the majority of viewers. 'Let us have something to chuckle about, and not so much mucking about in the mire of misery.'<sup>14</sup>

The young Don Taylor disliked the theatre of Coward and Rattigan. Yet when Rattigan's *The Winslow Boy* was shown in 1961, it received a significantly higher rating than most plays of the year, as had other plays of his shown earlier in the year. 'A wonderful play', wrote one housewife. 'I've seen it about six times but it still seems as fresh and new and interesting as ever.'<sup>15</sup> The plays that were not liked included Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*, with a very low rating,<sup>16</sup> and, despite its eventual 'classic' status, Dylan Thomas's *Under Milk Wood*.<sup>17</sup> John

<sup>12</sup> \*M. McCollum to Miss Coleman, 'Return of Maigret Monday October 23rd', 25 Sept. 1961 (TS/2166/2).

<sup>13</sup> \*VR/62/594, 14 Nov. 1962.

<sup>14</sup> \*VR/60/657, 23 Nov. 1960.

<sup>15</sup> \*VR/61/443, 12 Sept. 1961.

<sup>16</sup> \*VR/57/43, 13 Feb. 1957.

<sup>17</sup> \*VR/57/261, 22 May 1957. One comment was: 'It really is amazing how vulgarity can escape under the cloak of "Art".' Whatever the comments, it was included in the short select list of televised plays and dramatized documentaries printed in the BBC *Annual Report and Accounts*, as was *Uncle Vanya*. It was also placed in an even shorter list in a BBC brochure *Twentieth Century Theatre, a Selection from 60 Years of Notable Drama* (1960), along with Enid Bagnold's *The Chalk Garden*, John Arden's *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance*, and T. S. Eliot's *The Confidential Clerk*.

Mortimer's *Call Me a Liar* was, by contrast, well thought of. 'The story was original yet thoroughly plausible' was one comment. 'I've known and felt sorry for several persons with the same characteristics as Sammy Noles, and think the play was very true to life' was another.<sup>18</sup>

How the BBC fostered the skills of its producers during these years—whatever they were producing—is admirably described in Taylor's brilliant reflections on his early years in television drama, where he gives an invaluable account—invaluable partly because it is rare—of what was a highly practical BBC training course in television drama production in 1960.<sup>19</sup> 'The first lesson was to learn how to use a studio plan, how to draw the cameras and sound booms on it in their correct positions, using the standard BBC template—a plastic square with all kinds of equipment represented to scale in plan view cut-outs—and to work out just what the cameras would see with their turret of four lenses, of nine, fourteen, twenty-four and thirty-five degrees.'<sup>20</sup>

The mechanics of television had to be learnt before the aesthetics; however, the two were inseparable. What was being directed was different from what was being directed in the theatre, and changes in the techniques and arts of television had an independent momentum of their own. Like schools television, they were thought of in their first stages as 'experimental'. Most of the plays being produced were produced live, however, and sadly the merits of production and performance in them can be judged, like stage plays, only by those who remember seeing them. There were regular repeats, live repeats, but there was little recording.

The increase in output—and in the size of the audience—added to the sense of momentum. In 1955 and 1956 the BBC Television Script Department was handling around 300 new scripts a month—at a time when around 120 plays a year were being produced; in 1960, 350 plays were being produced. Of the BBC plays then produced, 204 had been specifically written for television.

Such a huge output—and the well-devised training schemes that made it possible—enabled the BBC to continue to make do with the small number of films from the cinema that Waldman had se-

<sup>18</sup> \*VR/58/220, 13 May 1958.

<sup>19</sup> D. Taylor, *Days of Vision* (1990), pp. 5 ff.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11. Taylor (*ibid.*, p. 6) described the sound boom, one of the most familiar sights of the studios, as a vast and clumsy object like a fishing rod on the top of a tower on wheels.

cured in 1960. So, too, did 'entertainment' output. This was a time when old distinctions between drama and entertainment were themselves becoming at least as blurred as old distinctions between news and current affairs and entertainment.

In 1955, when competition began, Waldman had been Head of Television Light Entertainment for four years, years when Light Entertainment was in his words 'struggling to escape from its shackles'. On a visit to the United States in 1949, he had noted what a 'wealthy industry' American radio was: it was 'able to attract the finest creative and interpretative brains in any sphere into which it wishes to move'. Yet it was not doing so. Waldman wanted the BBC to compete with America; but, like Barry, he also wanted it to do something which American radio did not do—to forget ratings and to appeal to minority audiences.<sup>21</sup>

Meanwhile, the most persistent competition came from ITV, with its 'show-biz' connections and with huge assets at its disposal. The Grades owned the largest Variety agency in the country, while the Blacks were in charge of Blackpool Tower.<sup>22</sup> The original ABC proclamation of intent had made the most of this. It mentioned along with Lew Grade and Val Parnell, 'the outstanding figure of the Variety world', the names of Hugh Beaumont of H. M. Tennant Ltd., Stuart Cruikshank of Howard and Wyndham Theatres, Phillip and Syd Hyams of Eros Films, and Anthony Gishford of Boosey and Hawkes. It referred too not only to the London Palladium—in block capital letters—but to the conversion of the Wood Green Empire, one of the largest suburban variety theatres, into a television theatre and to the acquisition of the British National Studios at Elstree.<sup>23</sup>

Concerned always with available resources—he had to be—Waldman was in sombre mood in 1955 when he noted that within the BBC itself one-third of 'the total film effort' of the television service was 'permanently engaged' by *Panorama* and the *Sportsview* unit.<sup>24</sup> He believed that 'audience shows' were vital to the success of

<sup>21</sup> \*R. Waldman, 'Report on Light Entertainment in American Broadcasting', 7 March 1949 (T15/220). For possible British competition, see G. Beadle, *Television, a Critical Survey* (1963), p. 123. In discussing 'world wide traffic in television entertainment', he concluded that 'while Hollywood will always have the lion's share of the trade, there seems every reason for Britain to make a bid for its own share'.

<sup>22</sup> To be in a Black production for the Blackpool season was 'the ambition of most variety and review artists' (\*Waldman to G. Beadle, Director of Television Broadcasting, 'Commercial Television and Light Entertainment', 15 Nov. 1955 (T16/91/2)).

<sup>23</sup> The statement of aims of resources is reproduced in B. Henry (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>24</sup> Light Entertainment producers felt 'frustrated and disheartened', he claimed, 'by the apparent ease with which others can get the facilities which are so frequently denied to

most of the light entertainment output, and contrasted the lavish facilities of the Palladium with the BBC's 'uncomfortably small and cramped' Television Theatre.<sup>25</sup> Yet he was in more cheerful mood in January 1956 when he questioned the evidence of a recent poll that two out of three viewers had declared that the ITA was 'better than the BBC in the matter of Variety'.<sup>26</sup>

Well aware of the facts of competition, Waldman saw no point in BBC comedians cracking gags about 'commercial programmes'—this was 'bad showmanship'—but he found consolation—and he was right to do so—in the fact that the BBC had carefully kept its script-writers. This, he claimed, was 'one of our greatest strengths'. 'If the writers go, the artists must follow.'<sup>27</sup> Unimpressed, one informed American student of comparative broadcasting, Burton Paulu, hailed the continuing strength of American competition. 'Britain has fewer good comedians and ingenious scriptwriters than the United States.' He properly added, however, in brackets, that 'some British television executives will reject this generalization'.<sup>28</sup>

It is revealing to compare Waldman's early comments in 1955 with those which were set out in a memorandum produced five years later by his successor, Eric Maschwitz. 'BBC is now "the tops" in comedy shows,' Maschwitz proudly exclaimed. 'Our ace series' included 'TONY HANCOCK [another case of the use of block capitals] in *Hancock's Half-Hour*, JIMMY EDWARDS in *Whack-O!* (the story of a crazy school headmaster), and CHARLIE DRAKE in *The Charlie Drake Show*.' The reason why the BBC was now 'on top', he claimed, was because the first article in its credo had been 'We believe in comedy specially written for the TV medium'. The ITV had had no such credo. It was still 'largely managed', he observed, 'by pundits from the theatre, vaudeville and night club world', whose comedy, 'such as it is', was 'crude and semi-theatrical'. While ITV had not yet

them' (\*R. Waldman to C. McGivern, Controller of Programmes, Television, 'Light Entertainment: Restrictions', 15 Sept. 1955 (T16/91/2)). Waldman had described the previous period in light entertainment on the eve of competitive television (that from April to June 1955) as one of 'quiet consolidation'. It was a phrase that would not be used frequently in the future. In 1954 the Light Entertainment Department was putting on 400 productions a year.

<sup>25</sup> \*Waldman to McGivern, 'Television Theatre', 12 Dec. 1955 (T16/91/2).

<sup>26</sup> \*Waldman to McGivern, 23 Jan. 1956 (T16/91/2). The poll was reported in *Audience Research Bulletin* no. 53, and was quoted in *Commercial Television News*, 13 Jan. 1956.

<sup>27</sup> \*Waldman to All Light Entertainment Producers and Production Assistants, 'Points Raised at Departmental Meeting', 13 May 1957; Waldman to Beadle, 'Commercial Television and Light Entertainment', 15 Nov. 1955 (T16/91/2).

<sup>28</sup> Paulu, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

realized 'the great and essential value of writers', the BBC was employing 'the best comedy writing teams' and 'paying them, if necessary, as much as we pay the Stars they write for'.<sup>29</sup>

Although Maschwitz remained fully aware of the 'huge assets', as Waldman had described them, of 'the Big Men behind Commercial Television', he was equally aware that by 1960 the BBC had developed distinct advantages of its own. It had even managed to retain under exclusive contract not only writers but an 'ever-growing family of top television performers'. The term 'family', he felt, was especially relevant within this context. 'The BBC works for its artists, develops their potentiality, builds them and, once built, does its best to maintain them; they are never immediately "expendable" at the whim of men who are only interested in ratings and the maintenance of advertising revenue.' Maschwitz conveniently left agents out of this picture. They had greatly increased the stakes, including their own.<sup>30</sup>

Maschwitz, who over many years had had considerable experience of the entertainment business on both sides of the Atlantic—including Hollywood<sup>31</sup>—added that, while the light entertainment output of the BBC was largely British, it had not left the United States out of the reckoning. There were exclusive BBC contracts with many American stars, including the singers Perry Como and Harry Belafonte and the comedians Bob Hope, Jack Benny, and Phil Silvers. Sergeant Bilko had introduced British viewers to the distinctive humour of the American army before they regularly saw the equally distinctive humour of the British army on their screens. Granada introduced *The Army Game* in 1957, but BBC viewers had to wait until 1968 for *Dad's Army*, and that was set in the past and dealt with civilians in uniform, not with soldiers. *MASH*, set in Korea, followed in 1973.

Americans often found the BBC far stranger than the BBC ever found the Americans, for the term 'light entertainment' was unfamiliar on the other side of the Atlantic, and Maschwitz was asked more than once who was Head of Heavy Entertainment in London. For his part, he had to remind them that he was not responsible for

<sup>29</sup> \*E. Maschwitz to Beadle, 'Notes on BBC Light Entertainment (Television)', 18 Jan. 1960 (T16/91/2).

<sup>30</sup> He also left out the question of rates of pay before competition began. 'The monopoly had not needed to pay big salaries, nor did it' (P. Black, op. cit., p. 121).

<sup>31</sup> Maschwitz, who began his BBC career with the *Radio Times*, was described by Maurice Gorham, who worked immediately below him and later became first Head of the Light Programme, as sharing with him 'the rabid pro-Americanism of the Twenties' (M. Gorham, *Sound and Fury* (1948), p. 30). See also Maschwitz's autobiography which stops short of his last BBC assignment, *No Chip on My Shoulder* (1957).



'Westerns, Whodunits and Magazine or Interview Programmes', although there were quite a few such programmes both in sound and on television.<sup>32</sup> Maschwitz was able to inform them, however, that he personally had been responsible for introducing into the BBC schedules, 'home-made', one of its most popular programmes with a transatlantic flavour, *The Black and White Minstrel Show*.

First televised in 1958, this was a show—the right word to describe it—which was soon to become the BBC's top programme in the ratings. A stage version was presented at Scarborough in the same year, and it was lavishly presented four years later at London's Victoria Palace. In 1961 it won the first Golden Rose award at Montreux.<sup>33</sup> The show was produced by George Inns, who before the War had worked for sound broadcasting's production of Harry Pepper and the Kentucky Minstrels.<sup>34</sup> While George Mitchell's Minstrels provided the voices and the male dancers, the Television Toppers were the girl dancers. At first, there were only twelve of them. The songs made the most of memories: they were deliberately nostalgic. There were to be controversies in the late 1960s, however, about the 'racism' of *The Black and White Minstrel Show*, but it continued to be televised until 1978.<sup>35</sup>

## 7. *Six-Five Special, Juke Box Jury*

There was nothing nostalgic about one of the BBC programmes that filled in the 'toddlers' truce' period, the very first programme of all, *Six-Five Special*. This first went on the air on the Saturday evening

<sup>32</sup> \*Maschwitz to Beadle, 'Notes on BBC Light Entertainment (Television)', 18 Jan. 1960. There was no BBC show at that time comparable to the Ed Sullivan Show, which had first been broadcast in 1948 and which continued to be broadcast for nearly twenty-three years. For the show, which included as its main item interviews with celebrities, see E. Barnouw, *A History of Broadcasting in the United States*, Vol. II: *The Golden Web* (1968). Professor Barnouw's three volumes are indispensable reading for the comparative historian. Vol. I is called *A Tower in Babel* (1966), Vol. III *The Image Empire* (1979). See also D. J. Czitrom, *Media and the American Mind: From Morse to McLuhan* (1982), and, for a British view, J. Tunstall, *The Media are American: Anglo-American Media in the World* (1977).

<sup>33</sup> See BBC, *The Black and White Minstrel Show* (1962).

<sup>34</sup> Inns died in 1970. His successor as producer was Ernest Maxim. The show was highly successful as colour television. In the *Radio Times*, 18–23 Dec. 1971, the performers, who were about to present a Christmas Day version, were described as 'the most colourful stars of TV'.

<sup>35</sup> The last *Black and White Minstrel Show* was presented on 21 July 1978.

that the truce ended, and it, too, like *Tonight*, left its impact on programming in general and on viewing habits. Along with a number of other Saturday programmes, it helped to reconstruct the British Saturday, which had, of course, begun to change in character long before the advent of competitive television. Among the other Saturday programmes that followed in the wake of *Six-Five Special*, the afternoon sports programme *Grandstand*, first televised on 11 October 1958, was prominent within a new leisure weekend: it was devised to give sports enthusiasts 'a complete picture of the day's news in sport'.<sup>1</sup> Saturday was already 'sports day' before television, and sport had not then spilled out into every day of the week. Music too had its place in the weekend, but not yet through the disco. Ironically, however, *Six-Five Special* was originally planned for Monday evenings before it was decided that *Tonight* should be broadcast every night from Monday to Friday but not on Saturday.

In the first instance, *Six-Five Special* attracted a teenage audience, past the toddler stage; yet, like other programmes, including *Grandstand*, it was not allowed to target one audience alone. It was like *Tonight*, too, in that it blurred the old dividing lines, in this case the lines between different kinds of entertainment. While it had pop music as its staple, it also included a 'sports spot'.<sup>2</sup> In the first programme the boxer Freddie Mills introduced two Hungarian heavyweights, the Herculean Balancers. There was also a 'comedy spot'. The comedian Tony Hancock declined to fill it; but Mike and Bernie Winters accepted.<sup>3</sup> There was also a 'classical music spot', although this did not survive for long.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This phrase was used in 1955 in relation to an earlier new sports programme, *Saturday Sports Special* (Programme Script, 10 Sept. 1955). The presenter contrasted it with *Sportsview*, broadcast between 8.30 and 9 p.m. on Wednesdays 'to interest all the family'. Possible titles for *Grandstand* that were rejected included 'Out and About', 'Here and There', 'Lookout', 'Spectator', 'Saturday Afternoon Out', 'Saturday Parade', 'Sports Parade' (too specific), and even 'Good Afternoon' (presumably too general) (\*Fox to Dimmock, 'Saturday Afternoon Programme', 9 Sept. 1958; Dimmock to Fox, 'Saturday Afternoon Programme', 16 Sept. 1958 (T14/493/2)).

<sup>2</sup> The Sports Department was concerned about the implications of this (\*Paul Fox to Tom Sloan, Assistant Head of Light Entertainment, Television, 'Six-Five Special', 13 Feb. 1957 (T12/360/3)), while Cecil Madden was concerned about a projected film project which he thought might jeopardize his position as the BBC's film liaison man (\*Madden to Douglas, 'Six-Five Special: Film Stars and Extracts', 28 Jan. 1957 (T12/360/3)).

<sup>3</sup> Another person who refused was the actor Lawrence Harvey (*Daily Telegraph*, 27 April 1957). Refusals are as interesting to the historian as acceptances in broadcasting history.

<sup>4</sup> In the first programme Pouishnoff played Beethoven and Chopin. Other features introduced into the programme were short films, folk songs, and dance demonstrations. In the first programme Michael Holliday, a singer with a broad cross-age-group appeal, sang two ballads.

There had been popular music programmes of a 'show biz' character before February 1957, among them *Off the Record*, first launched in May 1955, and *Hit Parade*, the BBC's anglicized version of the American *Top Twenty*, which was restored to the screen after a gap in October 1955.<sup>5</sup> Yet these programmes were only to a limited extent innovatory. They relied on familiar names associated with music as it was on the eve of its transformation, before the unforgettable breakthrough in beat and in sound level, rather than with 'pop' as it was now beginning to be called; and although they were linked to the rating charts—*Off the Record* included interviews with new singers and their promoters—they did not directly introduce either new records or new singers. Light Entertainment was not easy about the musical transformation, and Maschwitz was not alone in pouring scorn on 'the latest fads'.<sup>6</sup>

The first numbers of *Six-Five Special* were certainly not thought of, therefore, as the prelude to long-term reshaping of BBC 'pop music' policy or as a key element in a strategy devised to meet ITV competition. They were cheap programmes, originally budgeted at £1,000 and designed to run for only six weeks, and unfortunately only two of them have survived in the BBC Television archives.<sup>7</sup> None the less, they elicited an immediate response. Deliberately under-rehearsed, they provided a refreshing sense of spontaneity.<sup>8</sup> The most gratifying praise came from Birmingham. 'Yes, it was BBC, not ITV', the *Birmingham Mail* told its readers—'Just the kind of thing, in fact, that you might have expected from ITV'.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Produced by Francis Essex, it was first broadcast in 1952. (See Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 690 ff.)

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 692. The first number of *Off the Record* included the Four Aces, then in the charts with their version of *Stranger in Paradise*, Max Bygraves, Ronnie Hilton, and Alma Cogan singing *Dreamboat*, which was to reach the number one place in the charts. Bill Haley's *Shake, Rattle and Roll* entered the charts in Jan. 1955, but it was not until the following year that 'new music' came to feature prominently. Tommy Steele entered the charts in Oct. 1956 with *Rock Around the Caveman*.

<sup>7</sup> There is a useful account of the history of the programme in its context by J. Hill, 'Television and Pop: The Case of the 1950s', in J. Corner (ed.), *Popular Television in Britain: Studies in Cultural History* (1991), pp. 90–107. In July 1957 John Humphreys, Light Entertainment Organizer, wrote that he was anxious to record 'for archive purposes . . . an edition of 6.5 *Special* containing a strong Rock and Roll and Skiffle ingredient of say 20 minutes over all' ('Humphreys to Douglas and Good, "Six-Five Special"', 29 July 1957 (T12/360/3)).

<sup>8</sup> Apart from a band call on the Friday, all the rehearsals leading up to a trial run at 3 p.m. and a final run through at 4.30 p.m. took place on the Saturday.

<sup>9</sup> *Birmingham Mail*, 18 Feb. 1957. 'The whole hour', it added, 'seemed to be meeting the younger generation on their own ground and with their own enthusiasm.' The *News Chronicle* (18 Feb.) called it 'a noisy, clanking fill-in'. There was a long review by Maurice Wiggin in the *Sunday Times*, 17 Feb. 1957.

There was particular praise later on for several of the outside broadcast programmes of *Six-Five Special*, including a programme from Glasgow's Albert Ballroom in May 1957 and a programme visit in November to the Two I's Coffee Bar in Old Compton Street, the home of British rock and roll.<sup>10</sup> These were devised by co-producer of the programme Jack Good, aged only 26, who has won a distinctive place in television history. With more than a touch of inspiration, he knew that he had to draw on British talent and, even more, to draw it out. Just as important—indeed, it was of essential importance, given the nature of the programme—he understood more clearly than anyone else involved in the venture, including his senior producer, 'Jo' (Josephine) Douglas, just how necessary it was from the very start to reach a young audience through beat, vitality, and energy, what one of his critics condemned as 'wild abandon'.

Good knew also how it would be possible for young performers, like Marty Wilde, Tommy Steele, and Jim Dale, to launch their careers on the strength of the programme.<sup>11</sup> There was always a record spot.<sup>12</sup> Yet Good was ambitious to attract American as well as British performers to contribute to the spot. In November 1957 he cabled New York to investigate the availability of 'Frank Sinatra or Perry Como, Pat Boone, Paul Anka, Frank Lynon, Joy Mitchell, Fats Domino or Tommy Sands'. None of these represented new music, and all he could offer 'at the moment was a fee of £600 inclusive air fare'.<sup>13</sup>

The title *Six-Five Special* was chosen by Jo Douglas, and the memorable opening music of the programme, railway music, fitted it

<sup>10</sup> Of the latter, McGivern wrote: 'This edition was not only extraordinary but extra-ordinarily good. It was first-class television as well as first-class entertainment' (\*McGivern to Waldman, 'Six-Five Special Saturday 16th November, Produced by Jack Good', 18 Nov. 1957 (T12/360/11)).

<sup>11</sup> Tom Sloan, Assistant Head of Light Entertainment, Television, threatened to drop Marty Wilde from the show for 'Presley-type "belly swinging"' after Adam had complained (\*Adam to Sloan, 'Six-Five Special', 13 Jan. 1958; Sloan to Adam, 'Six-Five Special', 13 Jan. 1958 (T12/360/4)). Another individual performer in the programme, Terry Dene, was a success, and ultimately a casualty of early pop. He first appeared on *Six-Five Special* in April 1957, and entered the charts soon afterwards, eventually becoming the subject of a film *The Golden Disc* (see N. Cohn, *Awopbopaloobop alopbamboom: Pop from the Beginning* (1970)). See also T. Palmer, *All You Need is Love: The Story of Popular Music* (1976).

<sup>12</sup> Jo Douglas complained (\*Douglas to Waldman, ' "Six-Five Special"—Saturday 28th September 1957', 1 Oct. 1957 (T12/360/3)) that some singers had to mime to their records as they could not reproduce their disc performance in the studio. There were, of course, financial reasons for this also.

<sup>13</sup> \*Cable of 25 Nov. 1957 (T12/360/3).

perfectly. It was on the tracks.<sup>14</sup> The title was far brighter than ‘Hi There’, ‘Take it Easy’, ‘Don’t Look Now’, or ‘Start the Night Right’.<sup>15</sup> Good grasped, as did Douglas, that there were young performers who were capable of ‘getting across’ on the screen to a huge new audience through the mediation of a small, but highly involved, studio audience, itself ‘part of the act’. In the first show, vouchers to buy long-playing discs were offered to the couple who could cut ‘the coolest capers’; and then and later the cameras played on the oddest and most incongruous of the dancers as well as the coolest and the most adept.<sup>16</sup> No one was odder than the American rock star Little Richard, who was shown in a film excerpt from *Don’t Knock the Rock*. The small, live audiences for pop music in the studios and the huge audiences in the home were to differentiate themselves sharply from each other and from other audiences during the 1960s.<sup>17</sup>

There were many ambivalences, however, in the approach favoured by the group of people involved in the production of *Six-Five Special*. Good’s co-producer, Douglas, who appeared in the programme as well as produced it, was only three years older than he was. She was his senior, however, in the echelons of the BBC, and it was she, with a long television career ahead of her, who had to deal with criticisms both from her superiors and from the public. She ‘tries hard at being a teenager,’ the *Newcastle Evening Chronicle* complained, ‘and in so doing spoils her act.’ The disc jockey at her side, Pete Murray, who ran a programme for Radio Luxembourg, came in for even greater criticism. He ‘is the biggest temptation for me to switch off this side of Wilfred Pickles’, the same reviewer wrote.<sup>18</sup>

The dialogue between Douglas and Murray was meticulously, if appallingly, scripted. ‘Hi, there’, Murray began in the opening

<sup>14</sup> There was a dual allusion here, to railway tracks and to record tracks. As Jo Douglas noted, ‘trains and allusions thereto are frequently used in jazz parlance’ (‘Douglas to Sloan, ‘6–7 Programme’, 2 Jan. 1957 (T12/360/3)).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> McGivern praised the first programme as ‘a very good start indeed’, but he looked forward to less music and more varied items. He also criticized the early camera work, as did Waldman (‘McGivern to Waldman, ‘Six-Five Special Saturday February 16th’, 18 Feb. 1957 (T12/360/5); McGivern to Waldman, ‘Six-Five Special 30 March 1957’, 1 April 1957 (T12/360/7); Waldman to Douglas and Good, 25 Feb. 1957 (T12/360/5)).

<sup>17</sup> There were several complaints both from viewers and from the Television House Manager about the behaviour of some of the first audiences. Sloan told Douglas and Good (‘“Six-Five Special” Audiences’, 25 Sept. 1957 (T12/360/3)) that ‘the actual nature of this programme could not be regarded as an excuse for bad manners on the part of the audience’. There were complaints too that gate-crashers were trying to get into the studio without tickets.

<sup>18</sup> *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*, 31 Aug. 1957.

dialogue of the first programme, before going on to mix every metaphor. 'Welcome aboard the *Six-Five Special*. We've got almost a hundred cats jumping here, some real cool characters to give us the gas, so just get on with it and have a ball.' To which Jo Douglas replied equally stiltedly, with an older audience than teenagers in mind: 'Well, I'm just a square it seems, but for all the other squares with us, roughly translated what Peter [*sic*] Murray just said was "we've got some lively musicians and personalities mingling with us here, so just relax and catch the mood from us".'<sup>19</sup> Not surprisingly, Waldman wrote after the second programme that 'there was some unevenness about the length of the interviews . . . Jo must watch that we don't see too much of her.'<sup>20</sup> Sloan added equally pertinently in a later memorandum that 'we must be careful not to use the scriptwriter too much and too often.'<sup>21</sup> Translating from the language of one generation to another was always difficult.

That Good understood more clearly than most of the others the potential of the programme as a youth programme was obvious from other people's comments. Thus, Tom Sloan, the Assistant Head of Light Entertainment, warned him only a month after *Six-Five Special* had taken off how 'important' it was 'to introduce . . . more items of general interest' as 'Rock and Roll diminishes'. Months later, Kenneth Adam, who did not like Jo's role on the screen, complained mistakenly that the programme relied 'excessively' on rock and roll 'just at the time when straight jazz for jiving is on its way back'.<sup>22</sup> Good himself was not tied to rock and roll, and did much to promote another 'craze', skiffle, and Lonnie Donegan was a frequent performer on the programme. He even organized a national skiffle contest which upset the Musicians' Union, since most of those keen to take part in it were amateurs.<sup>23</sup>

In 1959 Good professed that he had been seeking—and through new programmes was seeking—to capture not only teenagers but 'their elder brothers and sisters'—and, for good measure, 'the mums

<sup>19</sup> The script survives. Pete Murray's words were quoted also in the *Sunday Times*, 17 Feb. 1957. The patronizing phrase 'the young in spirit in all ages' was used in the early billing of the programme (*Radio Times*, 22 Feb. 1957).

<sup>20</sup> \*Waldman to Douglas and Good, '6-5 Special—February 23rd', 25 Feb. 1957 (T12/360/3).

<sup>21</sup> \*Sloan to Douglas and Good, 'Six-Five Special', 18 March 1957 (T12/360/3).

<sup>22</sup> \*Ibid.; Adam to Sloan, 'Six-Five Special', 13 Jan. 1958 (T12/360/4).

<sup>23</sup> *Daily Sketch*, 31 Jan. 1958, which claimed that the union was trying to get them to join.



and dads too'.<sup>24</sup> Yet by then the first begetters of the programme had scattered, and Adam had complained how difficult it was 'to maintain fifty-five minutes weekly of high-speed musical entertainment'.<sup>25</sup> Jo Douglas, who had gone free-lance in October 1957, had stopped producing, and Good's contract had not been renewed in December 1957 after he had become involved in efforts to plan a stage version of the show. He had felt unhappy also when he was given a new co-producer, Dennis Main Wilson.<sup>26</sup> Soon afterwards Good joined 'the competitor', and was replaced by Duncan Wood; and later still Billy Cotton Jr., who was to have a highly distinguished BBC career, also joined the programme.<sup>27</sup> In May 1958, Jim Dale, an attractive personality, became presenter and the length of the programme was reduced to 45 minutes.

McGivern had complained on 8 April that the programme was 'unacceptable'. 'Apart from the general chaos' there were 'too many girls who wore very abbreviated skirts, and several who wore practically no skirts at all'. 'I know how kids feel and act', he added, 'and I sympathise with them, but they must not be allowed complete licence'.<sup>28</sup> The 1960s were still round the corner. It was a relief to Main Wilson, a comedy producer, who had been more disturbed by Good's interest in skiffle than by his enthusiasm for pop music in general. When Sloan complained of a skiffle group singing a 'terrible phoney spiritual about "showing a little light"', Main Wilson replied

<sup>24</sup> *TV Times*, 25 Sept. 1959. The *BBC Handbook*, 1959, p. 99, described *Six-Five Special* as 'a national institution equally enjoyed by the parents'. See S. Frith, *Formations of Pleasure* (1983). The Audience Research Report on the first programme, which was based on the reactions of a panel with a majority of over-30-year-olds, had been favourable. One older viewer stated: 'This obviously doesn't cater for my age group, but as a programme for the youngsters I can see it was good and of course we must cater for youth so on these grounds I approve.' A younger viewer reported: 'This is what many of us have wanted for a long time' (\*VR/57/95).

<sup>25</sup> \*Adam to Waldman, 'Six-Five Special', 7 Feb. 1958 (T12/360/4).

<sup>26</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 10 Jan. 1958; *Melody Maker*, 11 Jan. 1958. Henry Fielding produced a stage version, *The Six-Five Stage Show*, at Leicester and Hull earlier that week, with Jo Douglas, Pete Murray, and Freddie Mills and with the support of Good and the script-writer Trevor Peacock. There were other stage shows in other places. As *Melody Maker* put it, '6-5 Special is big business!'. Pete Murray described Good's leaving the BBC as 'very sad' and 'a complete surprise'.

<sup>27</sup> For a Janet Watts interview with Good years later, on the occasion of a stage show *Good Rockin' Tonight*, see *Observer*, 26 Jan. 1992. When Good left the BBC, his salary, according to him, was only £18 a week. When he joined ITV he got £100. Born in 1928, Cotton joined the BBC in 1956 as a producer in the Light Entertainment Department. In 1967 he became Head of Variety, in 1970 Head of the Light Entertainment Group, and in 1977 Controller of BBC-1. From 1984 to 1988 he was Managing Director, Television.

<sup>28</sup> \*McGivern to Acting Head of Light Entertainment, Television, 'Six-Five Special': Saturday 5th April', 8 April 1958 (T12/360/4).

that he would not enter into arguments about phoney skiffle groups singing phoney religious songs. 'I did not book this wretched skiffle contest in the first place.'<sup>29</sup> Skiffle, he thought rightly, was quickly losing ground. What was to come next he did not know. Perhaps, he thought, it would be 'ballads'.<sup>30</sup>

Russell Turner had been appointed sole producer of *Six-Five Special* when the BBC learned in the summer of 1958 that an ITV production by Good, *Oh Boy!*, was to be transmitted by ABC.<sup>31</sup> It, too, was a new departure, for ITV, hitherto dedicated to 'ballads', had been slow to compete in this field.<sup>32</sup> At the end of the toddler's truce it had opted to show on the first day of *Six-Five Special* a very different kind of programme, *The Adventures of Sir Lancelot*. *Oh Boy!* reintroduced Marty Wilde, whom Good captured from the BBC, and, more tellingly, a new performer, Cliff Richard, who appeared in the first programme and stole most of the headlines. Soon he was to move to top billing in the *TV Times* and to star treatment in the popular Press. Appealing directly to an audience that was eventually to span all the age-groups, Richard himself—with strong religious beliefs—learnt also how to span the years.<sup>33</sup> Wilde, however, soon left *Oh Boy!*. When the BBC tried to interview him in *Six-Five Special* to get him to explain what had happened, it was threatened with legal action by ABC, and Wilde never appeared.<sup>34</sup>

The Press preferred the new programme, in which the audience was heard and not seen, to *Six-Five Special*. So, too, did Adam and McGivern inside the BBC. 'I have been making enquiries among the younger generation about the interest in *Oh Boy!* and *Six-Five Special*,' Adam told Maschwitz in November 1958, 'and there is no doubt the former is preferred . . . Its formula is better, more punchy, its camera work simpler and faster than ours.' Such self-criticism was now a

<sup>29</sup> \*Main Wilson to Sloan, "'Six-Five Special': 17th May 1958', 20 May 1958 (T12/360/4). Main Wilson admitted that he and Good had diverse tastes, and that Good considered him a 'square' when he moved over to the programme from radio in Nov. 1957. Until Good left the BBC, he and Main Wilson produced *Six-Five Special* programmes in alternate weeks. *Melody Maker* described them as 'Producer Rivals' (9 Nov. 1957).

<sup>30</sup> *News Chronicle*, 17 May 1958.

<sup>31</sup> Turner sought 'a new look, a new noise and new faces', but he looked backwards rather than forwards when he introduced resident big 'bands', and bedecked his hostesses and many of the other performers in evening dress.

<sup>32</sup> AR introduced its first new pop music programme *Cool for Cats* (fifteen minutes on Mondays and Thursdays) on 31 Dec. 1956. It was networked in June 1957, and ran until Dec. 1959.

<sup>33</sup> C. Richard, *The Way I See It* (1972), *The Way I See It Now* (1975).

<sup>34</sup> *Musical Express*, 10 Oct. 1958.

main element in competition. 'The content was poor,' McGivern complained of the *Six-Five Special* programme on 22 November 1958, 'the presentation and the camera work very poor and the whole thing had no reason for its existence on our screen.'<sup>35</sup>

Soon afterwards Maschwitz took off the show, after having asked the experienced Francis Essex to plan a new production that would be more along the lines of *Oh Boy!* It was called *Dig This!*—with another necessary exclamation mark—and was designed to be 'swift moving' and 'up-to-the-minute'. Yet Maschwitz decreed that while it should generate 'life, movement and noise', it should do this 'without cluttering up the studio and the screen with juvenile delinquents'.<sup>36</sup> Essex, then 29 years old, himself described its aim as 'good clean fun with no hysteria'.<sup>37</sup> The show lasted, however, only until March 1959, when it was replaced by *Drumbeat*, an expressly upbeat show, with a younger producer, Stewart Morris, and a lively young performer, Adam Faith, another protégé of Good, who thought of Faith as 'a singing James Dean'.<sup>38</sup>

*Drumbeat*, which ran until 29 August 1959, survived *Oh Boy!* which was taken off the air on 30 May 1959, ostensibly for a rest, but never to return.<sup>39</sup> From its beginning, however, there had been one tacit confession of defeat. It had been scheduled not at 6 p.m. or 6.05 p.m. but at 6.30 p.m., a sign in itself that the first ramifications of the end of the 'toddlers' truce' were over. The programme that took its place was the American western series, *Wells Fargo*.

At 7.30 p.m. on Monday 1 June 1959, two days after the demise of *Drumbeat*, the BBC had introduced a new pop music programme, *Juke Box Jury*, with a genuinely original and basically simple formula—for Britain<sup>40</sup>—and one which was to continue successfully into

<sup>35</sup> \*Adam to Maschwitz, 'Six-Five Special', 4 Nov. 1958; McGivern to Adam, 'Six-Five Special': Saturday 22nd November', 24 Nov. 1958 (T12/360/4).

<sup>36</sup> \*Maschwitz to Adam, '6-5 Special', 25 Nov. 1958 (T12/360/4).

<sup>37</sup> *Swindon Evening Advertiser*, 3 Jan. 1959.

<sup>38</sup> He was, in fact, to have many other roles, including that of representative of his generation in a much publicized interview with the then Archbishop of York, Dr Coggan, on 28 Jan. 1962. It was an item in *Meeting Point*, and was presided over by Ludovic Kennedy. 'I don't think the Church gets to the teenagers,' Faith stated, 'there is no communication' (see *The Times*, 29 Jan. 1962). See also A. Faith, *Poor Me* (1961).

<sup>39</sup> A new Good show, *Boy Meets Girl* (with Wilde as the boy), replaced *Oh Boy!* in Sept. 1959. By then, Good was talking the same language of broad appeal as his earlier critics in the BBC.

<sup>40</sup> It was based on an American idea and the BBC had to pay a copyright fee; but, as in the case of other transatlantic transfers (e.g., *Twenty Questions*), there was no American programme quite like it. (\*Sloan to Norman Payne, MCA Ltd., 16 Jan. 1959: Agreement of 20 March 1959 WAC file R Cont.1: MCA file II.)

the Sixties.<sup>41</sup> Very quickly it was switched to Saturdays at 6.50 p.m. Equally quickly, it attracted a large audience of nearly 5 million viewers, which by 1961 had risen to over 12 million.<sup>42</sup> It was said to consist of viewers from 4 to 94, and the age range was a matter of conscious pride.<sup>43</sup>

Two of the panellists in the first programme were Pete Murray and Alma Cogan, and the producer was Russell Turner, who had produced the last numbers of *Six-Five Special*. It was compered by David Jacobs, who had already had an interesting radio career and who was soon to become one of television's best-known personalities. Uneasy about the first programme, Jacobs was surprised to be congratulated by Maschwitz after it ended with the words 'Marvellous—this is true television'.<sup>44</sup> He must have known, however, as Freeman and Famonn Andrews knew, that the success of his programme owed much to him. The cameras might play on the studio audience, 'tapping their toes, smiling, mooning, in fact being completely natural',<sup>45</sup> but the home audience always focused on his reactions at least as much as on those of his panel.<sup>46</sup> Feeling in the

<sup>41</sup> K. and S. Ferguson (eds.), *Television Show Book* (1964), p. 102. See also I. Whitcomb, *After the Ball: Pop Music from Rag to Rock* (1973). Some writers on the history of pop music have condemned *Juke Box Jury* for the 'emasculatation' of pop music and its transformation into 'family entertainment' (B. Woffinden, 'Hit or Miss?', *The History of Rock*, no. 19 (1982), p. 380). Cf. G. Melly's description of 'the castration of the first British pop explosion', in *Revolt into Style* (1970), p. 56.

<sup>42</sup> The first Monday show, which was welcomed in general terms by about half the under-30s, had a reaction index of only 59, as against the quarter's average reaction for light entertainment of 65. The first Saturday programme had an audience reaction of 64. In Feb. 1960, when its audience had more than doubled, it achieved an audience reaction of 66. (Audience Research Reports. \*VR/59/305, 17 June 1959; VR/59/552, 6 Oct. 1959; VR/60/108, 16 March 1960.)

<sup>43</sup> There was considerable elasticity as well as pride in the sense of 'age range'. For one journalist, Thomas E. Bergman, 'teenagers were the people between 12 and 88 who are able and willing to enjoy themselves without the encumbrance of inhibitions and snobbish pride'. None the less, he condemned 'pseudo-youthful exuberance' (*Newcastle Evening Chronicle*, 31 Aug. 1957).

<sup>44</sup> Jacobs was right to be worried about his deliberately planned verbal sparring with Pete Murray, which did not go down well with viewers. Murray left the programme in Aug. 1959 when his contract expired. Russell Turner said of the first programme: 'All my bosses, right from the top, were delighted with it' (*Melody Maker*, 6 June 1959). There was a similar response to later programmes.

<sup>45</sup> D. Jacobs, *Jacobs' Ladder* (1963).

<sup>46</sup> Jacobs, born in 1926, had broadcast during the Second World War with the Forces Broadcasting Service, and was Chief Announcer and later Assistant Station Director, Radio SEAC, Ceylon, from 1945 to 1947. In 1947, before going free-lance, he was a BBC newsreader in the General Overseas Service. In 1967, the last year of *Juke Box Jury*, he was to succeed Freddie Grisewood as Chairman of the radio programme *Any Questions?* (See below, p. 585)

know about what *he* liked and disliked, they may not always have been right, and they might often have disagreed. But it was he who ran the show.

Like Michelmores, Jacobs sometimes had the adjective 'avuncular' applied to him, but many other adjectives were used to describe him, including 'silky', 'glossy', and 'suave', a sign that he could irritate as well as please.<sup>47</sup> The glittering giant juke-box with which he was associated was an indispensable permanent prop in the programme—as much of a symbol as a 1930s cinema organ—and the guest panel of four, the favourite number for all television panels—and coincidentally for most pop music groups—changed week by week. Not all of them were involved in the 'pop scene', although they usually came from the television world. All were described, sometimes generously, as 'celebrities'. They included Nancy Spain, Eric Sykes, and (singled out by Jacobs in his autobiography) Henrietta Tiarks, who was engaged to the son of the Duke of Bedford.<sup>48</sup>

Viewers could study the reactions of the panel—face by face—and the particular 'juke box' items that were played. Then they voted each item a 'hit' or a 'miss' and made their comments, informed or ignorant, impressed or disgusted. If the panel tied, a teenage panel, chosen from the audience, was called upon to decide. It was the young who had the last word; at home, however, they might still find themselves arguing with other members of their household after the programme was over. This generation game was highly successful in exposing what came to be thought of as 'the generation gap'. At the same time, by familiarizing a wide audience with the latest pop music, *Juke Box Jury* led to the assimilation of pop music items into mainstream variety programmes, like ITV's *Sunday Night at the London Palladium* and the BBC's *Billy Cotton Band Show*.

To add an element of surprise week by week for both young and old, there was always a guest performer or composer, one of the artists whose record was being played as an item in the show. He or

<sup>47</sup> In *Melody Maker*, 17 Feb. 1962, Ray Coleson called him 'Great Pride of Pop Music!' with an exclamation mark. For the *Radio Times*, 24 Sept. 1964, he was 'most genial of disc jockeys, whose quiet authority and encyclopedic knowledge of the pop world keeps each edition running smoothly from title tune to closing credits'. At that time he was receiving 700 letters a week.

<sup>48</sup> There was ample adverse criticism of the programme from some television celebrities. Bob Monkhouse called it *Junk Box Jury* (*Today*, 27 Jan. 1962). The brilliant jazz player Humphrey Lyttelton criticized this verdict. '*Juke Box Jury* is fatuous and inane for the simple reason that pop music itself is largely fatuous and inane' (*Reynolds News*, 28 Jan. 1962).

she remained out of view until after the panel had voted, and then emerged, usually jubilant (a hit) or gloomy (a miss). There was special surprise if the artist showed anger and fought back. There was also special surprise if a panellist disliked all the records played, as did the singer Johnny Mathis. One of the greatest surprises came in 4 July 1964 when the viewers discovered that the panel consisted entirely of the Rolling Stones.<sup>49</sup> It was less of a surprise that the Rolling Stones refused to conform to the conventions of the programme. That was a surprise of the 1960s, however, not of the 1950s, and the Beatles were to come in between. The Stones, like everyone else, acknowledged that the chronology mattered.

A stage show of 1958, *Expresso Bongo*, with a script by Wolf Mankovitz, dealt with pop music, and included a psychiatrist and a parson, both played by the same actor. Turned into a film, it featured Cliff Richard and Gilbert Harding, who was shown taking part in a television documentary *Cosmorama*, that was examining the 'rock phenomenon'. The plot was very topical. Having made disparaging comments about both 'plastic palm trees' and 'teenage rebellion', Harding finds the show stolen from him by the pop singer's unscrupulous manager.<sup>50</sup>

Pop music seemed to lend itself to stage satire as well as teenage adulation even before the boom in satire during the early 1960s,<sup>51</sup> although the film, described by Dilys Powell as 'a sardonic rattle with music', omitted many of the 'satiric barbs' of the play.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, John Osborne demonstrated this in his musical of 1959, *The World of Paul Slickey*, which featured another real pop singer who had appeared in *Six-Five Special*, Denis Lotis.<sup>53</sup> In 1957 Osborne had written *The Entertainer*, with an old-fashioned comedian at the centre of the stage. He had also used the decline of the music-hall tradition as a metaphor for Britain's decline, a favourite theme for dramatists as well as academics in the late 1950s.

<sup>49</sup> *Radio Times*, 3 July 1964. For the Rolling Stones, see A. E. Hochner, *Blown Away: The Rolling Stones and the Death of the Sixties* (1990). See also, below, pp. 463–4.

<sup>50</sup> Tony Hancock was to take the part of a pop singer in *Hancock's*, the last series of programmes he made—for ITV—in 1967. In R. Wilmut, *The Illustrated Hancock* (1986), pp. 150–1, there is a picture of him, complete with guitar, being questioned by the police.

<sup>51</sup> See below, p. 300 ff.

<sup>52</sup> *Halliwel's Film Guide*, 8th edn. (1991), p. 354. One of the characters in the film, Cliff Richard, had figured in television pop programmes. One, Laurence Harvey (see above p. 199 n.), had not.

<sup>53</sup> See billing in *Radio Times*, 16 March 1957.



## 8. Comedy

Before satire took hold, however, one new-fashioned English comedian had made his mark both in BBC radio and in BBC television. Tony Hancock ushered in a new chapter in the history of entertainment. His programme, *Hancock's Half-Hour*, first broadcast in sound on 6 July 1954, was a new form of comedy, 'sitcom', developed by his two brilliant young script-writers, Ray Galton and Alan Simpson, who moved with Hancock from sound to television. The fact that the scripts were written by named writers—and not by teams—distinguished British sitcom from that of the United States.

Frank Muir, himself a master of comedy, was to point out on the basis of experience that there was a fundamental difference between 'formula comedy' and 'organic comedy' of the Hancock variety, the kind of comedy that engaged viewers' 'minds and affections' as well as their 'eyeballs'.<sup>1</sup> More recently, sitcom, like 'soap opera', has been subjected to deeper analysis, and the different components in it have been separated out and identified—regular characters and recognizable settings; flexible variations on basic themes; exploitable situations; linked narrative; and, above all, rhythms of timing.<sup>2</sup>

The first of seven television series of *Hancock's Half-Hour* (sixty-three shows in all) was launched on 6 July 1956. Hancock and Sidney James, who had come together in the radio series, were the two main characters. The programme, unlike so much 'Variety', focused on what happened not behind bright lights but behind closed doors, and it built up a national audience that included large numbers of people who cared little for the more traditional comedy of Jimmy Edwards or Ted Ray. In February 1954, the producer of the radio series, Dennis Main Wilson, who was to figure in the history of *Six-Five Special*,<sup>3</sup> had explained in a BBC memorandum to the Assistant Head of Variety Productions that 'the comedy style' would be 'purely situation[al]': 'we shall try to build Tony as a real life character in real life surroundings. There will be no "goon" or contrived comedy approaches.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> F. Muir, 'Comedy in Television', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 5th ser., 15 Dec. 1966.

<sup>2</sup> See S. Neale and F. Krutnik, *Popular Film and Television Comedy* (1990), ch. 9.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 204.

<sup>4</sup> \*Wilson to C. F. Meehan, Assistant Head of Variety Programmes, 'Tony Hancock Series—Starting in Week 43', 12 Feb. 1954 (R19/469). The first popular response to *Hancock's Half-Hour* on sound had been lukewarm, but the critics approved, and a second series began in April 1954. Hancock, suffering from exhaustion after a long stage show

Until 29 December 1959 the radio show continued to be broadcast in parallel with the television show, and each programme remained faithful to the original formula—the presentation week by week of ‘a real life character in real life surroundings’ with no musical interludes and no ‘theatricality’. ‘Anything that seemed like a joke, on its own grounds, was left out—whether or not we hooted at it, unless it was true to the story and the character’, Hugh Lloyd, one of the actors, recalled.<sup>5</sup> Restricted East Cheam was the location. The trains that went past 23 Railway Cuttings moved down the tracks at a quite different speed from the *Six-Five Special*.<sup>6</sup> Duncan Wood, the producer of the television programmes, who had replaced Good as producer of *Six-Five Special*, was well aware of this, although he did not draw the comparison.

The switch from radio to television had changed the medium but not the format. Indeed, Galton claimed that he and Simpson had made only one ‘concession’ to the new medium: instead of saying ‘Pick up that bucket’, they would now say ‘Pick that up’.<sup>7</sup> They were exaggerating, for more than one ‘concession’ was involved after the switch. The use of the new medium encouraged more pointed simplification of themes and stronger in-depth characterization, particularly of Hancock himself, who gained credibility when depicted on the screen as a middle-aged bachelor outsider, in touch with the flow of life but revelling in personal fantasy. ‘Belligerent, pompous, frequently childish and petulant’,<sup>8</sup> he had obvious intel-

and highly vulnerable in such situations, as *Face to Face* brought out, fled abroad, and did not return until the fourth episode. In his absence Harry Secombe, of *Goon Show* fame—and a comedian in an entirely different tradition—took his place. The show soon attracted a very large audience. In 1956 Hattie Jacques, a memorable comedian, joined the cast as Hancock’s secretary.

<sup>5</sup> *The Illustrated Hancock*, p. 53. For reliance on jokes and puns in other programmes, see D. Nathan, *The Laughtermakers* (1971). Kenneth Williams, who appeared in several Hancock radio programmes, despite what Simpson said, made regular use of ‘funny voices’ and of ‘camp’, as he continued to do—with remarkable success, including business success—for the rest of his life.

<sup>6</sup> \*On 10 Dec. 1958 a BBC Press Release was devoted solely to ‘Ten Facts about Railway Cuttings’ (T12/605/1). The first was: ‘Railway Cuttings is a street of terraced Victorian houses erected during the depression of 1864’ (not a year of depression). The third was: ‘The buildings are quite ugly and so are most of the residents.’

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Wilmot, *Tony Hancock ‘Artiste’* (1978), p. 83. Galton and Simpson had written scripts for Hancock’s earlier radio programme *Happy Go Lucky* (1951) and for the West End revues *London Laughs* (1952) and *The Talk of the Town* (1954–5). Hancock had appeared in very different kinds of radio programmes, including *Variety Bandbox* and *Educating Archie* (where he played the part of Archie’s tutor). See Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, p. 652.

<sup>8</sup> F. Hancock and D. Nathan, *Hancock* (1975), p. 34.

lectual pretensions. A *Listener* review of June 1961 described how he had taken up 'the intellectual life as a means of satisfying his soul'.<sup>9</sup>

The situations in which Hancock was placed were always believable, and as they revealed different facets of his character, different viewers, including intellectual viewers, could identify with different aspects of him.<sup>10</sup> In *The Bed Sitter* on 26 May 1961 he selected a volume of Bertrand Russell from his loaded bookshelf at a time when Russell was known more for his Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and Committee of 100 activities than for his philosophy.<sup>11</sup> *The Listener* wrote of his performance then that 'no twenty-five minutes have more mercilessly or accurately pilloried the inner man in all of us'.<sup>12</sup>

'Realism' had been carried a step further in 1957 when, at Hancock's own suggestion, 'straight actors' replaced comic actors in some of the minor roles. A number of his 'guests', however, like the later guests of Morecambe and Wise, were neither actors nor comedians. In April 1960, for example, John Snagge, well-known BBC commentator on the Boat Race—a broadcaster with one of the best known of all radio voices—took part in a programme in what he himself described as the funniest television series that the BBC had ever put out.<sup>13</sup>

One technical development helped Wood. In August 1958 the BBC acquired a new type of telerecording machine, made by the American firm Ampex: it was first used for a trailer on 1 October for *A Tale of Two Cities*. Wood, who had made use of older modes of telerecording for four episodes in December 1957, appreciated at once that if he could use it in *Hancock's Half-Hour*, the quality of the finished episodes would be greatly improved. For one thing Hancock would be relieved of the strain, which he obviously felt, of doing everything

<sup>9</sup> *The Listener*, 1 June 1961. 'His aspirations, like his aspirates, have a way of sneaking out on him.'

<sup>10</sup> *The Times*, 2 March 1959. See also K. Hoare, 'Situation Vacant', *Contrast*, no. 1 (Autumn 1961), p. 57. When the third series ended with an extended variety show, Wood noted that this was a mistake never to be repeated.

<sup>11</sup> CND held its first public meeting on 17 Feb. 1958. A smaller group, the Direct Action Committee, was the forerunner of the Committee of 100. For the story see C. Driver, *The Disarmers* (1969), and B. Masters, *The Swinging Sixties* (1985), ch. 9. See also an anticipatory article by J. B. Priestley, 'Britain and the Nuclear Bombs', *New Statesman*, 2 Nov. 1957, and Bernard Russell's book *Commonsense and Nuclear Warfare* (1959). See also J. Nuttall, *Bomb Culture* (1968).

<sup>12</sup> *The Listener*, 1 June 1961.

<sup>13</sup> \*Snagge to Wood, 27 April 1960 (T12/605/1). For Snagge, see Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 781, 785.

'live'.<sup>14</sup> Costs were high, however—videotapes were priced at £100 each and were not re-usable when cut—so that BBC administrators as well as engineers were drawn into the discussions about programme making.<sup>15</sup> It was only after a struggle that Wood, who was a good fighter, was allowed to use Ampex after July 1959. Ironically, one of the first programmes to make use of the new techniques was called 'The Economy Drive' (25 September 1959).

Wood had explained, in face of caution on the part of the engineers, that the *Half-Hour* programmes could be improved if they were telerecorded discontinuously in segments. This would allow not only for vision mixing but for changes of scene and costume. Backed by Hancock, who threatened not to sign a contract for a new series unless Ampex was used, he was allowed to carry out this experiment; each programme was to be telerecorded in about six separate takes.<sup>16</sup> The new technique proved immediately effective on the screen, and was subsequently used by many other producers, particularly producers of sitcom.

Wood used great skill also in employing the camera in close-ups to register (and cut off at the right point) Hancock's remarkable range of fascinating facial expressions, only a few of which John Freeman and Hugh Burnett caught in Hancock's *Face to Face* interview.<sup>17</sup> Galton and Simpson regarded the close-up as the 'basis of television'.<sup>18</sup> Hancock himself wrote that 'the biggest battle I ever won

<sup>14</sup> For Ampex, see also below, pp. 836–9. *I Love Lucy*, like many other American shows, had been shot by film, scene by scene, since 1954. American 'sitcom' relied on effective camera work. *I Love Lucy*, e.g., employed three cameras, with one focused entirely on Lucille Ball to catch all her reactions.

<sup>15</sup> McGivern complained that the production of the programmes was too slow (\*McGivern to Adam, 1 April 1959 (T12/605/1)). 'I know the producer Duncan Wood would retort with the inevitable slowness of television as opposed to film, the changing of clothes and set, the necessity to hang on to captions, bridging shots and all the rest of it. Nevertheless, despite that, this production must be quickened up . . . Live television need not be so far behind the speed of Bilko.'

<sup>16</sup> \*Wood to Maschwitz, 2 July 1959; James Redmond, Assistant Superintendent Engineer, Television Film, to Joanna Spicer, Head of Programme Planning, 9 July 1959 (T12/605/1). Redmond approved of the Hancock series being used for the 'experiment' in a new type of operation. 'For the moment [we should] restrict it to that series until we have more experience in handling Ampex tape in this fashion.' In addition to engineering issues, there were trade union issues affecting the programme-making techniques, involving the Musicians' Union and Equity. The studio audience was present throughout all the retakes.

<sup>17</sup> See above, pp. 170–1. American comedy series, like *The Burns and Allen Show*, concentrated on close-ups, and as early as 1951 the British comedian Terry-Thomas had emphasized the importance of 'a very close-up technique' (*Radio Times*, 14 Sept. 1951). For Terry-Thomas see Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 654, 904.

<sup>18</sup> See *The Times*, 2 March 1959.

was to do comedy in close-up'.<sup>19</sup> Hancock's partner—or accomplice—Sidney James agreed. 'I guess my face is my fortune,' he told the Press in 1959. 'Mind you I've had to work on it a bit.'<sup>20</sup>

Hancock liked experiment, and in his final series he dispensed with James, a change that did not appeal to many lovers of the programme. The two men parted amicably, however, and Hancock's genius was never better displayed than in some of the last episodes, when he worked in a new setting. Among these were 'The Blood Donor', 'The Radio Ham', and 'The Bed Sitter', programmes that became 'classics', and were often to be repeated; the last of them centred brilliantly not on action but on boredom. The *Daily Telegraph* critic's headline spoke for itself; 'Hancock Solo Succeeds: Critics Silenced by the New Series.' Yet Peter Knight went on to give the reason: 'The coat with the astrakhan collar may have been left behind in Railway Cuttings, but basically it is the same Hancock and few viewers will quarrel with that.'<sup>21</sup> They did not.

These last programmes drew an even bigger audience share (30 per cent) than the sixth series (28 per cent), and by then Hancock was receiving £1,000 for each performance, almost twice the figure for his first series (£550), along with an extra £500 for one repeat and £250 for transcription rights. For the time these were large sums. McGivern wrote in 1959 of an 'expensive contract and a very expensive programme'. 'If knowledge of [its] price is put abroad,' McGivern had written in April 1959, 'it could seriously affect the prices we are at present paying for American telefilms.'<sup>22</sup> Unique in his field, Hancock had become 'a valuable property'—to use the terminology applied to Eamonn Andrews.<sup>23</sup>

When, during the preparation of his last series, Hancock was concussed in a car accident, he had to go on, although he was seriously handicapped by being forced to make the remaining programmes with the help of an auto-cue. After ending his series, he made a film *The Punch and Judy Man*, released in 1962,<sup>24</sup> before

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in P. Oakes, *Tony Hancock* (1975), p. 25.

<sup>20</sup> \*BBC Press Release for programme on 16 Oct. 1959 (T12/605/1).

<sup>21</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 27 May 1961; *The Times* heading on the same day ran '25 Minutes Soon Gone'.

<sup>22</sup> \*McGivern to Adam and Maschwitz, 1 April 1959.

<sup>23</sup> See above, p. 174.

<sup>24</sup> One of the characters in it was played by John Le Mesurier, who was to become familiar to viewers in *Dad's Army* (see below, p. 943). For stills from Hancock's films—and television programmes—see Wilmut's excellently produced *The Illustrated Hancock*. It also has a section on Hancock's stage career.

appearing in thirteen programmes for ATV in 1963.<sup>25</sup> By then he had personal worries which neither performing nor the money he received for doing so could solve. His marriage was breaking up, and after a disastrous second marriage he committed suicide in Australia in 1968. Ironically, Australia had been the first overseas country to buy his programmes in 1959.

There was no element of irony in the continued success of Hancock programmes after his death.<sup>26</sup> Their place in television history was already secure when he died. So, too, was their influence on other programmes, like Harry Worth's *Here's Harry* (1962–7), starring the most awkward of comedians, and, above all, *Steptoe and Son* (1962–74), a series starring Harry S. Corbett and Wilfred Brambell, also written by Galton and Simpson and also produced by Wood.<sup>27</sup> Corbett had acted with radical *Theatre Workshop* before turning to sitcom, which he now felt offered the best opportunity for 'good social comment'.<sup>28</sup> Hancock, with no such background, had prepared the way.

Meanwhile, Frankie Howerd, already established before Hancock as one of the funniest of all BBC comedians, could say: 'I now prefer being funny in a situation, rather than just telling jokes. That after all isn't fashionable any longer.'<sup>29</sup> A master of expressions, Howerd had a face made as much for close-ups as Hancock's. He also had genuine artistic interests outside comedy. It was entirely appropriate that a writer in *The Listener* could refer to him years later in the context of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the D. H. Lawrence novel judged—after a famous case in 1960—not to be obscene: 'his face is that of a superannuated chorister who reads *Lady Chatterley* in the sermon.'<sup>30</sup>

<sup>25</sup> The first ITV script-writer was Godfrey Harrison, who after six programmes was replaced by Terry Nation, who soon afterwards was to introduce Daleks into the BBC's *Dr. Who* (see below, p. 422). The ATV series, all recorded, were transmitted in a different order from that in which they had been made. One was called *The Politician*. Hancock represented 'The Advance Party'.

<sup>26</sup> There is a good article on his influence by Alan Brien in the *Sunday Times*, 26 Jan. 1969, where he notes Hancock's desire in his lifetime to be admitted to the pantheon of illustrious, half-forgotten, dead comedians while still in mid-career. 'He would have liked to knock the dust off his bowler hat on Stan Laurel's head, cross a limp niblick with Sid Field, and mix a gin for the baby with W. C. Fields.' Brien notes Hancock's interest in radio and its effect: 'they can keep their Sistine Chapels, give me the inside of a wireless set any day.'

<sup>27</sup> See below, pp. 434–6.

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in H. Burton, *Acting in the Sixties* (1970), p. 47.

<sup>29</sup> *Radio Times*, 28 March 1958.

<sup>30</sup> J. Waterman, 'Not on Your . . . No . . . What?', *The Listener*, 30 March 1978. For the *Lady Chatterley's Lover* case, which hit the headlines in Nov. 1960, see C. H. Rolph, *The Trial of Lady Chatterley* (1961), and Masters, *op. cit.*, pp. 61 ff.



Already during the Christmas season of 1957 Howerd made his début as Bottom the Weaver in an Old Vic production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.<sup>31</sup> The singer Jim Dale was to make the transition to Shakespeare also.

## 9. Sport

Although Christopher Innes stated in 1992 that he was deliberately leaving out both television and musicals in his *Modern British Drama, 1890–1990*,<sup>1</sup> he none the less found a place for a brief reference to Tom Stoppard's *Professional Foul* (1978), which was made for television. The cross-reference to sport was characteristic of Stoppard and the time, for the dramatic possibilities of sports were being increasingly exploited from the late 1950s, and were to be exploited still further as the lines between sport and entertainment became blurred.

The major new programme, *Grandstand*, introduced a whole panorama of sports, culminating in a *Sports Review of the Year*, which incorporated the choice of a Sports Personality of the Year, first devised in 1954, when Chataway had won the title, and as much attention was paid in it to stories as to games. As in drama, producers showed great interest in the exploitation of new techniques. How they could exploit them was often complicated initially by patterns of legal and financial rights. It was further complicated in practice by access to camera facilities. Sport never wished to be 'out-of-date'.

The history of the televising of the Derby, one of the country's biggest sporting events, illustrates the complexities of the relationships which were involved in presenting major sports events on the screen, and they were relationships which for financial reasons were to become more complex over the years. The Derby was a race that was listed as one of a small, select cluster of national events for

<sup>31</sup> K. Baily (ed.), *The Television Annual for 1960*, p. 153. The early Howerd was a master of the catch-phrase. 'The Best of Luck' and 'I Was Amazed' made their way round the country for radio's *Variety Bandbox* (1946–7). Howerd died in the same week as another of the best-known television comedians, Benny Hill, who first appeared on BBC radio in 1947 in *Variety Bandbox* and as a compère on television's *Music Hall* in 1949. *The Benny Hill Show* began on 15 Jan. 1955. See obituaries of Hill in the *Daily Mail*, 21 April 1992, *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, 22 April 1992, and of Howerd in the *Guardian* and the *Independent*, 20 April 1992. Appreciations of both men appeared in the *Guardian* and *The Times*, 22 April 1992.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 191 n.

which, according to the Television Act of 1954, neither ITV nor BBC could obtain exclusive broadcasting rights. In 1955 the result of the race was shown on BBC screens over a still picture of the winning post, and a day later a film of the race made by a cinema newsreel company was shown. Stills were shown on both BBC and ITV in 1956 and 1957, but in 1958 Smithers managed to get permission for BBC's own film cameras to take pictures of the race from a moving car on the track alongside the Epsom course, and these were included in the news bulletin that night.

There was similar coverage in 1959. In 1960, however, the pattern was less simple. The BBC attempted in February to acquire rights to show the whole race in *Sportview* on the evening of Derby Day, on the same terms as the cinema newsreel companies. It failed, however, when the Epsom Grandstand Association said that it was already seeking to reach an agreement with ITV that would prevent the Derby from being shown on BBC television until twenty-one days after the event; and a month later Captain Brownrigg of AR informed the BBC that he had made an exclusive contract which, according to the 1954 Act, he would share with the BBC on a 50 : 50 basis. AR cameras would do the filming. The BBC turned down the proposal, claiming that BBC camera work was superior.<sup>2</sup> In the event, there were two televised Derbys, though both were won by Lester Piggott on St. Paddy. The BBC claimed that 10 per cent of the population over 5, nearly 5 million people, watched the BBC's Derby and only 4 per cent the ITV's.<sup>3</sup> By contrast, TAM conceded a majority share for the BBC only in London, Scotland, and Wales.

Whatever the merits of the statistical argument on 1 June 1960, the BBC had enjoyed a lead in most events in the sports broadcasting races from the start of competition,<sup>4</sup> even if maintaining it involved a continuing struggle inside as well as outside the Corporation. The *Grandstand* producers had to fight hard, for instance, for their own physical access to the Ampex video-recorder, which Wood had craved and secured. They had to fight hard, too, for the acquisition of the necessary teleprinters to make possible immediate reporting of sports results.

<sup>2</sup> For BBC cameras in use at the time, see *BBC Handbook, 1961*, pp. 89 ff., and below, p. 859.

<sup>3</sup> \*VR/60/308, 15 June 1960. The broadcast won a high audience appreciation rating, and was said to convey 'all the atmosphere and excitement of this great national event'. The BBC had been left with only eighteen days to make its arrangements.

<sup>4</sup> See above, pp. 18–19.

Peter Dimmock, who had been Head of Television Outside Broadcasts since 1954 and who in 1972 was to move to programme selling and other forms of merchandising,<sup>5</sup> the same kind of move that Waldman had made, was familiar with and fascinated by American technical development. On his visits to the United States he was impressed by camera work both on the spot, particularly slow motion replays on film, and in the studio, where cueing devices, like teleprompters and ear-pieces, greatly improved performance.<sup>6</sup> Knowledgeable as he was about the work of CBS and NBC, he found himself arguing frequently about cameras with BBC engineers. They defended the Orthicon, a camera which was produced in Britain.<sup>7</sup> He wanted what was most up to date in technical terms, wherever it came from.

There were other fights inside the BBC, not only about equipment but about scheduling. Thus, when it was suggested that *Grandstand* would have to end at 4.45 p.m. to accommodate children's programmes, the producer Paul (later Sir Paul) Fox, editor of the *Sportview* unit, argued vigorously—and in face of objections both from Children's Programmes and from Kenneth Adam—that 'unless we can give the results AS THEY COME IN [eloquent capitals] and stay on the air until five o'clock to present them in tabulated form, the programme is not worth doing at all. I see this as a sports news programme and I do not see how we can go off the air at the very moment *the* news of the day is happening.'<sup>8</sup> For the time being, Adam won, and the old sports results programme (with regional opt-outs), *Today's Sport*, continued to be broadcast much later at 5.40 p.m.<sup>9</sup> This and many other birth pains made Fox fear that the new programme *Grandstand* would 'go off half-cock'.<sup>10</sup>

Dimmock was the presenter of the first programme, because his own choice as presenter, David Coleman, could not then be moved on a permanent footing from the Midland Region to London.

<sup>5</sup> See below, p. 713.

<sup>6</sup> See below, p. 836.

<sup>7</sup> See E. Pawley, *BBC Engineering, 1922–1972* (1972), p. 144.

<sup>8</sup> \*Fox to Dimmock, 'Saturday Afternoon Project', 1 Aug. 1958 (T14/493/1). Children's programmes were not the only obstacle in the way of effective scheduling. A memo from John Mair, Senior Planning Assistant, to Dimmock on 8 May 1958 pointed out that a programme starting earlier than 2 p.m. might cause the BBC to exceed its annual quota of outside broadcast time then fixed by the Postmaster-General ('\*Saturday Afternoon Project' (T14/493/1)).

<sup>9</sup> This timing, itself a compromise, was five minutes before ITV's sports results programme at 5.45 p.m.

<sup>10</sup> \*Fox to Dimmock, 'Saturday Afternoon Programme', 9 Sept. 1958 (T14/493/2).

Coleman soon joined him, however, as co-presenter for the second.<sup>11</sup> Four years earlier, Dimmock had welcomed viewers to the first edition of *Sportsview*, broadcast on Thursdays, which until 1958 remained the main weapon in the BBC's armoury against the competitor.<sup>12</sup> In the new *Grandstand* programme he had got much of what he wanted, and was surrounded by 'all the machinery that goes with high-speed sports reporting—batteries of tape machines, a giant sized scoreboard, the sub-editors' table'.<sup>13</sup> In most previous sports broadcasts in Britain, what was going on outside the studio had dominated the screen. Now, what went on inside the studio became almost as important. There had to be carefully arranged hand-overs, therefore, between studio and outside, along with visible as well as invisible talk-back systems.

However strenuous the birth pangs, the new programme, which began not with football but with golf from St Andrews, with the Horse of the Year Show, and with racing from Ascot, soon proved a success. The first Audience Research Report on the third programme in the sequence noted a 5 per cent audience with an audience reaction index of 80.<sup>14</sup> 'Well done BBC,' wrote one viewer, 'you have done a good job for all of us outdoor sports lovers. Long overdue, but very welcome.'<sup>15</sup> It was with pride that Adam was able to tell the Board of Governors in his report on the last quarter of 1958:

[*Grandstand*] seems to have made a particularly strong impact. The audience figures for Saturday afternoon have trebled and are now more than twice those of the competitor, while reaction indices are astonishingly high. Advertisers on the commercial network are said to have been cancelling their contracts and we know that advances have been made to BBC personalities, so far unsuccessfully, to start a similar non-stop programme on the other side.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Other names considered were Raymond Glendenning, prominent in sound broadcasting and closely identified with *Hall of Fame*; Eamonn Andrews, experienced jack of all trades, who presented *Sports Report* on radio; Raymond Baxter, who knew little about football and racing ('our Key Saturday sport'); and Kenneth Wolstenholme, who had already been contracted as a commentator on film of football matches ('Fox to Dimmock, 'Saturday Sports Compère', 22 Aug. 1958 (T14/493/1)).

<sup>12</sup> See Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 774 ff. 'Welcome sports fans to this first edition of *Sportsview*', Dimmock had stated in the first number. 'We hope to bring you through the programme the latest news and views from the world of sport.'

<sup>13</sup> Note for an article in the *Radio Times*, 22 Sept. 1958.

<sup>14</sup> The first programme had provoked thirty-seven telephone calls ('Duty Officer's Report). Only two were congratulatory. Eleven complained of too little time being given to the Horse of the Year Show. Ten thought the programme too 'bitty'.

<sup>15</sup> \*VR/58/582 'Grandstand, 25 October', 5 Nov. 1958.

<sup>16</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, Section by Adam in 'Report by Director of Television Broadcasting, October to December 1958', 29 Jan. 1959.

When he wrote these words, the BBC's average viewing ratio was 35 to ITV's 65,<sup>17</sup> and even when ITV fought back in its own sporting output, introducing in 1965 its *World of Sport*, complete with Eamonn Andrews, *Grandstand* more than held its own.<sup>18</sup>

## 10. Radio Reactions

During these years of expansion in BBC television, radio for a time continued to retain substantial audiences, although many of the largest of them had already been falling even before 1955.<sup>1</sup> The trend was obvious in relation to the News, where Television News had special advantages. Yet Light Programme News, a minor element in total news output, retained its audience share in 1957–8 before losing it in 1959 and in 1960. Until February 1957 its main news outlet, *Radio Newsreel*, had faced no competition from television because it was broadcast during the 'Toddlers' Truce'.

### *Percentages of the Population Aged 16 and Over Listening to News in sound*

| Year | Home | Light |
|------|------|-------|
| 1955 | 14   | 11    |
| 1956 | 13   | 9.5   |
| 1957 | 11   | 7     |
| 1958 | 9.5  | 7     |
| 1959 | 7    | 5.4   |
| 1960 | 5.1  | 3.8   |

There was a fall, too, in the figures of sound audiences for sport, even if the appeal persisted of well-known radio sports commentators with a big personal following, like John Arlott, 'the distinctive voice of cricket', who 'described the game as no other has ever managed to do'.<sup>2</sup> Brian Johnston, for many years one of Arlott's colleagues, who was to continue to broadcast cricket commentaries after Arlott's voice

<sup>17</sup> See above, p. 20.

<sup>18</sup> For later sports coverage, see below, p. 952.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> *Independent*, 16 Dec. 1991, obituary by Henry Blofeld. See also the *Guardian* and the *Daily Telegraph*, 16 Dec. 1991.

was no longer heard, claimed that no one had done more than Arlott 'with his marvellous Hampshire burr', 'to spread the gospel of cricket'.<sup>3</sup>

*Sports Parade* on the Light Programme on Saturdays at 12.30 or 1 p.m., announcing what was to be on offer, had a bigger audience in 1960 than *Sports Report* at 5 p.m., which gave news of what had happened, but boxing, with or without Raymond Glendenning, could still command big radio audiences whatever the time.<sup>4</sup> Races like the Grand National had a big audience, too, but commentators who described Rugby Union matches were listened to by very few people. It was Rugby League that was being popularized by the BBC during this period. The voice and the northern accent of its commentator Eddie Waring, who made his début as a television reporter in 1951, became almost as familiar as the voice and accent of Wilfred Pickles.

Some commentators, like Dan Maskell, 'the Voice of Tennis', had moved over from radio to television. He was to have a long BBC career.<sup>5</sup> His predecessor as tennis commentator at Wimbledon, Freddie Grisewood, with an inimitable voice of his own, was known best for his chairmanship of the well-known popular radio programme that was itself related to the weekly news lines, *Any Questions?*, broadcast on Friday evenings on the Light Programme. None the less, the audience for it was declining, from 16 per cent of the potential total audience in 1955 to 15 per cent in 1956, 13 per cent in 1957, 12 per cent in 1958, 8.6 per cent in 1959, and 5.9 per cent in 1960.<sup>6</sup> Staged then only in the West Country, it had a distinctive element of political controversy in it, although it was less 'political' than it was to become later. Like other radio and television programmes, it spotlighted 'personalities'. 'Almost anybody in public life would be

<sup>3</sup> *Independent on Sunday*, 15 Dec. 1991. See also B. Johnston, *Chatterboxes, My Friends, the Commentators* (1983). Johnston, who joined the BBC just after Arlott in 1946, had worked first on live radio broadcasts from theatres and music-halls. He became the BBC's first Cricket Correspondent in 1963, and he, too, had his own highly distinctive voice. Arlott had joined the BBC in 1945 as a producer. He wrote more than forty books, and attempted to win a seat in Parliament—as a Liberal—in 1955 and 1959.

<sup>4</sup> For *Sports Report* see B. Butler (ed.), *Sports Report: 40 Years of the Best* (1987). In 1959 by far the biggest sports audience (25%) was for the heavyweight boxing contest between Brian London and Henry Cooper.

<sup>5</sup> For his obituary see *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Independent*, 11 Jan. 1993.

<sup>6</sup> For the early history of *Any Questions?* see Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 102–5. For Grisewood see *The Times*, 16 Nov. 1972. He had joined the BBC in Savoy Hill days. In 1952 he wrote an autobiography, *The World Goes By*, and in 1959 *My History of the BBC*. For the later history of *Any Questions?* see below, pp. 584–5.



only too glad to take part in the programme', its producer Michael Bowen wrote, borrowing a phrase from Adam.<sup>7</sup>

If programmes like *Any Questions?* with an obvious element of topicality were clearly losing ground under the pressure of television, so, too, of course, were radio programmes with little or with no current affairs content, programmes as different as *Life with the Lyons*, *Friday Night is Music Night*, *Saturday Night Theatre*, and even *The Archers*. Meanwhile, some effective 'Third Programme' radio survived cuts so that Val Mehta in an influential article in the *New Yorker* in 1963 could treat them as no more than a setback.<sup>8</sup> Yet in the case of such, radio ratings were so small that it was scarcely worthwhile counting them.

*Size of Audiences for Radio Programmes: Percentages*

| Year | <i>Life with the Lyons</i> | <i>Friday Night is Music Night</i> | <i>Saturday Night Theatre</i> | <i>The Archers</i> |
|------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1955 | 18                         | 12.5                               | 14                            | 23                 |
| 1956 | 15                         | 12                                 | 13                            | 20.5               |
| 1957 | 11.5                       | 9                                  | 10                            | 18                 |
| 1958 | 8.5                        | 9                                  | 8                             | 15.4               |
| 1959 | 6.4                        | 7.1                                | 5.5                           | 12.9               |
| 1960 | 4.5                        | 5.2                                | 3.9                           | 9.8                |

Among the specifically topical radio programmes, *Today*, which faced no competition from television, had a more shaky start than television's *Tonight*, and it took effort, imagination, and resources to turn it into a fixture. Even before its first number was broadcast on 28 October 1957, there had been a characteristically bitter and untidy argument between News, then headed by Tahu Hole, and Talks, headed by John Green, about who should be responsible for it.

Isa Benzie, a Talks Producer, who chose the name *Today*, had found it difficult to persuade R. D'A. Marriott, still Assistant Director of sound Broadcasting, that it needed a presenter, not staff announcers from News, if it was to acquire an identity of its own. It was certainly unhelpful on the part of News—and of the Head of News Talks, E. R. Thompson—to suggest that if Newsreel material were incorporated in the new programme, it would have to be used *en bloc*, completely uncut by Talks. What programme could have survived such treatment? Many compromises were made, but the number of

<sup>7</sup> M. Bowen, 'Any Questions?', *Ariel*, Jan. 1957.

<sup>8</sup> V. Mehta, 'Upward and Onward with the Arts: The Third', *New Yorker*, 18 May 1963.

staff eventually allotted to the programme was too small, and the attempt to control it far too tough.

Nevertheless, it was a sign of the intrinsic interest and importance of the idea behind the programme that it soon won an audience, too big, indeed, for the small staff to cope with incoming telephone calls. Indeed, Isa Benzie warned that unless more staff were appointed, the programme would have to go off the air. All she got was one extra producer. Not surprisingly, she soon had to take sick leave, and it was only after Betty Rowley took over as producer and in May 1959 became its editor, that the programme finally established itself.<sup>9</sup>

At first, *Today* consisted of two sections ('editions') of twenty minutes on each side of *Lift Up Your Hearts*, listened to by many non-church-goers, and the 8 a.m. news. The length of the first edition had been limited to avoid encroachment on *Morning Music*, but was extended from twenty to twenty-five minutes in October 1958, and in December 1958 the second was similarly extended on Wednesdays and Fridays. The content of the two segments was varied, ranging from 'briefing a pilot at Heathrow' (in the very first number) to T. S. Eliot reading his poem '*La figlia che piange*'.

*Today's* long-term success depended greatly on the personality and skills of Jack de Manio, who was 'tried out' as presenter (following Alan Skempton) during the summer of 1958 and stayed on until 1971. De Manio, endowed with what was described as 'a rich gin-and-tonic voice', was able to make very different kinds of people feel at home in front of the microphone. Just as important, he liked to feel that he was equally at home in other people's homes. He brought a distinctive air of informality to *Today* that was at least as real—and far more chaotic—than the televised informality of *Tonight*.<sup>10</sup> He also had immense curiosity. It shone through. De Manio liked the eccentric and the unpredictable.<sup>11</sup>

In 1962 a pattern of shift working was introduced, and the programme now fell under the control of Stephen Bonarjee, editor of an evening combined news and current affairs radio programme, *Ten o'Clock*, which had been introduced as 'frankly experimental' on 19 September 1960. Like *Today*, it offered both news and comment

<sup>9</sup> In *BBC Handbook, 1961*, p. 31, it was described as 'a special morning attraction' that had proved that at the right time of day there could be large audiences for radio.

<sup>10</sup> For an anecdotal sketch of the history of the programme see J. Timpson, *Today and Yesterday* (1976). Timpson became dual presenter with de Manio in 1970.

<sup>11</sup> See N. Andrews, 'All Today's Yesterdays', *Radio Times*, 21–7 Nov. 1987, an article celebrating the programme's thirtieth anniversary.

in the same programme. Bonarjee, along with his deputy editor, Arthur Hutchinson, had returned to radio from television in order to launch it, and among those who worked with him were Tony Whitby, a man with an influential BBC future who left *At Home and Abroad* to join him.<sup>12</sup> The senior producer, A. D. B. Hope, had been a Current Affairs producer in Talks Division.

Another senior producer, Peter Redhouse, had been in Overseas Talks and Features, and Denis Blakely was recruited from the Monitoring Service.<sup>13</sup> There were also interviewers of the calibre of Hardiman Scott, the BBC's Political Correspondent, and presenters of the quality of Robert McKenzie, George Scott, James Mossman, Richard Gould-Adams, and John Thompson. The last of these in a later period of radio competition was to become the IBA's first Director of Radio in 1972. During the early 1960s, however, it was competition inside the BBC—with television—that mattered most to Bonarjee. Having been an active participant in the Greene revolution in television,<sup>14</sup> he was particularly happy to capture 'many of the plums' for Broadcasting House on his return to sound.

The most popular of programmes in sound during the late 1950s included panel games like *My Word!*, later transferred to television; *Does the Team Think?*, a farcical, largely unscripted version of more serious radio discussions such as *The Brains Trust*; *Have a Go* (with Wilfred Pickles) still popular in 1960; and Kenneth Horne's deliciously funny *Beyond Our Ken*, which had a smaller audience, however, than the radio version of *Hancock's Half-Hour*.<sup>15</sup> Several of these programmes had weekly repeats. Meanwhile, *Round Britain Quiz*, most sophisticated of all quizzes, kept its audience. So, too, did *Down Your Way*, which since 1952 had had Franklin Engelmann as its commentator;<sup>16</sup> *Gardeners' Question Time*, started in the North Region in 1947 with as strong a northern flavour as *The Good Old Days*, broadcast on television since 1953 from Leeds City Varieties; and *Desert Island Discs*, compered by Roy Plomley who, *pace* his guests,

<sup>12</sup> See below, p. 800.

<sup>13</sup> See 'Ten O'Clock, a Time and a Programme', *Ariel*, Feb. 1961.

<sup>14</sup> See above, p. 156.

<sup>15</sup> *Beyond Our Ken* ran from 1 July 1958 to 16 Feb. 1964. Its first script-writers were Barry Took and Eric Merriman. Kenneth Williams, Bill Pertwee, Hugh Paddick, and Betty Marsden were among its stars. The musical interlude was provided by the Fraser Hayes close harmony group. See B. Took, *Laughter in the Air* (1976) and B. Took, *A Point of View* (1990).

<sup>16</sup> Engelmann took over from Richard Dimbleby. He died in March 1972, only a few hours after recording his 733rd edition. He was succeeded by Brian Johnston, another example of broadcasting versatility.

was the programme. With him it had what was later to be called 'a solid institutional quality'.<sup>17</sup> He knew how to make it last.

*The Critics*, a very different arts programme from *Monitor*, followed a formula, as, of course, did *Desert Island Discs*. It had been broadcast continuously since September 1947, and unlike *Desert Island Discs*, it depended not on one person but on a team mainly of 'rotating regulars' who dealt in turn with books, radio, films, theatre, and art. Frequent participants included Dilys Powell, Philip Hope Wallace, Walter Allen, Ivor Brown, and Sheila Porter. The first two were the most popular. There was a big change in timing in April 1956, when the programme was moved from noon on Sundays to 7 p.m. The large majority of listeners welcomed the change, but it soon moved back again, this time to 12.10 p.m.<sup>18</sup> By then the programme was edited on tape, and lively though it often was, it would soon lend itself to satire. Its producer, Peggy Barker, wrote in 1959 that 'critics are apt to have splendid and quite impractical ideas about what we shall do, and my long training in throwing cold water is very useful'.<sup>19</sup>

By far the biggest radio audience in 1960 (34.6 per cent) was that for *Two-Way Family Favourites*, broadcast on Sunday morning at 12 noon on the Light Programme. The audience was slightly larger than it had been in 1955, and in 1956, when Jean Metcalfe, Cliff Michelmores's wife, was singled out as the nation's favourite, one contented listener told the BBC that there was 'no one to touch her as a disc jockey'.<sup>20</sup> *Housewives' Choice*, broadcast daily, also sustained its audience (around 17 per cent); to be chosen to compère the show was, in Peter Black's words, 'a kind of decoration', like being chosen as Roy Plomley's castaway on *Desert Island Discs* (or on television Freeman's *Face to Face*).<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, the audience for *Children's Favourites*, still presided over by Derek McCullough, 'Uncle Mac', actually grew from 16 per cent in 1956 to over 20 per cent in

<sup>17</sup> See B. Appleyard, 'Troubled Times on Paradise Island', *The Times*, 4 Jan. 1986. The programme celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1992 with a reunion of its guests. For *The Good Old Days* see *Ariel*, April 1967.

<sup>18</sup> \*Audience Research Report LR/56/593, 1 May 1956.

<sup>19</sup> *Ariel*, Sept. 1959.

<sup>20</sup> \*LR/56/1382, Aug. 1956. The programme, one of the longest-running on the BBC, remained on the air until 1979.

<sup>21</sup> P. Black, *The Biggest Aspidistra in the World* (1972), p. 179. To mark the BBC's sixtieth birthday, a series of five weekly programmes entitled *When Housewives Had the Choice* was broadcast in the autumn of 1982. They were written by Russell Davies, and presented by himself and Julie Covington. Jonathan James-Moore was the producer.

1960,<sup>22</sup> although three years later, when *Children's Hour*, the oldest children's programme, was dropped, its audience was said to have fallen to 250,000.<sup>23</sup>

The size of audiences reveals that in a world of change there was still an acknowledged place for established daily and weekly routines in radio listening. Yet, during the 1960s, nothing could be completely taken for granted as far as particular programmes were concerned.<sup>24</sup> If any programme was an institution, *Children's Hour* certainly was, and if any programme seemed sacred, it was *Lift Up Your Hearts*. Leaving on one side the power of television, there were changes in the composition of the radio audiences that were bound to affect programming. In particular, the proportion of adult listeners who had taken part in, or lived through, the Second World War was inexorably diminishing. None the less, in 1956, servicemen still in the Forces were involved directly and regularly in the *Two-Way Family Favourites* programme, and they continued to be so even when Britain's imperial responsibilities receded.

It might once more have been wartime in 1956 when one disgruntled listener complained, 'Why don't they write home instead of writing to the BBC?'<sup>25</sup> The continuing preponderance of the wartime audience was demonstrated by the fact that on television in 1960 *Vera Lynn Sings* could win a bigger audience (19 per cent) than *Juke Box Jury* (14 per cent). She was also attracting a 10 per cent audience for the repeat of her programme. The Forces' Sweetheart was still very much in the news. Vera (later Dame Vera) Lynn had to compete on television. Who she was 'placed against' on 'the other channel' mattered. In sound, however, BBC programmes faced no competition from inside Britain, whether they were well-established or innovatory.

<sup>22</sup> *Children's Favourites* had been introduced in 1954, the successor to *Children's Choice*. McCullough continued to present the programme until 1964.

<sup>23</sup> For the end of *Children's Hour* see below, pp. 342–3.

<sup>24</sup> Audiences for *Today*, *Woman's Hour*, and *Any Questions?* were far smaller; and that for another hardy programme with a continuing history, Alistair Cooke's *Letter from America*, much smaller still. Even *The Archers* in 1960 had an audience of roughly only one-fifth of that for *Two-Way Family Favourites*.

<sup>25</sup> \*LR/56/1382.

## 11. Music

Of all BBC departments, the one which was least influenced by competition was Music. The selection and presentation of music reflected not what 'the competitor' was doing, but what were the tastes and tendencies within the BBC itself and within the musical world in which it had become an important part. Serious music was given a high priority, small though audiences usually were in terms of percentages of population, and while sound was obviously the major medium in music, serious attempts were made to give televised music an accepted place on the screen. At one end of the spectrum, the opening and closing Promenade Concerts from the Albert Hall were televised, as were opera and ballet from Covent Garden and Glyndebourne; at the other end of the spectrum, 'celebrity recitals' were televised too. Menuhin, Fischer-Dieskau, and Arrau were three of the celebrities who appeared in 1959/60. Studio broadcasts with a 'music appreciation' component, very familiar to listeners to sound, were also tried out on television, among them *Music for You*, and attempts were made, too, to link the musical and visual arts. At Christmas 1957, for example, a performance of Handel's *Messiah* was accompanied by images of German baroque religious art.

There had been a change in the administration of music on television when Kenneth Wright was succeeded in 1956 by Lionel Salter, who had produced opera and ballet programmes from Alexandra Palace before the War. Meanwhile, policy questions of how to present it and how much there should be—questions that paralleled questions asked in religious broadcasting—were being discussed by the BBC's Central Music Advisory Committee. When one member of the Committee urged in March 1957 that at least as much attention should be paid to the promotion of music on television as had been recently paid—with successful results—to the promotion of the visual arts, Salter replied that there would always be a limited amount of music on television as compared with sound. The most important point, he insisted, was to ensure that only 'the very best of each kind' should be on offer.<sup>1</sup> At a later meeting Beadle returned

<sup>1</sup> \*Central Music Advisory Committee, *Minutes*, 27 March 1957. Dr W. Greenhouse Allt had replaced Frank Howes as Chairman of the Committee, and took the chair for the first time on 23 Feb. 1956.



to a familiar theme when he told the members that there were limits to what the BBC could do with only one television programme at its disposal. He hoped, therefore, that there would be a concentration on opera and ballet.<sup>2</sup>

The Committee, which had a history that went back to 1925,<sup>3</sup> met three times a year, and between 1955 and 1960 it discussed a wide range of topics, including the future of BBC orchestras and the role of the Musicians' Union. Like its predecessors, it represented a variety of musical experience and interests at a time when, in the words of one of its members, Professor Antony Lewis, 'the BBC's music output' was 'generally regarded as representing the most important co-ordinated plan in the life of the country'.<sup>4</sup> Lewis spoke just before the advent of ITV competition, but even after competition had begun, 'competition' never figured as an item on the agenda of any of the Committee's meetings. Nor did it play any significant part in the pattern of BBC musical provision. It was exceptional when AR presented Benjamin Britten's *Turn of the Screw* in two instalments in 1959 and when Granada presented the Royal Opera House's Prokofiev ballet *Cinderella* in 1960.<sup>5</sup> These were dismissed inside the BBC as 'prestige' offerings.

During the first years of competition, British musical tastes inside and outside the BBC were assured, if not completely rigid, and there was less interest in the new than in the familiar. The historian of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Nicholas Kenyon, rightly picked out a relatively rare passage from a discussion on contemporary European music in 1956 as a memorial to what was then an essentially 'insular' approach to music.<sup>6</sup> When questions were asked about the quality of the musical composition of composers like Henze and Boulez (the latter with a BBC career ahead of him), the conclusion was reached 'on balance' that 'it was felt that to broadcast a few of their better works would not blunt our reputation for acute critical assessment'.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> \*Minutes, 26 June 1957.

<sup>3</sup> For its origins, see Briggs, *The Birth of Broadcasting* (1961), p. 223. Reith said wistfully after the first meeting that 'such committees are awfully difficult to handle'.

<sup>4</sup> \*Minutes, 26 June 1955.

<sup>5</sup> *The Times*, 29 Dec. 1959, 14 April 1960.

<sup>6</sup> For two contrasting versions of British musical history, versions with the same title, see F. Howes, *The English Musical Renaissance* (1966), and P. J. Pirrie, *The English Musical Renaissance* (1979). See also F. Routh, *Contemporary British Music: Britain's Musical Tradition since the War* (1972).

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in N. Kenyon, *The BBC Symphony Orchestra, 1930–1980* (1981), p. 278. Kenyon was to become Controller of Radio 3 in 1992.

Since 1954, one new British work had been commissioned each year, to be performed in the Royal Festival Hall; and to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Third Programme, further new chamber music was commissioned from British composers, among them Peter Racine Fricker, who joined the Music Advisory Committee in 1957, Alun Hoddinott, Kenneth Leighton, and Phyllis Tate. Significantly, however, orchestral music was commissioned almost exclusively from continental composers, among them Ibert, Martinu, and Panufnik. Michael (later Sir Michael) Tippett was the only British composer invited to join this privileged inner group.<sup>8</sup>

There were signs of change in audience tastes, however, and the BBC was beginning to reflect them under the guidance of its Controller, Music, R. J. F. Howgill, who had held the post since 1952. One non-anniversary day in the life of the Third Programme, 3 March 1957, presented the kind of programme that would become more common during the 1960s. It started with Luigi Nono's *Conti per 13*, and was followed with *Le Marteau sans maître* by Boulez, Stockhausen's 'Zeit Masze', and Concerto Op. 24 by Webern. Significantly, however, the details of this broadcast had not been announced in the *Radio Times*. Nor were BBC musicians involved. The works were played in a concert, directed by William (later Sir William) Glock, at the Institute of Contemporary Arts.<sup>9</sup> The fact that Howgill was prepared to include such a concert in his programme schedules was a sign of his open-mindedness, but neither he nor his colleagues wished to tamper with the balance within 'the total music output' of the BBC. Howgill was insistent that it was by that 'total music output'—and not by its commissioning policy or, indeed, by its Third Programme policy—that the BBC should be judged.

The effect on music of the introduction of Network Three had been disturbing. The first casualty had been the loss of the BBC Symphony Orchestra's Thursday Concert on the Third Programme, and there had been fewer concert series on the Third Programme. No Renaissance, medieval, or oriental music had been broadcast. Nor had there been much baroque music. The Wednesday Concerts on the Home Service also suffered after the reorganization; it was felt 'higher up in the BBC' that they contained too much new music.<sup>10</sup> The end of repeats meant

<sup>8</sup> For Tippett as a critic of BBC policies see above, p. 57. It was not until the Autumn of 1957 that the commissioned work was ready. Tippett joined the BBC's Central Music Advisory Committee in 1961.

<sup>9</sup> Kenyon, *op. cit.*, p. 278.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 277.

that listeners could not hear difficult works twice. For other reasons, 'novelties' disappeared in the Sunday programme. There were shibboleths too. It was considered pre-eminently desirable that all the BBC Symphony Orchestra's broadcasts should be live.

The Orchestra was still held up as the brightest star in the BBC's musical firmament, and although a report of August 1957 concluded that 'its disbandment could not seriously be contemplated', the fact that it had been felt necessary to state this was a sign that orchestral disbanding was being seriously contemplated in some BBC circles. Other BBC orchestras were in real danger. A Working Party set up in August 1957 recommended the disbandment of four of them: the Midland, either the Scottish or the Northern Orchestra, the West of England Light Orchestra, and the Revue Orchestra. Its recommendations, however, which were made in March 1958 but not submitted to the Board of Management until the beginning of 1959, were scaled down by the Board, mainly in the light of likely opposition from the Musicians' Union. In fact, little was done at the time.<sup>11</sup> The BBC Symphony Orchestra itself was at no point in real danger.

None the less, it had other problems. At the end of the 1950s it was never without critics, and many of them were influential. 'There is an inherited aura of mediocrity about BBC concerts,' wrote Ernest Bean, Manager of the Festival Hall, in February 1960, 'which keeps people away.'<sup>12</sup> Rudolf Schwarz, who had replaced Sir Malcolm Sargent as Chief Conductor in August 1956,<sup>13</sup> impressed many of the musicians performing with him by his efforts 'to reach the truth of the music', but in his last year as Chief Conductor, 1961–2, his treatment of Mahler's Ninth Symphony was to be described in *The Times* as 'blatant misrepresentation', in the *Daily Telegraph* as moving 'from bad to worse', and in the *Guardian* somewhat more gently as 'misleading'.<sup>14</sup>

Again, however, the Orchestra was known to have distinctive talent and identity. Just before Schwarz retired, *The Times* claimed that

<sup>11</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'House Orchestra: Note by the Director of Sound Broadcasting', 29 Jan. 1959; *Minutes*, 5 Feb. 1959.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Kenyon, op. cit., p. 292.

<sup>13</sup> Changing Sargent's title had been difficult. Inside the BBC's Music Department he had been criticized from the time of his appointment for not devoting enough time to the Orchestra. He had great moments of triumph, however, both at festivals overseas and during the Proms. After Sept. 1956 he remained Conductor-in-Chief of the Promenade Concerts and Chief Guest Conductor of the Orchestra (\*BBC Press Statement, 11 Sept. 1956).

<sup>14</sup> *The Times*, 10 Dec. 1961; Donald Mitchell, *Daily Telegraph*, 10 Dec. 1961; Neville Cardus, *Guardian*, 10 Dec. 1961.

while it lacked, and for many years had lacked, 'exactly that sure-founded virtuosity and strong musical character without which versatile development is attempted in vain', nevertheless the 'material' for a conductor to draw on was 'admirable enough', and could, 'under a Stravinsky, a Rosbaud, a Maazel, an Izler Solomon, be welded together into the semblance of a splendid orchestra'.<sup>15</sup>

Long before then, a revolution in the control of BBC music had taken place. On Howgill's retirement in the autumn of 1959, William (later Sir William) Glock was appointed Controller, Music,<sup>16</sup> an apparently quixotic appointment that led one of Glock's own friends, Walter Legge, to write him when he heard the news that he did not know whether to be 'more surprised or delighted'. 'I feel as though I were a citizen of Wittenborg [sic] in 1556 and Luther had just been elected Pope.'<sup>17</sup> Yet, for all the surprise, there was continuity. Howgill, who had met Glock, was the man who had recommended him. Moreover, Glock had served on the BBC's Central Music Advisory Committee since March 1957.<sup>18</sup> And he was to serve in his new post until 1972.

Born in 1908, Glock was Chairman of the Music Committee of the Institute of Contemporary Arts, linked to the International Society for Contemporary Music, and it was through that body that he had first met Howgill: the BBC had broadcast a number of concerts from the Institute. He had earlier demonstrated his practical capacities when he established a lively summer school, first at Bryanston School and later at Dartington Hall in Devon, and he had also founded a new magazine, *The Score*, in which young composers wrote about their work. He had been in the news far more than his predecessor.

In his new post Glock wished to introduce a wider selection of contemporary music, including continental music, and to revitalize the BBC Symphony Orchestra. He loved planning programmes and series. He was keen, too, to enliven BBC concerts policy, switching as much music as possible from the studio to the Festival Hall and

<sup>15</sup> *The Times*, 4 May 1962.

<sup>16</sup> There were almost disastrous time-lags in the BBC's attempt to secure the services of Glock in 1958 and 1959. A tea with Lindsay Wellington was not followed up quickly enough. Nor was a subsequent lunch. Jacob himself promised to telephone him, but had not been able to locate the Chairman, and could not get hold of him. The Vice-Chairman, Philip Morris, had not been helpful. For Glock's account, see his *Notes in Advance: An Autobiography in Music* (1991), pp. 97 ff.

<sup>17</sup> Glock, *Notes in Advance*, p. 99.

<sup>18</sup> He was appointed at the same time as Dr (later Sir) Thomas Armstrong. He missed all the meetings of the Committee, however, until 27 Nov. 1958.

other concert halls outside. In his own words, he wished BBC orchestras to play more often to human beings and less to microphones. In the short run, he was successful in realizing many of these objectives. He also rejuvenated the Third Programme, introducing, for example, interesting Thursday Invitation Concerts into its schedules.<sup>19</sup> Most important of all, he succeeded in bringing new men into the BBC's Music Division, many of them young men of the kind that Greene wished to recruit for BBC Television. They included Hans Keller, Leo Black, Alexander Goehr, composer and future Professor of Music at Cambridge University, and David Drew.<sup>20</sup> Glock wanted to give them as free a hand as possible.

The long-term programme that Glock wished to carry through was not an easy one to implement, but, significantly, he did not wish to work through a committee in order to achieve it. Perhaps he did not know that at the meeting of the Governors which approved his appointment, the previous item on the agenda had been a consideration of the Report on House Orchestras.<sup>21</sup> Their fate was still in the balance—and, moreover, in the hands of a Committee. Significantly also, perhaps, the first time that Glock spoke at the Central Music Advisory Committee was on 27 October 1959, after he had been appointed Controller. A member of the Committee, Dr Daniel Jones, had proposed a motion that the BBC should clearly define its music policy in terms of presenting without 'bias' 'the broadest possible' range of music, 'including all styles, tendencies and schools'. There should be only one proviso: all performance should be of 'high standard'. In his reply to Jones, Glock focused on the words 'bias' and 'high standard', questioning just what they implied; but, whatever they meant, the motion was carried.<sup>22</sup> Jones had proposed it following an inconclusive discussion at the previous meeting as to whether

<sup>19</sup> They were broadcast from the BBC studio at Maida Vale, and often used different ensembles in the same programme.

<sup>20</sup> Keller was a violinist and music critic who had fled to Britain from Austria in 1938. He joined the BBC in 1959 as Music Talks Producer, and became Chief Assistant (Orchestral and Choral) in 1962. In later years he often wrote about football. He retired from the BBC in 1979. Leo Black had joined the BBC as a music assistant in 1960, and at the end of the decade was working part-time. In 1971 he was appointed Chief Producer, Music Programmes, Radio. He left the BBC in 1988. Alexander Goehr was the son of the German conductor Walter Goehr, and worked in the BBC from 1960 to 1967 as a music assistant. From 1971 to 1976 he was West Riding Professor of Music at Leeds University. Drew remained music critic of the *New Statesman* while working at the BBC.

<sup>21</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 8 Feb. 1959.

<sup>22</sup> \*Central Music Advisory Committee, *Minutes*, 27 Oct. 1959. Jones was a Swansea composer and life-long friend of Dylan Thomas. He is mentioned in Kingsley Amis's *Memoirs* (1991 edn.), pp. 137–8.

the BBC had shown 'bias' in not presenting enough of the music of Arnold Bax.<sup>23</sup>

Glock now knew what to expect of the Central Music Advisory Committee, and it was on his suggestion that Michael Tippett joined it. He had other BBC problems, however, outside the Committee. Wellington, who also sat on it, did not agree with him about the quality of the Proms or about many other subjects; while inside his own Department, Maurice Johnstone, Head of Music Programmes, Radio, who had moved to London in 1953 after being Head of Music in Manchester, was particularly unsympathetic.<sup>24</sup> It proved possible to bypass Johnstone, if not Wellington, and in 1960 Johnstone left the BBC. He was succeeded by one member of the Music staff who had been helpful to Glock from the start: Eric Warr, who had been directly responsible to Johnstone. By a coincidence, Warr had been Glock's predecessor as Organ Scholar at Caius College, Cambridge. He was to stay in his new post for seven years until his own retirement.

Within a very short time Glock had changed the structure of his Department as well as its personalities, substituting for the Chief Assistants attached to Programmes, of whom the Chief Assistants for the Third Programme and Home Service were the most important, Chief Assistants attached to categories of music, like chamber music and recitals, choral and orchestral music. He was clearly concerned with the BBC's music output as a whole and with the choice of the best Programme on which to present it. A very similar pattern of structural reorganization was to be followed a decade later in the BBC's external services.<sup>25</sup>

There were two symbolic events at the beginning of the Glock regime. The first was in London, the second in Italy. Glock persuaded Stravinsky to conduct a performance of *Oedipus Rex* for the Third Programme at the Festival Hall. The date was 9 November 1959, and Jean Cocteau was the speaker. The programme was broadcast live at the extraordinary time of 11 p.m. on a Monday after a regular Festival Hall concert, and despite or because of the date, the place,

<sup>23</sup> \*Minutes, 9 July 1959.

<sup>24</sup> According to Glock ('Interview with Frank Gillard for the Oral History Project, March 1983), Johnstone, a composer and friend of Sir Malcolm Sargent, said soon after they met, 'I know nothing about chamber music and care less'. He included Bach's St Matthew Passion in this category. Yet, in *Notes in Advance*, Glock describes him as 'a pertinacious and likeable Lancashireman' (p. 101).

<sup>25</sup> See below, pp. 703-5.



and the speaker, constituted what seemed to be a kind of new Rite of Spring. Eighteen months later, on 13 April 1961, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Bruno Maderna, one of Glock's favourite conductors, gave the first performance in Venice of Nono's opera *Intolleranza 1960*; it did so at the invitation of RAI, the Italian radio and television organization.<sup>26</sup>

A manifestly left-wing work, described by its composer as 'a story for our times', the new opera was barracked by well organized right-wing protesters. More ominously—and in line with much that was to happen later in the decade—there was a stink-bomb attack from the gallery on the orchestra pit. Maderna braved both kinds of assault, and the events of the evening were read about by far more readers of Britain's popular Press than listeners to the performance.<sup>27</sup> BBC music was in the news. There was an element of irony in the fact that a few members of the Venice Festival audience, a radical audience, had booed Vaughan Williams's Fourth Symphony when the BBC Symphony Orchestra had played it at an earlier concert. It had been far too 'old-fashioned'. Vaughan Williams, to the chagrin of many BBC listeners, was not to figure prominently in Glock's programmes for the 1960s. Nor was Bax.

## 12. *This is the BBC*

No programme parade of the late 1950s could end without introducing the programme of programmes, that which tried to sum up everything that really mattered in the daily life of the BBC: the highly accomplished Richard Cawston sixty-eight-minute film *This is the BBC*, the first film to be made about the BBC for twenty-five years.<sup>1</sup> Its première was before an invited audience at the Odeon, Leicester Square, on 12 November 1959, and it was released by the

<sup>26</sup> The RAI Orchestra had stated that it would need twenty-two rehearsals; the BBC Orchestra said that it could do it in eleven, 'as', recalled Glock, 'we could' ('Oral History Project interview).

<sup>27</sup> See *The Times*, 14, 16 April 1961. Both *La Traviata* and *Madame Butterfly* had been booed at their premières, *The Times* music critic wrote, but the 'hullabaloo [in Venice] was something altogether dirtier and more dangerous'.

<sup>1</sup> The previous film to tackle the subject had been John Grierson's *BBC—The Voice of Britain* (1935). When Grierson, pioneer of documentary, made his film, the BBC employed 2,000 people. In 1959, it employed over 16,000 people. In 1959 Cawston was far less well known than Grierson had been in 1935. He was a producer in the Television Talks Department.

Central Film Library on 1 January 1960 to mark the new decade. General though it was in scope, the film won the British Film Academy award for the Best Specialized Film of 1959. Ed Murrow, who cannot be left out of any section of this chapter, thought it the best film that he had ever seen 'dealing with an instrument of mass communication'.<sup>2</sup>

*This is the BBC* took the producer and his assistant only seven months from commissioning to completion. The research and preparation of the script were finished in under two months. The camera crew worked on it for two months, the editor for three months, and it took three days to mix the sound. Cawston had been reluctant to embark on the project at first. In his opinion, there seemed to be far more interesting things to do than make an 'in-house film' about the organization to which he belonged.<sup>3</sup> Yet very soon he found the project completely absorbing. It was not a costly film. Artists and copyright fees, together with technical film costs, amounted to only £7,000.<sup>4</sup>

The film did not depend on a voice-over commentary. Instead, viewers were offered an impressionistic picture sequence of a typical, though imaginary, broadcasting day, what the *Times Educational Supplement* called '24 hours in the life of the rambling, indefinable multitude of activities that make up the work of the BBC'.<sup>5</sup> The time was Spring, the day was Wednesday. It was the day of the Lincolnshire Handicap, and the Boat Race was to be rowed the following Saturday. In all, 1,200 people appeared in action on the screen, with every shot having been taken where it had or would really happen. Nothing was 'mocked up' in film studios.

The day's sequence started at midnight. Home broadcasting was closing down for the night, but there was hectic activity both in the studios of the external services at Bush House and in the Riverside television studios, where sets for later in the day were already being assembled. As the day went on—and throughout the day, time was shown on clocks—viewers caught glimpses of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, of the popular comedy show *Beyond Our Ken*, of the *Black and White Minstrels*, of Brecht's play *Mother Courage*, of the Lincolnshire Handicap, of figure skating for Eurovision, and, not least, of Sir

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in 'Some Press Comments on "This is the BBC"', *Ariel*, Dec. 1959.

<sup>3</sup> \*Cawston interviewed by Leonard Miall for the Oral History Project, May/June 1980.

<sup>4</sup> Taking into account staff, premises, and overhead costs, the real cost was probably three or four times as much (\*BBC Notes for Use in Introducing the Film, 12 May 1960).

<sup>5</sup> *Times Educational Supplement*, quoted in publicity leaflet 'This is the BBC: a documentary film', 1959.

Isaiah Berlin talking.<sup>6</sup> And the news of the day—in this case entirely imaginary—focused on the launching of a Russian moon rocket and on an air search for a missing liner in the Atlantic.<sup>7</sup>

Almost at the end of the film, viewers saw lights being switched off again in Broadcasting House and the late-night announcer leaving for home. There was, however, a surprise ending. From black and white, the film burst into colour. Experimental performances were taking place in a colour television studio at Alexandra Palace. As the programme closed, the words ‘This is the BBC’ gave way to the proud words, ‘This will be the BBC’.

The striking two-minute colour sequence was included—at Cawston’s insistence—for several reasons. First, because much experimental work was being carried out in colour, and it seemed right to him that the BBC should be associated with experiment and not with routine. Second, because no day ever ends, and it seemed appropriate to Cawston to end the film with something that was starting, colour television, rather than with something that was closing down. Colour television pointed to the future. It left the audience with something to talk about. All this was imaginative but true. None the less, Cawston had to fight what he recalled as ‘an enormous battle’ to get the BBC to agree to the colour sequence being included at all. In particular, ‘the engineering people were very apprehensive’: they feared that the money to get into regular colour television would never be available.<sup>8</sup>

Cawston’s film was televised on 29 June 1960, the day when the BBC’s new Television Centre was opened, and shown immediately after *Tonight* it was seen by nearly a quarter of the population. It received an appreciation index of 82, a very high figure. ‘This made me realise how much our £4 pays for’ commented one viewer. ‘It was most interesting to see what makes the BBC tick’ commented another.<sup>9</sup> Press reactions were uniformly favourable; and throughout 1960 copies of the film were to be shown several times a week somewhere in the world.<sup>10</sup> ‘*This is the BBC* came to me as a

<sup>6</sup> Television viewers were not privileged to see Berlin, who objected to the way he had been incorporated, and refused permission for the film to be televised, with him in it. Different material had to be substituted.

<sup>7</sup> To produce the imaginary news, Cawston was advised by Don Ricketts, who was seconded to him by Stuart Hood (\*interview for the Oral History Project).

<sup>8</sup> \*Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> \*VR/60/369. ‘This programme was an eye-opener,’ wrote another viewer, ‘as I, for one, didn’t fully realize all the work that lies behind the making of the programmes.’

<sup>10</sup> *Radio Times*, 24 June 1960.

revelation', wrote a critic in the *New Statesman*. 'The scriptwriter and director has used every ingenuity in the way of linkage, assimilation, contrast, a hare started, a dance tune, or Ravel lingering on to keep things going.' More simply, Ruth Adam, writing in the *Church of England Newspaper*, declared herself 'enthralled, excited, and most strangely moved'.<sup>11</sup>

One very special audience that saw the film in October 1960, an audience which the BBC had very much in mind, consisted of the members of the Pilkington Committee, who had been appointed a month earlier to examine the future both of the BBC and of ITV.<sup>12</sup> They were to refer to it in their Report.<sup>13</sup> The total reading matter submitted to the Committee between then and April 1961 amounted to seven times the length of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*.<sup>14</sup> The sixty-eight-minute film must have been a delight by comparison.

### 13. Politics

The Conservative Government that called the Pilkington Committee into existence had been elected just a year earlier at the general election of October 1959, an election which appears in no sense to have been 'decided' by television.<sup>1</sup> It was, however, the first general election in which, in Jacob's words, echoed by Greene, the BBC covered the campaign 'in our news [broadcasts] in the same way as any other event on the basis of news value'.<sup>2</sup>

Political broadcasting and how it should be developed both at general election times and between elections had been much discussed between 1957 and 1959. Under the stimulus of competition the country was moving inexorably, in the opinion of *The Economist*, 'towards a hotter air'.<sup>3</sup> Only the two big political parties, which

<sup>11</sup> From *This is the BBC*, a brochure, 4th reprint, 1960.

<sup>12</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Public Relations: Press Advertising', Note by the Director-General, 18 Sept. 1958; L. Miall to K. Adam, 'Visit of the Committee on Broadcasting', 20 Feb. 1961 (T16/326/3).

<sup>13</sup> See below, p. 284.

<sup>14</sup> *Guild News* (official organ of the Songwriters' Guild of Great Britain), April 1961.

<sup>1</sup> One of the best-known television personalities who contested the election, but did not win, was Robin Day, who is singled out in the *Longman's Chronicle of the Twentieth Century* (1988), p. 835.

<sup>2</sup> \*Jacob, 'The General Election', 8 Sept. 1959 (on all BBC notice-boards) (T16/511/2).

<sup>3</sup> *The Economist*, 24 May 1958.

regulated key aspects of the system,<sup>4</sup> stood in the way, and there were signs that they were changing their attitudes also. The breakthrough came not at the general election but at a by-election at Rochdale in February 1958, with Granada, not the BBC, taking the lead.

More intrepid than other broadcasting organizations, Granada deliberately broke new ground when, after consulting its lawyers, it broadcast programmes while the campaign at Rochdale was in progress. Indeed, even before the death of the dying MP for the constituency, two Granada producers had been dispatched to the town to talk over with local party agents provisional plans for by-election broadcasts, proposals which were leaked to the *News Chronicle* before reaching the head offices of the parties in London.

Morgan Phillips, the Secretary of the Labour Party, thought it strange that Granada had not approached the central offices of the political parties first. Granada, whose Chairman, Sidney Bernstein, was a Labour Party supporter, replied that it would have been 'quite improper to do so'. The Liberal candidate was well known to television viewers: Ludovic Kennedy. The ITA agreed that Granada could go ahead with the plan, stating approvingly that it had 'always been its wish that ITV should make its full contribution to the vitality of political life in this country'.<sup>5</sup>

The subsequent story, interpreted at the time in different ways by different organs of the Press and well told by Granada after the event, had many twists and turns. Yet, after the first Granada broadcast, *The Times* rightly noted, although it need not have used the word 'perhaps', that 'perhaps things will never be the same again'.<sup>6</sup> After the poll, Kenneth Allsop, well known on BBC screens, wrote in the *Daily Mail* that 'the televoter is born . . . Rochdale has changed the nature of democratic politics. Theorising may now end. Television is established as the new hub of the hustings.'<sup>7</sup> A month later, the *New Statesman* claimed that it was 'to the credit of Granada TV that, at

<sup>4</sup> The Liberal Party, for which Day stood, was not a full member of the inter-party committee that discussed political broadcasts until 1960, and minor parties were excluded. For the committee, see below, pp. 443–4.

<sup>5</sup> Sendall, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 351. See also *Granada and Political Broadcasting*, No. 1 (1958; repr. 1974), *Granada Goes to Rochdale, the First Series of Television Programmes on a By-Election*.

<sup>6</sup> *The Times*, 7 Feb. 1958.

<sup>7</sup> *Daily Mail*, 14 Feb. 1958.

Rochdale, it finally forced the machine men to grow up into the television age'.<sup>8</sup>

The BBC had kept out of Rochdale, but it, too, was quickly drawn into—not forced into—reporting the Kelvingrove (Glasgow) by-election in March 1958 in far more detail than it had ever reported any by-election before. A little later, at the Ealing South by-election, won by a Conservative, it introduced ideas of its own about what to broadcast. Candidates were asked questions by members of an invited audience, directed by an independent chairman. There was also an inside view of a by-election meeting.<sup>9</sup>

The political scene in the spring of 1958 was relatively unexciting, although, like so much else, it showed signs of change.<sup>10</sup> Domestic politics had remained divided since Suez, with many of the differences centring, as they had done at the beginning of 1956, not on foreign policy but on arguments about strikes, particularly unofficial strikes.<sup>11</sup> Less was made in 1958 than might have been expected of the divisions on financial policy in Parliament—and in the Cabinet—divisions that had led up to the resignation in January 1958 of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Peter Thorneycroft, and the two Treasury Ministers, one of them Enoch Powell. The most exciting event of the spring was the by-election at Torrington in Devon on 28 March, where the Liberals achieved their Party's first by-election gain in thirty years.<sup>12</sup> Television did not treat Torrington any differently, however, from other pre-1958 by-elections.

In the summer of 1958 a new element entered politics in an ominous wave of ethnic violence, culminating in riots that took place in August at Nottingham and Notting Hill. The BBC set out both to report and to explain. News bulletins described what was

<sup>8</sup> *New Statesman*, 15 March 1958.

<sup>9</sup> For an account of the BBC's role see *The Times*, 10 June 1958. The *Daily Worker*, 11 June 1958, complained that it was unfair that one by-election should be televised and not another: 'What has Ealing got that Wigan hasn't?' In fact, it was left to each region to decide what it did with each by-election (\*Miall to Adam, 'Ealing By-Election', 1 May 1958 (R34/1043)). The television programme from South Ealing was repeated in sound only, on radio. It was thought to have been 'lively' (\*Sound Broadcasting Committee, *Minutes*, 17 June 1958).

<sup>10</sup> CND's first Aldermaston March took place in April 1958.

<sup>11</sup> Twice as many working days were to be lost through strikes in 1959 as in any previous year since the Second World War. BBC radio tried to explain the background of strikes more fully and more dispassionately than most of the sections of the Press, but there was more public interest in the impact of strikes than in their causes.

<sup>12</sup> The victor, Mark Bonham Carter, was a future Vice-Chairman of the BBC. He became a Governor in 1975.



happening.<sup>13</sup> 'Explanation' followed. For example, on 5 September a discussion of the significance of the events was broadcast in *At Home and Abroad*, with Patrick Gordon Walker, J. K. Cordeaux, and Bruce Miller as participants. There was also a contribution by Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders, Chairman of the Institute of Race Relations.<sup>14</sup> A delegation from the West Indies arrived in London on 5 September to study the problems, and later in September, in an imaginative act, *Panorama* sent out the presenter Christopher Chataway and the producer David Wheeler to interview potential immigrants into Britain.<sup>15</sup> Later in the year, Mark Abrams presented a *Matters of Moment* radio programme, 'Black and White'. 'About 200,000 coloured people are living among us', ran the announcement of the Abrams programme in the *Radio Times*. 'Are we prejudiced against them and how much of a problem does such a minority create?'<sup>16</sup>

It was during the summer of 1958 that Gallup Polls pointed to a rise in Conservative support, which had plummeted immediately after Suez; and it was during this summer too that Harold Macmillan, caricatured in the Press, but not to his disadvantage—he was soon to become 'Supermac'—was beginning to capture most of the headlines as well as the cartoons.<sup>17</sup> It was also during this summer that television began to be thought of increasingly not only as a public eye but as 'the universal eye'.<sup>18</sup> ITV had now expanded into

<sup>13</sup> The first clash between '200 white and coloured men in Nottingham' was the second item, briefly reported, in the 7 a.m. news on 25 Aug. 1958. (See also below, p. 590.) The first item was an account of an official report on the economic situation. The length of the reports on the disturbances subsequently increased. On television 'Nottingham gang warfare' was the third item in the 6 p.m. news. Notting Hill and Nottingham were put together on 31 Aug., when the Chief Constable of Nottingham was reported as saying that the trouble had been caused by Teddy boys and people who had had a lot to drink. The trials were fully reported, as was the remark made by the Chairman of the Nottingham Magistrates that the coloured population in Nottingham had nothing whatever to do with the case. Their presence in the city had been used as an excuse.

<sup>14</sup> See A. Carr-Saunders, 'Immigration and Britain's Racial Riots', in *The Listener*, 11 Sept. 1958.

<sup>15</sup> The programme had a higher than average reaction index. 'General interest in the report was almost overwhelming... and many viewers said how greatly they had enjoyed this well-balanced, factual and interesting survey of the situation' (\*VR/58/505, 9 Oct. 1958).

<sup>16</sup> *Radio Times*, 18 Dec. 1958.

<sup>17</sup> In the national Press between Jan. 1957 and Aug. 1959 Macmillan figured in about six times as many news stories as Gaitskell (D. E. Butler and R. Rose, *The British General Election of 1959* (1960), p. 29). Vicky's image of Supermac was to be used to Macmillan's advantage, particularly as he travelled round the world as a senior statesman.

<sup>18</sup> This was to be the title of a book by T. Green, which appeared in 1972. Three years earlier, J. Whale's *The Half-Shut Eye: Television and Politics in Britain and America* had been published.

Southern England, the West, and Wales, and later in the year the State Opening of Parliament was to be televised for the first time, with Robin Day commentating for ITV.

Significantly, the rise in Macmillan's popularity coincided with his first major television success, in May 1958—an interview with Murrow, who enters this chapter yet again, and Charles Collingwood, both of CBS. The Prime Minister was very carefully prepared and coached. Before the interview, the Gallup Poll found that only 37 per cent of its sample believed that Macmillan was 'doing a good job as Prime Minister'. After the interview, the proportion rose to 50 per cent.<sup>19</sup> Television was not the only influence accounting for the change, but it was obviously a measurable influence, as Macmillan himself fully realized.

By August 1959, after a series of constituency tours and visits abroad, the figure of 50 per cent had risen to 67 per cent. Meanwhile, Gaitskell seemed (at least to the sympathetic *Guardian*) to have serious problems with his image. People associated him either with Whitehall, his original civil service background, or with the Third Programme, neither association adding to his popularity. Such associations were dubious at best. Before he became leader, he had warned that he would never join a cultural crusade against ITV. He had even gone so far as to tell Crossman—according to Crossman's account—that it was a pity that the Labour Party had not encouraged the BBC to lease out time to commercial companies.<sup>20</sup> He remained, in fact, suspicious of all image building. In July 1959 he declared himself 'a rationalist in politics', adding that he refused to believe that people vote as they do 'because something appeals to their unconscious'.<sup>21</sup>

From inside the ITA Fraser seemed to be in agreement with Gaitskell on this point at least, and it made for mutual understanding. Television could deal with issues, Fraser maintained, for politics on television was not manipulative. 'The main force of television politics lies in the fact that a man is brought into a

<sup>19</sup> A previous television broadcast by Macmillan in Jan. 1957 had been less successful. He had been advised, *The Economist* wrote (26 Jan. 1957), to crack no jokes. 'The television audience is used to Mr. Thomas Trinder and others who try to amuse.' Macmillan's first real success was in an interview with Day after the Rochdale by-election: 'Tories will be delighted with the Prime Minister's TV success', wrote the *Yorkshire Post*. 'Certainly he is no longer just a House of Commons Man' (quoted in M. Cockerell, *Live from Number Ten* (1988), p. 62).

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in P. Williams, *Hugh Gaitskell* (1979), p. 390.

<sup>21</sup> Interview in the *Daily Mail*, 30 July 1959.

personal contact with his political opponents, can see them and acquire feelings of respect and even liking for them, even if he does not agree with them.<sup>22</sup> Such a statement, generous though it was in intent, grossly exaggerated the quality of relationship achieved through political television, which was scarcely one of 'personal contact'. A better case could be argued, as people inside the BBC were beginning to argue it, that television was doing something different from what the partisan Press was doing. It was supplying information and stimulating argument, but it was also seeking to offer a balance. That the popular newspapers would not, and could not, do.

An interesting discussion on the 'rules' of political broadcasting in a new age of television took place at a private weekend conference in Nuffield College on 11 January 1958. It was a conference that had been arranged by David Butler, a pioneer of political broadcasting at election times, with the strong support of the Warden, Sir Norman Chester. Jacob and Fraser were both present. So, too, were several party leaders, far away from Westminster and Party offices, among them Gaitskell, R. A. Butler, Jo (later Lord) Grimond, and the Conservative Party Whip, Edward Heath. The academics included Alan Bullock and H. G. Nicholas from Oxford and R. T. (Bob) McKenzie, a familiar figure on the television screen, from the London School of Economics. Grisewood accompanied Jacob, and Geoffrey Cox represented ITN.

The Conference was quite different in atmosphere from the annual meetings of the small inter-party committee on which most of the politicians present in Oxford had served, as had Jacob and Fraser. The 'neutrals' had not served, however, and it was they who set an agenda at Oxford which covered a wider range of issues than the Meeting on Party Political Broadcasting had ever considered. They included the scope and quality of programmes of news and political debate produced on their own initiative both by BBC and by ITV and the right of access to radio and television of minority parties not represented in the 'official' discussions. Significantly, the Nuffield meeting was as much concerned with the period between elections as it was with election campaigns.

It was generally agreed by those present that the 'dead period' before general elections should be shortened. At previous general elections there had been an enforced black-out on the reporting of election news during the weeks between the dissolution of Parlia-

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Butler and Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

ment and polling day. This should now end. There was also discussion about whether broadcasters should have some of the same freedoms as the Press: for example, to present election issues as they saw them and not just as the political parties, the only mediators, saw them. The Press, not subject to the same restrictions as BBC and ITV, helped to determine the election agenda and, the political scientists added, its outcome. Representatives of the broadcasting authorities pointed out in an addendum that if extensive news coverage were to be given to the election during the election campaign, it might be difficult for them to impose a total black-out on news during the last twenty-four hours.

As far as the 'electoral period' was concerned, there was further agreement that there should be a relaxation of the 'self-denying ordinances' imposed on itself by the BBC. It should be more free to frame programmes and to choose people taking part in them. In the case of the ITA, more than a 'self-denying ordinance' was involved, for the Television Act of 1954 had decreed that, by law, all political broadcasts in which party views were expressed, apart from official party broadcasts, had to be balanced. What the BBC had always sought to achieve, the ITA was required to enforce. In consequence, both BBC and ITA had considered that it was wrong to present one constituency candidate at an election without presenting all. The refusal of any one candidate to appear could thus prevent his rivals from appearing also.

Another Act of Parliament affected both BBC and ITV, although it did not even mention broadcasting. Section 63 of the Representation of the People Act of 1949 laid down that no person might spend money with a view to promoting a candidate's election other than his authorized agent. It was arguable, therefore, that if a candidate took part in a broadcast, the full cost of representing him might have to be charged against his expenses. In the Act, the Press was explicitly free from this threat. Fearful of litigation, the BBC, in particular, had wanted to avoid all risks. The Nuffield meeting wished that the risk be eliminated.

In welcoming more flexibility, particularly between elections, the meeting recognized that if BBC and ITV policies concerning political broadcasting became 'more adventurous', this would 'inevitably give rise to much more criticism'. It was argued none the less, perhaps ingenuously, that with more political broadcasting, 'any single error' made by the broadcasting authorities would count for far less. There would, indeed, be fewer complaints of 'bias'. There was no intima-

tion at this time that there might be too much political broadcasting at election times, and that viewers and listeners might tire of it.<sup>23</sup>

There was a difference in outlook at Oxford between academics on the one hand and the representatives of the political parties and broadcasting organizations on the other about what the role of broadcasting should be, given that the BBC no longer had a monopoly. Should the criterion of election news broadcasting be based entirely on 'news values'? If so, how could there be 'balance'? What programmes other than news bulletins might, or should, be put on? How much political 'analysis' could there be to go with 'Press conferences'? One suggestion made was that instead of political items being reported in general news bulletins, there might be regular programmes on the lines of *Today in Parliament*, both on television and on radio. This, however, was not deemed to be adequate.

Other psychological differences remained:

Some argued that if the coverage and scope of political broadcasting was to be increased at the next [general] election it might be better to proceed cautiously and learn from experience of a modest degree of advance. Others felt that there was only a choice between blackout and spotlight: that there might be less danger of complaints and repercussions in the form of stringent rules after the campaign if a major breakthrough were made with different innovations.<sup>24</sup>

Another set of notes on the meeting, obviously written by an academic, summed up the writer's personal assessment of the respective attitudes of the BBC and ITV as revealed at Oxford and elsewhere. BBC policy in the past, the author commented, had been mainly activated by 'a natural conservatism, a fear of criticism, a certain laziness'. 'The arrival of ITA [*sic*]' had 'put them under heavy competitive pressure and they were already vaguely conscious that next time it would have to be different . . . They trust their ability to be fair and if supported by the parties against charges of bias, they would be willing to take a risk. But the details would need to be worked out.' Contentiously, he added that 'the ITA itself is in fact more cautious than the BBC. The reason is their fear of the Labour Party and for their own future if a Labour Government is returned. For them this is a more important factor than winning a bigger audience during the three weeks of the campaign.' Putting the two

<sup>23</sup> See below, p. 984.

<sup>24</sup> 'Political Broadcasting', Notes of a Meeting, 11 Jan. 1958. This was 'not an agreed record', and no one present was bound in any way by it.



4. 'How did people know who to vote for before they had TV, Dear?', Vicky in *Daily Mirror*, 8 Feb. 1958.

together, 'both BBC and ITA would welcome a liberalisation. They would also welcome greater public discussion of the issues.'<sup>25</sup>

Just how warm the welcome might be the writer did not choose to say. There was backing for change, however, in several newspapers and periodicals, including the *Manchester Guardian*, which leaked details of the Nuffield Conference, and *The Economist*. The latter warned correctly, however, that while at the next general election the 'old system' would not be retained, what would take its place would not be a new system, but 'a system' that would 'at best [be] only half-free'. For *The Economist*, political broadcasts planned and prepared by the political parties should be allowed to decline in importance, while the number of programmes produced by broadcasters, like *Any Questions?*, should be increased.

It might be true that 'at bottom, most party managers' felt uncomfortable about 'this monster of television' which was 'poking its snout into their trade', but the public itself had the right to ask 'by

<sup>25</sup> The Nuffield Conference, Notes, p. 5. \*In a letter to Grisewood (6 Dec. 1957), Fraser had made it clear that he strongly supported an extension of coverage and that he had no doubt that the BBC was the 'more cautious' (R34/1072/2).



virtue of what principle' were the party managers claiming the 'presumptive right of controlling the airwaves'. Politics at election time was not primarily a matter for 'the professional vote-seekers': it was 'primarily a matter for the voters themselves'. 'The two big parties must not be allowed to block suggestions for using [television] . . . as an instrument to make democracy more informed'.<sup>26</sup>

Long before the Nuffield Conference at Oxford, the BBC had already started working on its plans for dealing with the next general election,<sup>27</sup> but it was not until February 1959 that Grisewood told the leaders of the political parties that when the long-awaited day came, a Television Unit, headed by Miall, Head of Talks, Television, and a sound Unit, headed by Archie Gordon, Producer, Current Affairs Department, would be in action. It would be reporting directly, he said, to Hugh Greene, who had become first Director of News and Current Affairs in August 1958, when Tahu Hole, who had never been responsible for current affairs, was pushed sideways without ceremony to become Director of Administration.<sup>28</sup>

As far as BBC news bulletins were concerned, Greene told a Press Conference on 19 September 1959, 'we are going to cover the election . . . strictly on the basis of news values. There will be no attempt within the individual news period to provide an exact balance between the different parties and their statements . . . This is a new thing and we think we shall do it well.' He added significantly that in order to secure maximum coverage, parties would have to learn how to time their issue of news items. The onus was thrust on them. If they got their timing wrong, they might have to wait a day.<sup>29</sup>

First plans for the coverage by both BBC and ITV were announced by the BBC's Press Office on 18 March 1959, with a further Press Release on 17 April. The legality of the new arrangement had been vigorously challenged in the House of Commons by Emmanuel (later Lord) Shinwell and others, and the April Press Release emphasized

<sup>26</sup> *The Economist*, 24 May 1958.

<sup>27</sup> \*C. McGivern, Deputy Director of Television Broadcasting, to G. Beadle, Director of Television Broadcasting, 'General Election', 29 Nov. 1957; T. Hole, Editor, News, to Jacob, Director-General, 'Reporting the General Election in Sound and Television', 21 Jan. 1958 (T16/511/1).

<sup>28</sup> \*Grisewood to Gaitskell, 23 Feb. 1959; Grisewood to Grimond, Grisewood to Heath, 24 Feb. 1959 (T16/511/1). See below, pp. 311–12.

<sup>29</sup> Press Conference, 19 Sept. 1959 (quoted in Butler and Rose, op. cit., p. 78). ITN policy was the same. It followed a policy of parity of technical resources. Cameras were in short supply, and it wanted to ensure that speakers of different parties were given an equal chance (see Cox, op. cit., pp. 129–35).

that what was being proposed, while new, was not illegal.<sup>30</sup> 'The purpose of all the BBC's Election broadcasts will be to help the public cast their votes with as clear an understanding of the issues involved in the Election as the broadcasts may be capable of presenting. It will be no part of the BBC's intention to promote or procure the election of a particular candidate in any constituency.'<sup>31</sup>

Inside the BBC, Jacob told BBC staff, who included people both in News and in other departments and both in sound and in television, that 'the greater freedom which we are assuming on this occasion in the coverage of the Election places a great responsibility on all of us. Just as much care must be taken as in the past to watch our whole range of programmes for such things as jokes, facetious remarks, asides and indeed any sort of comment which might have a bearing on the Election campaign.' The man who was to succeed Jacob was to be his watchdog. 'In any case of doubt about the interpretation of this and previous directives on the General Election reference should be made to D.N.C.A. [Hugh Greene].'<sup>32</sup>

Given the build-up, the general election of October 1959 did not quite live up to its promise, although it was an important election both in broadcasting history and in British political history. Whereas the election of 1955 had been dull, that of 1959 was exciting, if only because it was by no means certain who would win it. The pollsters themselves were in doubt. Some things were the same as in 1955. There was little face-to-face confrontation between party leaders, less, indeed, than there had been then. As in the 1955 election, there was no 'swing of the pendulum' but, rather, another swing to the right. The word 'swing' itself began to be used more widely, however, in 1959 than ever before. What the BBC called a 'swing indicator' and the Press a 'swingometer' was cheerfully used by McKenzie in the presentation of results.

Another word used more in 1959 than ever before was 'image', the old word that was being given new force because of television—and advertising—resonances.<sup>33</sup> A detailed scholarly study of the election in the north of England published remarkably soon after-

<sup>30</sup> \*Margaret Bayley, Day Press Officer, 'Announcement to Press Agencies', 18 March 1959 (R34/1072/3).

<sup>31</sup> \*Statement by the BBC: General Election Broadcasts', 17 April 1959 (R34/1072/3).

<sup>32</sup> \*I. Jacob, 'The General Election', 8 Sept. 1959 (T16/511/2).

<sup>33</sup> For the very varied approach to the image, cf. two non-British studies: K. Boulding, *The Image: Knowledge in Life and Society* (1956), and D. Boorstin, *The Image* (1962).

wards bore the title *Television and the Political Image*. It concluded negatively and somewhat ponderously that ‘the electorate was *not* influenced directly in its voting or political attitudes either by the amount of the political campaign to which it was exposed [on television], or by the presence or absence of any part or of virtually all the campaign’.<sup>34</sup> Many political scientists agreed. The swing to the right, giving the Conservatives a third win in a row, was more often attributed to social and political trends than to images. At the time it did not seem easy to separate the two.<sup>35</sup>

National politics shaped local politics, rather than the other way round. This was not a surprise. Nor was it entirely the result of the intervention of television. Indeed, both BBC and ITV presented well-planned regional programmes, and Granada television carried out ambitiously what it described as a ‘Marathon’ in which time was provided for all candidates from constituencies situated in ‘Granadaland’ to appear before the cameras, to speak for a minute each, and then to have a right of a minute’s reply to the other side. The audience was bigger than had been expected at off-peak hours, the time when *Marathon* was presented, and the ‘experiment’, which before the event had been criticized as potentially illegal, was deemed to be both a broadcasting and a political success.<sup>36</sup>

The BBC, which cancelled *Tonight* during the election campaign and made no references to the election on *Panorama*, presented its own forty-minute constituency programme, *BBC Hustings*. There were two *Hustings* programmes in each region, broadcast on television and repeated on radio later the same evening. In each BBC region, except Northern Ireland, an independent chairman questioned local candidates, selected by the parties, in the presence of an invited audience. About thirty tickets were offered to each main party, ten of them for potential questioners. There were also five ‘independent’ questioners. All questions were submitted in advance. The independent chairmen included McKenzie (Birmingham and Norwich), Kenneth Harris (Manchester, Sunderland, Wrexham, and Cardiff), Max Robertson (Exeter and Titchfield), and Derek Hart

<sup>34</sup> Trenaman and McQuail, *op. cit.*, pp. 233–4. For Press comment on their findings see the *Guardian*, 9 March 1961, and L. Marsland Gander, *Daily Telegraph*, 10 March 1961: ‘Television and Vote Appeal’.

<sup>35</sup> See D. Lockwood, *The Blackcoated Worker* (1958); H. A. Turner, ‘Labour’s Diminishing Vote’, *Manchester Guardian*, 20 Oct. 1959. Ch. 3 of Butler and Rose (*op. cit.*, p. 27) takes as its initial quotation Lord Woolton’s remark ‘The voter is also the consumer’.

<sup>36</sup> See *Granada 500, an Experiment in Collective Discussion of Election Issues (Granada Political Broadcasting, no. 5 (1959; repr. 1974))*.

(London).<sup>37</sup> Northern Ireland, not then much in the news, had to be content with watching England's North Regional programme; Sinn Fein was outlawed, and the all-powerful Ulster Unionist Party had refused to be present in the same room as the Northern Ireland Labour Party.<sup>38</sup>

*BBC Hustings*, non-partisan, with an audience of 6.5 and 8.9 per cent on television, was thought to be more 'spontaneous' than the election broadcasts devised by the political parties themselves. Yet, inside the BBC itself, there were some doubts. For Denis Morris, Head of Midland Regional Programmes, the hustings were not lively enough. For Kenneth Brown, Senior Talks Producer in the North, who was facing up to direct Granada competition, the audiences were far too well regulated. He would have liked the BBC to have been able to choose them itself.<sup>39</sup> The parties were still far too powerful.

There were, all in all, 215 minutes of party election broadcasts in television, and 180 minutes in sound, with an average television audience of 21.9 per cent (about 8 million). Of this great audience, 10.5 per cent chose to view the BBC, and 11.4 per cent ITV. ITV had a bigger edge when the Labour Party programmes were broadcast—55 per cent as against 45 per cent.<sup>40</sup> This was a factor which the Labour Party obviously had to take into account in contemplating the future structure of British television.

There was one somewhat unusual BBC link with the party election broadcasts. Anthony Wedgwood Benn was in charge of the Labour Party's programmes, and he approached the BBC, which ten years before had employed him for a brief period, to ask for professional advice on mounting a programme similar in character to *Tonight*, which was to be one of the temporary casualties of the election campaign. He saw Miall at the House of Commons on 5 March 1959, when a May election seemed possible, and discussed the idea of a national programme for television and for sound, complete with a

<sup>37</sup> There are four BBC files of papers on the programme; T32/1576/1 and 2, T32/1577, and T32/1578.

<sup>38</sup> \*See memorandum from R. McCall, Controller, Northern Ireland, to Greene, Director, News and Current Affairs, 'The General Election 1959', 30 Oct. 1959 (T16/511/3).

<sup>39</sup> \*Morris to Goldie, 'General Election Report', 22 Oct. 1959; R. Stead, Controller, North Region, to Greene, 'General Election 1959', 3 Nov. 1959 (T16/511/3).

<sup>40</sup> \*BBC Audience Research Report 'Broadcasting and the General Election', 26 Nov. 1959 (T16/115/3). There were eighteen sound broadcasts on the Home Service and the Light Programme, and twelve broadcasts on television; the party ratio was 5:5:2 (General Advisory Council, *Papers*, 'The General Election of 1959', 18 Dec. 1959).

team and an anchorman. Comments would be made on the political speeches that had been made the night before, and party strategies would be identified and discussed. The set would need to be carefully planned, and there would have to be access to Ampex recording and to the services of the BBC's gramophone library. Above all, the programmes would require an experienced producer.<sup>41</sup>

Miall replied on 25 March, offering Benn the services of Alasdair Milne, modestly described at the time as 'Donald Baverstock's deputy on *Tonight*'. Access to the gramophone library would raise no difficulties, Miall told him, but access to audience research, which Benn had also asked for and which fell outside the limits of normal production assistance, would require the approval of the Director-General. Ampex might be difficult, too, since there were far more demands for it than could be met. Miall added that Milne would be glad to talk at once to him about preparations, but that he would not be solely at the Labour Party's disposal. He was organizing the results programme, and he might find himself in the position of being asked to supervise the production of some other election programmes.<sup>42</sup>

When Butler and Rose picked out the Labour Party broadcasts for special attention in their scholarly survey of the general election, they referred admiringly to 'the brilliantly flexible formula' employed in the programmes that Benn had devised. In particular, they praised the carefully designed set made to serve as 'The Labour Television and Radio Operations Room',<sup>43</sup> and the use of the com-pères—Benn himself, Christopher (later Lord) Mayhew, and Wyatt, the last two well known to television viewers. Yet they felt that the last broadcasts in the series might have been more productive if the *Tonight* formula had been varied and if Gaitskell had been given more time on his own to address the electorate, as Macmillan did in the last Conservative Party political broadcast, a broadcast which attracted the highest television audience of the campaign.

The most dramatic moment in that broadcast came when Macmillan walked over to a vast globe and turned it round, saying to his huge audience 'Let me tell you what I want to do to the rest of the world'. Such drama had been missing from the first Conservative

<sup>41</sup> \*Miall's Record of interview between Miall, Benn, and Kenneth Peay of Transport House on 5 March 1959, 6 March 1959 (T16/S11/1).

<sup>42</sup> \*Miall to Benn, 25 March 1959 (T16/S11/1).

<sup>43</sup> Some indignation was expressed by the broadcasting authorities and by the other parties to the use of this phrase to describe a studio not in Transport House but in Lime Grove (Butler and Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 84).

broadcasts, and as a result, half-way through the campaign a major programming change had been made when one programme was scrapped, even though it had been advertised, and when, guided by Norman Collins, whom Macmillan had never previously met, Chataway was brought in to *compère* the fourth Conservative broadcast.<sup>44</sup>

As a professional broadcaster Chataway was skilful enough to make his mark by mocking 'slick' Labour presentation. A second professional, the Liberal Ludovic Kennedy, was in a position to mock the Conservatives too. He had the last word on competition between Conservative and Labour broadcasters in the third Liberal Party broadcast:

Many Conservative leaders are openly contemptuous of television . . . And because they've never learned how to use it, we have seen, lumbering across our screens these last ten days, a succession of old party carthorses, earnest, amiable, smug—and looking—let's face it—as though they've never had it better. And what of the other side? All these bright, young, Public School, Labour boys, directing non-existent operations from a non-existent operations room. As entertainment value, of course, it's splendid. Smooth, glossy, slick. But what they have omitted to say is, I think, rather more interesting than what they've actually said.<sup>45</sup>

Entertainment intruded even in this context.

Radio and television writers in the Press tended to follow the politics of their own newspapers in making their judgements on the merits of the broadcast political programmes. 'Labour Hit Television Jackpot' was a *Daily Mirror* headline after the Labour Party's first broadcast, describing the modelling of the programme on *Tonight* as a 'daring gamble'—with Benn as the Cliff Michelmore of the programme. 'It moved so fast, so topically and so entertainingly that many viewers probably forgot they were being appealed to as voters.'<sup>46</sup> 'The theme that life is better with the Conservatives was plugged through with some subtlety', wrote *The Times* of the second Conservative broadcast, which it considered much better than the first.

The medium used, it noted, was an 'agreeable film which followed the career of a young architect (presumably also a Young Conservative) from his perambulator to the threshold of his married life with a young woman as personable as himself . . . His decision to become

<sup>44</sup> See Cockerell, *op. cit.*, pp. 72–4.

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Butler and Rose, *op. cit.*, pp. 89–90.

<sup>46</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 22 Sept. 1959.



an architect afforded a convenient excuse for bringing housing policy into it and even provision for the old.' Among the other performers in this programme were Miss Edith Pitt, 'warm and womanly', Sir Keith Joseph, 'unsmiling and intense', and Butler, who conducted the conversation throughout with 'urbanity'.<sup>47</sup>

In the *Daily Mail*, Peter Black, as deft in his comments on political broadcasting as he was on avowedly entertainment programmes, retained a critical stance throughout, asking, for example, whether broadcasting professionals, like Mayhew, Wyatt, and Kennedy who had made their broadcasting reputations as 'worthy television guides', would lose public confidence after the election during which they had appeared as 'propagandists'.<sup>48</sup> Black wrote appreciatively, however, rather than critically about the results programme at the end of the day:

There is nothing like a polling day to raise the morale of a television service. Once every five years, more often with a bit of luck, television can drop its attempts to 'entertain' and revert to its unique role as a supplier of news. When it does, it behaves so properly that I can stop worrying about it as though it is the greatest social disaster to hit the civilised world since the Black Death.<sup>49</sup>

Not everyone in Lime Grove would have agreed that there had been no attempts to entertain in the presentation of the results programme, which was explained and discussed in retrospect at some length by Goldie in an interesting article for *Ariel* in which she enumerated 'some of the lessons learnt'. As the results came in, constituency by constituency, fifty-seven television cameras had been at work, 'many moving overnight to new locations', contributing to a minute-by-minute rapid reporting of the results. All of them were controlled from the largest Lime Grove studio, specially equipped for the occasion. Usually there were four cameras in use. On election night, however, a further five had been added, two of them fitted with zoom lenses.

In the studio was a battery of maps, charts, diagrams—and swingometers; in the background there was an 'electronic brain' to process the results 'for the benefit of statisticians'. Particular attention was paid to visual presentation both of figures and of personalities. 'The success of an operation of this kind', she concluded,

<sup>47</sup> *The Times*, 24 Sept. 1959.

<sup>48</sup> *Daily Mail*, 22 Sept. 1959.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 9 Oct. 1959. The Black Death image was Reith's in a speech in the House of Lords (*Official Report*, vol. 176, col. 1301, 22 May 1952).

depended both on advance planning and on 'the service having within it people of a wide range of experience gained in other fields: commentators, engineers, caption artists, producers, newsmen. It is built upon the excellence of an existing service. Such excellence cannot be improvised for a particular operation. We did better in 1959 than in 1955 because we had a larger number of experienced staff in all fields on whom to draw.'<sup>50</sup>

When he viewed the BBC and ITV results programmes, Black watched 'both sides' on adjacent sets, from time to time switching sound off on one to watch pictures on the other, and 'deriving thereby a fine impression of urgency and tumult'.<sup>51</sup> Few viewers behaved in this way except at newly fashionable television parties. Of the maximum audience of 22 million, 13 million watched BBC television, and 5.5 million ITV, while 3 million listened to the Home Service. Over 7 million were still watching the BBC programme at midnight, and when it closed down at 4 a.m. there was still an audience of around 750,000.

A videotape record of results was kept between 4 a.m. and 4.30 a.m., and this was transmitted from 6.30 a.m. to 8 a.m. for the benefit of early morning viewers, who were given what at that time was the unique privilege of breakfast television. At 8 a.m. regular transmission started again, and between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. there were simultaneous regional opt-outs so that different localities could give regional programmes analysing their own local results. At 10 a.m. the new morning results started to come in, and reporting of them, as on the night before, continued until between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. At 6.10 p.m. a brief review of the situation was broadcast, and at 8 p.m. a more comprehensive review in which leaders of all three parties spoke.

One of the surprises in 1959 was the size of the audiences on the second day of the results, even though it was clear to experts before midnight on polling night that the trend was clearly in favour of a Conservative victory. Nevertheless, between 2 and 5 million people were watching the BBC programme during the greater part of the second day. Many of them doubtless remembered the dramatic sequence of broadcast election results in 1945.

<sup>50</sup> *Ariel*, Jan. 1960: 'General Election Results: Problems and Lessons'. Michael Peacock wrote a long, confidential internal memorandum, 'The Presentation of the 1959 General Election Results in the Television Service', 4 Nov. 1959 (T16/S12).

<sup>51</sup> *Daily Mail*, 9 Oct. 1959.

In 1959 electoral behaviour was studied more carefully and systematically by academic observers than at any previous general election, and Macmillan himself, after his victory, referred in a speech at the Oxford Union to 'one of the latest so-called sciences', psephology, 'the study of how the people voted last time, how they will vote next time'.<sup>52</sup> He did not mention David Butler—or Nuffield College—specifically by name, but his audience was in no doubt that he knew. The great television audience, too, was beginning to know, if not what the word 'psephology' meant, at least what activities its practitioners were engaged in. They had an 'educative' influence which, at least in this early stage of television, was not incompatible with entertainment.

The election had rarely been given first place in the News, however, and only twice had recordings of speakers been introduced into 10.30 p.m. news bulletins 'to give life' to the campaign. There had been no reference either to opinion polls, which were to become the staple of future elections, and the coverage of issues had been narrower than the coverage given in the Press. In the principal radio news bulletins between 19 September and 7 October Macmillan had been mentioned fifty-four times, Gaitskell fifty-seven, and Grimond eighteen, but other politicians had figured far less. Morgan Phillips (thirty-one) had been mentioned more times than Lord Hailsham (twenty-nine) and, surprisingly, Butler (nineteen). Harold (later Lord) Wilson, Labour's next leader, though no one of course knew it at the time, was mentioned only eleven times, six times less than Aneurin Bevan. There had been thirty-six references to the 'political summit', an invention of Macmillan, and to disarmament and twenty-eight to taxation, but fewer than ten references to employment, housing, education, or the colonies, all of which were to become issues of major importance after the election was over.<sup>53</sup>

After the election, the defeated Labour Party was divided—with nuclear disarmament as the most dramatic divide—and it was not until the autumn of 1960 that Gaitskell, whose policies had been challenged and successfully opposed at the 1959 Party Con-

<sup>52</sup> Speech at the Oxford Union, 3 Dec. 1959, quoted in Butler and Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 1. The word was first used light-heartedly by Butler in his earlier study *The British General Election of 1951* (1952), p. 1. He emphasized in 1960 (*op. cit.*, p. 4) that it was 'not primarily concerned with the forecasting of results'. Viewers did not necessarily share his view, however, that 'a psephologist, like a cricket correspondent, shall be judged by his success in enhancing his reader's knowledge and understanding of the game far more than by the accuracy of any forecasts he may make'.

<sup>53</sup> Butler and Rose, *op. cit.*, pp. 79–80.

ference, was strong enough to announce, still to cries of opposition, that while last year 'our task was to save the party. This year it is to save the nation.' Even then, the Labour Party's share in the total vote at by-elections continued to decline until the end of 1961.<sup>54</sup> It was only the Liberal Party vote that rose—and in the background the size of television audiences.

There were many signs of national malaise—and of uneasiness about party politics—when the 1960s began, signs that were noted at the beginning of this chapter, when they were placed within the context of public broadcasting. Where was the country going? Was 'affluence' or the promise of affluence enough? Would 'tradition' hold? Would the campaign for nuclear disarmament be successful? These were the kind of questions that neither radio nor television could ignore. There was, of course, a further question of even more direct relevance to those employed in radio and in television than to their 'great audience'. How would the present structures of radio and television themselves survive public inquiry?

It was in the knowledge that many people, old as well as young, professionals and non-professionals, were uncertain about the future of old national institutions—from the Church of England to the railways—that Macmillan appointed the Pilkington Committee to review the future of broadcasting.<sup>55</sup> Competition was bound to be on the agenda of the Committee, but so also was much else, including the relatively new broadcasting institutions. One month after Sir Harry Pilkington's appointment in July 1960 a satirical review called *Beyond the Fringe* opened at the Edinburgh Festival.

<sup>54</sup> In May 1961 Anthony Wedgwood Benn doubled his majority in a Bristol South-East by-election caused by his succession to his father's peerage, but was banned from the Commons when he tried to take his seat. At the end of July the High Court quashed his by-election victory, and appointed his defeated opponent as MP. For the sequel, see below, p. 515.

<sup>55</sup> Richard Beeching was asked in April 1960 to head a four-man team to study Britain's rail network.

# IV

---

## Under Review: Pilkington

We will seek to establish in the minds of the Committee the conception of public service broadcasting by 'one BBC' acting as the national instrument of broadcasting. Tribute has been paid by successive Governments and successive Broadcasting Committees to the value of this conception, which has given British broadcasting a high reputation in the world.

BBC, *The Committee on Broadcasting, 1960: The Main Issues*, 13 Oct. 1960

The Report of the Pilkington Committee, the latest of the decennial inquests on broadcasting, gives three cheers for the BBC and cannot raise even one for commercial television. Since this is at variance with the conferment of popular applause as expressed in the way most people use their switches, it requires some justification. This the committee offers at remorseless length—without doing it very well.

*The Times*, 28 June 1962

The Committee seem to have accepted the BBC at their own valuation. The ITA, however, they find too negative in their concept of the purposes of broadcasting; apt to play down the influence of the medium; and responsible for the great bulk of the programmes which have given rise to criticism. I think this verdict is unbalanced and unfair. I think the committee have been swayed unduly by the evidence of prejudiced but articulate organisations and has largely ignored the inarticulate man in the street.

REGINALD BEVINS, Postmaster-General, Cabinet Paper, 22 May 1962

If the Pilkington Committee wanted to know what the people of Britain think of their television service, why on earth didn't Sir Harry Pilkington appear on television and ask viewers to send him their opinions? The Committee wouldn't have had to spend any money. Neither the BBC nor the commercial television could have possibly refused him a minute or two. Thousands of viewers could have claimed their right to help shape television's future.

*The Daily Sketch*, 3 May 1962

---

## 1. The Scope of the Review

Everything except the external services of the BBC, which had been almost continuously under official review during the 1950s, figured in the remit, comprehensive in scope, given to Sir Harry Pilkington on 13 July 1960. His new Committee was required

to consider the future of the broadcasting services in the United Kingdom, the dissemination by wire of broadcasting and other programmes, and the possibility of television for public showing; to advise on the services which should in future be provided in the United Kingdom by the BBC and the ITA; to recommend whether additional services should be provided by any other organisation; and to propose what financial and other considerations should apply to the conduct of all these services.<sup>1</sup>

The Television Act of 1954 had given the ITA an initial life of ten years, and in announcing the setting up of the Committee Macmillan's recently appointed Postmaster-General, Reginald Bevens, announced also that the BBC's Charter, due to expire on 30 June 1962, would be extended to 29 July 1964. He added that both the BBC and the ITA would continue to exist after 1964. Apart from that, the Committee could examine anything, including—and it was the most interesting item in its remit—whether or not any third or other organisation should be brought into existence.<sup>2</sup> Yet, as a Yorkshire newspaper which took a particular interest in broadcasting questions put it, however wide the terms of reference, 'in the public mind these are likely to be narrowed down to two issues: Should there be a third television network? If so, what sort of authority should be set up to run it?'<sup>3</sup> The BBC, of course, had no doubts. It had been committed

<sup>1</sup> Cmnd. 1753 (1962), *Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960*, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 626, cols. 1402–6, 13 July 1960. The Cabinet decision to set up the Committee was taken on the basis of a memorandum by Bevens, 'Broadcasting in the United Kingdom', 16 March 1960 (PRO CAB 129, vol. 100, C(60)50). On 9 March 1960 Harold Macmillan, like R. A. Butler, had been opposed to the setting up of a Committee; but the following day Bevens told Macmillan that the Home Affairs Committee now favoured one. He suggested Lord Radcliffe, Sir Harry Pilkington, and Sir Eric (later Lord) Ashby as possible Chairmen. Macmillan replied, 11 March, that he was happy with Radcliffe, but that if he did not accept, he would like to be consulted again (PRO PREM 11/3669). Radcliffe had been Attlee's first choice for the chairmanship of what passed into history as the Beveridge Committee. (See Briggs, *Sound and Vision* (1979), p. 268.)

<sup>3</sup> *Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, 18 July 1960.



for a long time to the view that if there were to be a third channel, as it had long hoped, the BBC should control it.<sup>4</sup>

Both the ITA and the BBC had been consulted about the terms of reference and timing of the new review, but the BBC, which had expected it to be announced earlier, was far better prepared for giving evidence to it.<sup>5</sup> The Cabinet had decided to defer any inquiry in July 1958, 'because it would be bound to arouse all kinds of speculation about the future of the BBC and the future of commercial television which would be politically undesirable in the period preceding a General Election';<sup>6</sup> and when the Postmaster-General returned to the issue after the election, the matter was delayed again, and the BBC was told in March 1959 that there would be no early inquiry and no early statement with regard to the terms of the Charter.<sup>7</sup>

In the months that followed, papers were prepared inside the BBC, including a general paper describing BBC 'services and progress', and it was almost completed before the Committee was announced.<sup>8</sup> It demonstrated in what was its initial submission that the BBC was ready for both defence and attack. 'We want to have the enquiry and welcome its establishment', a 'spokesman of the BBC' told the *Financial Times*. The ITA was more cautious. 'At first it would say nothing at all. Later it admitted that it also welcomed the inquiry and would give the Committee all the help it could.'<sup>9</sup>

Not all sections of the Press thought that the review was necessary. Nor had all members of the Cabinet, some of whom expressed the opinion that 'as so many of the issues were political, it might be preferable for the Government to keep the formulation of policy in their own hands'.<sup>10</sup> *The Economist*, aware of such differences, argued that the proper constitutional course to follow would have been quite different. The Postmaster-General should have stated the Gov-

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 22.

<sup>5</sup> In a valedictory memorandum on his retirement, Jacob had warned that very strong forces were going to be deployed against the BBC in any committee of inquiry, and had urged that an important public relations campaign would have to be mounted to forestall proposals to open the door to 'an extension of commercial operations in every field' ('The BBC: Past and Future, Memorandum by the Director-General', 30 Dec. 1959 (WAC file T16/326/1)). Long before then, however, the idea, seriously considered, of using Press advertising had been turned down ('Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Public Relations: Press Advertising: Note by the Director-General', 18 Sept. 1958).

<sup>6</sup> PRO PREM 11/3669, 'Broadcasting Development', 18 Feb. 1959, setting out the Prime Minister's thinking.

<sup>7</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 19 March 1959.

<sup>8</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 28 July 1960.

<sup>9</sup> *Financial Times*, 14 July 1960.

<sup>10</sup> PRO, *Cabinet Minutes*, 22 March 1960.

ernment's own answers to the basic questions of principle; then Parliament should have debated them; and only then should a committee have been appointed. It should have been given very close terms of reference, and, instead of deliberating on all issues, should have been asked to make recommendations about 'the best technical ways of putting Parliament's views into effect'.<sup>11</sup> For the *Daily Telegraph*, doubtless even better informed of what was happening behind the scenes, it was 'just, but only just arguable, that the future of broadcasting and television needed examination by an independent committee'.<sup>12</sup>

The Chairman of the reviewing committee, whose appointment was announced nearly two months ahead of the rest of his colleagues, was an energetic industrialist from St Helens who had considerable experience of public service. He cycled to work in London, and grew roses in Lancashire. Since 1957 he had served as Chairman of the Royal Commission on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration, and he hoped that his new committee would take less time to reach decisions than the three years taken up by the Commission. His aim, which he was not to achieve, was to complete the Report of his new committee by about the end of 1961. This would give the Government time to consider it before the next general election, and to put consequential legislation through Parliament.

Pilkington, Chairman of his own family business, Pilkington Glass, from 1949 to 1973, was a former President of the Federation of British Industries, and served as a Director of the Bank of England from 1955 to 1972. His company did not advertise on television, although when his name was presented to the House of Commons, Labour back-bencher Anthony Crosland suggested that with his 'lifelong connection with large-scale industry, [he] must inevitably have a strong bias in favour of advertising'.<sup>13</sup> At the outset, Pilkington refused to answer journalists' questions about his television preferences, showing a reticence that greatly appealed to one commentator who was notoriously far from reticent. The fact that 'he knows practically nothing about television' was in Tom Driberg's opinion a 'main qualification for the job'.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *The Economist*, 16 July 1960: 'The New Democracy'.

<sup>12</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 14 July 1960.

<sup>13</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 626, col. 1405, 13 July 1960.

<sup>14</sup> When Cadogan had become Chairman of the BBC, he had told reporters that he did not own a television set.

When Driberg talked to him, Pilkington was puzzled when questioned about the Beveridge Report. Beveridge was associated in his mind, as he probably was in most people's minds, only with social security. Pilkington did not know then that in 1951 Selwyn Lloyd had signed a minority report urging the end of the television monopoly. Nor did he know of the existence of official regulatory machinery. 'Neither the technical obscurity of the Television Advisory Committee report nor the prospect that his Committee might not achieve unanimity (and that the Government might again ignore the majority) worries him . . . What the Government does with his Report afterwards means nothing to him: "one simply does the job."<sup>15</sup>

On one subject Pilkington had made his views known. With his own business in mind, he had concluded that unrestrained duplication was wasteful and that the consumer paid more for competition than he realized. None the less, the competitive satisfaction of the consumer was still the best incentive for the business man.<sup>16</sup> Clearly, broadcasting competition would require careful consideration. Only ten years earlier, the BBC, in its evidence to the Beveridge Committee, had forecast dire consequences if competition were introduced—a lowering of standards and particularly a slackening of responsibility.<sup>17</sup> Now the advocates of competitive broadcasting were suggesting that the BBC itself had benefited from the end of the monopoly.

The members of the Pilkington Committee, like their Chairman, were to refuse to take such a benefit for granted. Indeed, they were to re-survey all the debatable lands of 1953 and 1954, and in the course of doing so, they were to outline what came to be called a Pilkington 'philosophy'. They were an unusual body in their mix, when compared either with the members of earlier committees called upon to consider the future of the BBC or with the range of programmes then being offered by ITA contractors, and Pilkington was to give them ample opportunity to discuss philosophical issues.

<sup>15</sup> *New Statesman*, 23 July 1960. Asked if there was any risk that, having started by hating publicity, he might get to like it, he paused 'reflectively', and said, 'It's very insidious.' For a profile of Pilkington after the publication of his Report, see *Observer*, 1 July 1962. See also Pilkington's obituaries in *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, and *Guardian*, 23 Dec. 1983.

<sup>16</sup> During the later 1960s Pilkington was to present with success his own Company's case to the Monopolies Commission (see T. C. Barker, 'The Glassmakers', in D. J. Jeremy (ed.), *Dictionary of Business Biography*, vol. iv (1985), pp. 693–9).

<sup>17</sup> Cmd. 8116 (1949), *Report of the Broadcasting Committee*, p. 198.

They reached agreement, too. This time there was to be no minority report.

Two periodicals, the *Spectator* and *The Economist*, anticipated one of the lines of enquiry of the Committee when they announced its formation, although neither foresaw the outcome, and both ended with proposals that were different from those that were to win Committee support. The *Spectator* proposed pay television, which the Committee was to reject on the general grounds that, if commercially successful, it would 'materially reduce the value to the viewer of the services now available for him' or that might become available to him in the future.<sup>18</sup> *The Economist* proposed 'complete freedom of the air on the same principles as freedom of the press'.<sup>19</sup>

'This extra-parliamentary committee', *The Economist* grumbled, is to be charged with the task of making recommendations on the broadest possible issue of policy; it is to become the forum in which the initial battle is to be fought between the commercially minded supporters of giving the people what they want and the establishment's higher-minded advocates of giving them what they ought to want. Possibly the Committee will split neatly up its middle; in that case Parliament will have returned to it the questions that it should have debated in the first place.<sup>20</sup>

More adept at analysing than at forecasting, *The Economist* was right in its assumption that Parliament—or the Cabinet—would have the last word.

The *Spectator*, which did not claim to represent 'the establishment', was prepared to be specific. 'The ITA', it observed, had 'shown itself masterly in the art of explaining why, when contractors break the TV Act, the Act is not really being broken at all.' Its first Chairman, Sir Kenneth Clark, had claimed that as soon as the first phase of company formation was over and contracting agencies had begun to make profits, their programmes would become more 'balanced'.<sup>21</sup> They were now 'making millions, but balance [was] still as far away as ever'. Even those companies like Granada, which had shown 'a heartening inclination to experiment', now tended 'to stick to old and tried programmes', and most of the contractors did not even attempt 'to disprove the fact that they put on prestige programmes

<sup>18</sup> Cmnd. 1753 (1962), para. 995, p. 269.

<sup>19</sup> *The Economist* had already argued this case on 4 June 1960. Cf. *Evening Dispatch*, Edinburgh, 14 July 1960: 'It is to be hoped, however, that some effort will be made to find out what the customers want, and not what those at the top think they want.'

<sup>20</sup> *The Economist*, 16 July 1960. See above, pp. 3–4.

<sup>21</sup> See above, pp. 10–11.

only because the ITA insists that a bare minimum of them must be shown'.

To justify its case, the *Spectator* turned to detail. During the previous week the contractors had been boasting of 'a big winter drive to woo back viewers from the BBC'. To do so, their two main ploys had been 'a melodrama about a maniac who strangled spaniels and old women, . . . made with an eye on the Canadian market', and *Candid Camera*, a revised version of *People Are Funny*, the idea being to put people into 'humorous situations' and film them without their knowledge.<sup>22</sup> *People Are Funny*, 'cruel, tasteless and pointless', had been stopped by the ITA soon after the beginning of commercial television. 'Presumably the ITA now feels that the viewer is so conditioned to people being embarrassed and humiliated for amusement that it need no longer intervene.'<sup>23</sup>

The announcement of the names of the twelve members of the Pilkington Committee on 15 September 1960 almost coincided with the fifth birthday of independent television, a point picked out by the *Observer*, which used the occasion to publish a long 'Memorandum to the Committee'. Its title, 'The Use of Television', recalled the title of the best-known book produced by any member of the Committee, Richard Hoggart's *Uses of Literacy*.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, Hoggart had just written an article in *Encounter* (originally a lecture) with almost the same title as the *Observer's*.<sup>25</sup>

'Ladies and Gentlemen', the Memorandum began ponderously, 'you have taken on the most important and complex public service task of the day. The People of Great Britain spend more time looking at television than in any other activity outside work and sleep (the average viewer watches for fifteen hours a week: the audience on Sunday nights for commercial programmes alone is estimated at 16,800,000). It is no exaggeration to say that the morale and temper of the country in the next few years, which are likely to be the roughest in our history, will be formed as much by television as by any other comparative factor.

Nine points were made in the article, which included an insert naming TAM's 'top ten programmes' for the week ending 18 Septem-

<sup>22</sup> *Spectator*, 16 Sept. 1960.

<sup>23</sup> *Bath Chronicle and Herald*, 14 July 1960, a local newspaper that welcomed the idea of pay TV. See Sendall, *Independent Television in Britain*, vol. 1, p. 321. The end of *People Are Funny*, which had been sponsored on Radio Luxembourg by Pye, disappointed those people who had lined up in its long waiting list of volunteers.

<sup>24</sup> *Observer*, 25 Sept. 1960. See also above, p. xix.

<sup>25</sup> 'The Uses of Television', *Encounter*, vol. 14 (Jan. 1960). The original version was a Harvey Memorial Lecture at Fircroft College, Birmingham, delivered in June 1959. The article is reprinted in Hoggart's *Speaking to Each Other* (1970), pp. 152–62.

ber 1960. There was not one BBC programme in the list. *Juke Box Jury* was the most popular BBC programme.<sup>26</sup> Three ITV programmes were viewed in more than 6 million homes. AR's *No Hiding Place*, a detective series, came top; ATV's the *Arthur Haynes Show* (variety), second; and the quiz show *Take Your Pick* third. ATV's soap opera *Emergency Ward 10*, the first of its kind in Britain, came fifth, with a viewing rating of 5,931,000 homes, and *Sunday Night at the Palladium*, also an ATV production, sixth.<sup>27</sup> There were local differences. The tenth programme in the national list, the American detective series *77 Sunset Strip*, came third in the London area. Two other American series came first and second: *Riverboat* and *Cimarron City*.

The main thrust of the *Observer* memorandum, which anticipated in many respects what was to be the main thrust of the Pilkington Report, was that the ITA should act like an Authority. It should use its powers to the full. The argument was couched, however, in severely practical, not philosophical, language. 'We recommend', Point 1 read, 'that you watch commercial television systematically with a copy of the Act in your hand.' The Act of 1954 had 'established the Independent Television Authority as the absolute overlord of the programme contractors and laid down a number of standards to which the Authority was required to make the contractors adhere'. Had the contractors observed these standards? The Act had empowered the Authority itself to provide programmes which 'in their opinion' were necessary for 'securing a proper balance in the subject matter of the programmes and cannot, or cannot as suitably, be provided by the contractor'. What had happened had been a mockery of this. Year by year the ITA's annual reports had extolled the programme contractors' achievements, and year by year the contractors' reports had expressed gratitude to the Authority. Was this 'the kind of relationship between Authority and contractors that the Act envisaged?'

Point 2 suggested that the debates of 1953 and 1954 should be reopened. At that time, 'the Prime Minister was not interested, the Cabinet was divided, many back-benchers had misgivings'. The Act had reflected these circumstances. In places it was vague. Did it, for example, really permit eighteen-minute advertising magazine programmes? Should not the Act now be tightened up? As far as further

<sup>26</sup> See above, pp. 206–8.

<sup>27</sup> Granada's *Coronation Street* was to be rarely out of the top ten after its full networking in May 1961. It was first broadcast in 1960.



legislation was concerned, why was it 'taken for granted' that the country 'needed' more channels? 'What is there in the existing output that could lead anyone to suppose that there is enough talent available for two more channels, whether run by the ITA or by the BBC? Do more channels mean better television? What happens in the United States?' Why should professed 'pioneers' be allowed to assume that they could operate toll-vision or TV wire services? Was there really a 'growing public demand for regional or local sound broadcasting'?

Point 3 dealt with the question of whether television should give people what they wanted. There, the writer claimed, was 'the central (and very perplexing) issue'.

Television caters for a mass audience, and obviously the taste of the mass audience is low. Do you let public taste dictate the level of television programmes, or do you try to influence it? Should the controllers of television programmes concentrate on feeding the undoubted public appetite for trivialities and narcotics? Or should they try to refine it? . . . Is any democratically minded Committee bound to hand down its verdict in obedience to the block vote of the Tamratings?

Very little indeed was said of the BBC in this *Observer* article—less than the Pilkington Committee was to say—except that BBC standards had themselves suffered under the impact of competition: 'many of the BBC's present popular programmes would have been condemned by the BBC itself five years ago as intolerably shoddy.' The Corporation was 'less afraid of controversy' than it had been in the past ('occasionally it dares to offend'), yet in its news bulletins, for example, had it not 'forgotten its obligation to provide full and unvarnished news coverage' in its efforts 'to make the news brighter and more "interesting" '? Were there not fewer serious programmes—'in the sense of "educational" programmes'—than formerly?

All these were leading questions, and all of them implied that the ending of the BBC's monopoly had not produced desirable results. The phrase 'merits of competition' was a slogan. 'Has there [to maintain the style of the memorandum the word 'not' should have been added] been a tendency in the BBC to put on entertainment programmes when ITV is putting on "serious" ones (and of course ITV gets up to the same caper)?' 'Does each debauch the other?' 'What has happened to the old BBC ideal that the invention of television would make it possible to reunite our splintered modern society by giving it a common cultural background?' It is interesting

that the phrase 'splintered modern society' was used so early.<sup>28</sup> Far more was to be made of the 'splintering' before the Sixties were through.

## 2. The Members

Whether or not the *Observer's* memorandum forecast the Report, hardly any of the members of the Pilkington Committee, according to Hoggart, had publicly stated views on broadcasting in September 1960. Most did have committee experience, however, and they were all clear that they 'weren't going to be pushed around'.<sup>1</sup> 'Things started slowly. But after six months a strong committee view had begun to form.' Hoggart added that he had never seen or indeed was to see such 'a largish disparate group so steadily and firmly reach a common mind'.<sup>2</sup> There were several subcommittees too, including one dealing with finance and one with technical matters.<sup>3</sup>

According to the Postmaster-General, the members of the Committee had been picked for their 'wide range of experience'. Ten of the sixteen people originally thought of, including the Chairman, accepted the invitation. There were no politicians among them. Surprisingly, the *Times Educational Supplement* dismissed them as 'a bunch of ordinary intelligent chaps', believing that they had been chosen 'idly and oddly' and that they lacked weight.<sup>4</sup> Equally surprisingly, the *Daily Herald* over-optimistically claimed that 'For once most of the names are known to the public'.<sup>5</sup> The size of the Committee was reduced from sixteen, as originally planned, to

<sup>28</sup> See above, p. xv, and below, p. 996.

<sup>1</sup> Hoggart himself had served on the Albemarle Committee on the future of the Youth Service, appointed in 1958. For his views on committees, see the third volume of his autobiography *An Imagined Life* (1992), pp. 18 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *The Listener*, 13 Nov. 1980.

<sup>3</sup> PRO, Home Office Papers, HO 244/3, Sub-Committees, *Minutes*, 1 Nov. 1960–May 1962.

<sup>4</sup> *Times Educational Supplement*, 16 Sept. 1960. 'This easy-going Government seems to have relapsed into the opinion that broadcasting is something for the plebs and for that reason of no account.' According to Hoggart (*An Imagined Life*, p. 60), his own name had been put forward by the Ministry of Education.

<sup>5</sup> *Daily Herald*, 10 Sept. 1960.

twelve after Pilkington and Butler, the Home Secretary, had discussed the question.<sup>6</sup>

The composition of the Committee suggested that the Committee might follow similar lines to those followed in the *Spectator*, although there was little intimation that the members might produce something more than a review of a system and go on to expound a philosophy. At a time when there was increasing intellectual interest in what were beginning to be called 'the media', the composition seemed to reflect the ideas and preferences less of the Postmaster-General than of the Prime Minister, who had skilfully led the Conservative Party to victory at the general election of 1959.<sup>7</sup> When Bevins became Postmaster-General, Macmillan did not even mention television, let alone 'the need for a Television Bill' or a Television Committee, in offering him the assignment. He implied that the Post Office would be 'a nice political convalescence'.<sup>8</sup>

Bevins considered the Pilkington Committee 'politically broadly based', although he was to find its Report 'unbalanced' and was to complain that it had given 'far too much weight to the views of the do-gooders' than to those of the public.<sup>9</sup> Macmillan's biographer does not mention Pilkington at all, but the Prime Minister was familiar both with the issues and with the context. At the centre of the television scene during the early 1960s, he was attracting more attention from the media, including television, than any other political personality of the time. Much of it was satirical, but he did not complain.

Bevins talked of an 'accent on youth' in the Committee, although only two members were under the age of 40 and the average age was 49. One of these was 'the brilliant young producer' Peter (later Sir Peter) Hall, then Director of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, who was only 29: he was to resign because of 'outside commitments' in January 1961.<sup>10</sup> The other was the footballer Billy Wright, aged 36, and his was the name most commented upon in the Press. He had played for England 105 times, and on eighty-five of those occasions

<sup>6</sup> HO 244/165, draft letter from the Postmaster-General to the Home Secretary, undated.

<sup>7</sup> See above, pp. 247–8.

<sup>8</sup> R. Bevins, *The Greasy Pole* (1965), p. 69.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 85, 86.

<sup>10</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 9 Sept. 1960, which described him also as 'the husband of Leslie Caron'. Hall had appeared on the BBC's televised *Brains Trust*, and in 1965 he was to produce the televised *Wars of the Roses* sequence for the BBC (see below, p. 520–1).

he had captained his country.<sup>11</sup> Appropriately, therefore, the members of the Committee were often described as 'the team', not only in the popular Press but in the *Manchester Guardian*. 'On the Ball' was the *Evening Standard's* contribution to the imagery.<sup>12</sup> *Christian World* chose an image, however, that was directly derived from a different television game—the TV Quiz Team'.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, the *Financial Times* included a description of what the Committee would have to do under the headline 'Panel Games, Past and Present'.<sup>14</sup>

The mixed composition of the Committee was not mixed enough for some critics. *Christian World* complained, as did the *Baptist Times*, that there was no member specifically representing the life of the Christian Churches.<sup>15</sup> It did not note that Pilkington was a lifelong Congregationalist. *Television Today*, which described the Committee as 'a farce and impertinence and a disgrace', demanded the inclusion of a television performer and an 'ordinary television viewer', while the *Hull Daily Mail* asked 'Why not Mrs. Smith?' 'It is a pity that Mr. Bevins did not engage for his bill a specialist on the receiving end. The tireless [sic] surveys which the BBC carry out on their customers could surely produce a Mrs. Smith, average listener and viewer.'<sup>16</sup>

Belatedly the *News of the World* was to make the same point after the Committee had completed its work. Tory back-benchers who had remained silent in 1960, it exclaimed two years later, were going to put up a very strong fight against the Committee's recommendations. 'Why was there no bus driver or foundryman, no mill girl or shop assistant? Fifteen million people like these watch TV every night. If there's one subject the man and woman in the street knows about—

<sup>11</sup> When asked by the *Daily Mail*, 9 Sept. 1960, whether he would like to see more sport, particularly football, on television, Wright replied circumspectly: 'I am keeping an open mind. Of course I have an edge towards sport, but have not been told that I have been chosen to advise on that.' The title of the only book Wright wrote was *Captain of England, the World's my Football Pitch*. Wright found it difficult to attend the meetings of the Committee because of footballing engagements, and the Chairman wrote to him on 26 May 1961 pressing him to come; he said that he would (HO 244/239, Pilkington to Wright, 26 May 1961; Wright to Pilkington, 31 May 1961).

<sup>12</sup> *Manchester Guardian, Evening Standard*, 9 Sept. 1960.

<sup>13</sup> *Christian World*, 15 Sept. 1960.

<sup>14</sup> *Financial Times*, 9 Sept. 1960.

<sup>15</sup> *Christian World*, 15 Sept. 1960; *Baptist Times*, Sept. 1960. The latter described the omission as being 'in arrogant disregard of the importance, deference and respect owed to the Church'.

<sup>16</sup> *Television Today*, 15 Sept. 1960; *Hull Daily Mail*, 9 Sept. 1960. The *Sunday Times*, 11 Sept. 1960, complained that there was no one from 'the cognate worlds of the cinema, newspapers or publicity'. Using the newly coined language of the times (in significant inverted commas), it referred to 'the vast network of "communications" industries'.

this is it.' <sup>17</sup> The commentator found consolation at that late stage in his 'guess' that the Cabinet would accept few of the recommendations. The prospect had not deterred Pilkington at the outset; and when he had raised this possibility at a weekend meeting of his Committee at Hove after it had met regularly for several months, the members agreed with him then that they would argue their case radically without seeking to make it more acceptable to government. <sup>18</sup> By the time the Report appeared, Pilkington was so deeply committed to its particular approach that he could ignore such 'guesses'. It is not clear whether he knew that the Cabinet had a Committee of Ministers which was considering the main issues of broadcasting before he reported. The Chairman of that Committee was Butler. <sup>19</sup>

There were two women members on the Pilkington Committee, one of them well known. Joyce Grenfell, actress and writer, then 50 years old, had been radio critic of the *Observer* for three years before the Second World War. She had also worked closely with Stephen Potter on the *How* radio programmes for the BBC's Radio Features Department, and in her own programmes had entertained BBC listeners hundreds of times and, more recently, ITV viewers. As far as committee work was concerned, however, she started, according to Hoggart, 'virtually from scratch in this strange set of rituals'. None the less, in order to convince her of a point, 'you had to come through a very fine mill indeed'. <sup>20</sup>

The second woman, then 45 years old, Mrs Elizabeth Whitley, social worker and journalist—and a future Scottish National Party candidate—was well known herself in Scotland, where she had broadcast regularly. She was the wife of the Minister of St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh. Her father, 'Paraffin Jones', had established his reputation by inventing a system for distilling petrol from crude oil. Another Scot on the Pilkington Committee, E. P. (later Sir Edmund) Hudson, aged 57, was Managing Director of Scottish Agricultural Industries. The Welsh member—and a Welsh speaker—was Dr Elwyn Davies, aged 51, Secretary to the Council of the University of Wales and to the Board of the Welsh University Press. He was the brother of the BBC's Welsh Programme Director, Hywel Davies, an eloquent BBC spokesman. <sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *News of the World*, 1 July 1962.

<sup>18</sup> Hoggart, *An Imagined Life*, p. 70.

<sup>19</sup> Bevens, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

<sup>20</sup> R. Hoggart, 'The Noblest Roman of Them All', in R. Grenfell and R. Garnett (eds.), *Joyce* (1980), p. 152. Hoggart added that 'there was a touch of the headmistress in her'.

<sup>21</sup> See below, p. 650.

J. S. Shields, aged 57, headmaster of a school in Winchester, had been Vice-President of the Classical Association in 1958. More interestingly, he was the brother of Lord Reith's first secretary. John (later Sir John) Megaw, who had read classics at Cambridge, was Recorder of Middlesbrough, aged 51, he resigned in January 1961 when he became a High Court Judge. Harold (later Lord) Collison, aged 53, was a former farm-worker in Gloucestershire, who for seven years had been General Secretary of the National Union of Agricultural Workers. He seems to have been a second choice, although it was convenient that he could be deemed to 'represent' both farming and trade unionism. Sir Jock (later Lord) Campbell, aged 48, was Chairman of Booker Brothers, McConnell and Co. Ltd. He resigned from the Committee for health reasons in February 1961, and three years later he was to become Chairman of the Board of the *New Statesman*. The oldest member of the Committee was R. L. Smith-Rose, an electrical engineer, aged 66, who was responsible for radio in the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research.

When three members resigned—for different reasons—in early 1961, only one new member was appointed: Professor F. H. Newark, aged 53, Professor of Jurisprudence at the Queen's University, Belfast. Like Megaw, he could be deemed to 'represent' both Northern Ireland and the law.<sup>22</sup> Such 'representation' was considered important when committees and commissions were being formed during the 1950s and 1960s. They had to include at least one trade unionist, at least one woman, and representatives from Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The Pilkington Committee was no different from any other committee in this respect. It was unusual, however, for three members to resign so quickly and to be replaced by only one. Nevertheless, a Post Office spokesman stated confidently that 'the balance of the Committee was now satisfactory without further additions'.<sup>23</sup>

Hoggart, the most articulate member of the Committee—and the most prominent, and controversial, once the Committee had reported—was also one of the youngest. Aged 41, he had written his book *The Uses of Literacy* while engaged in adult education at Hull University, but in 1959 he had moved to Leicester University as Senior Lecturer in English. In describing the reaction of different

<sup>22</sup> From 1947 to 1974 he edited the Northern Ireland Law Reports. Megaw went on to become a Lord Justice of Appeal.

<sup>23</sup> *The Times*, 18 March 1961.



members of the Committee to television at the time of their appointment, the *Sunday Times*, which deliberately took a diametrically different line then and later from the *Observer*, called Hoggart's own reaction 'lukewarm': his wife had reported that while he was fond of features and documentaries 'when he has nothing better to do, . . . a whole fortnight might go by without him turning on the set'.<sup>24</sup> He switched on for Tony Hancock, but disliked sporting programmes.

In fact, in his revealing article in *Encounter*, 'The Uses of Television', characteristic in its style as well as its content, Hoggart had already raised many of the questions that were to preoccupy the Committee, including the consequences of regular viewing. 'By now one feels a little hesitant about running through the potential advantages of television,' he began, 'just because they have been so often and so uncritically rehearsed. Yet it is all in some ways true: television can stimulate immense numbers of people; it does offer "windows on the world" and may "widen our outlook"; and, yes, it is so intimate that the usual tricks of crowd rhetoric are exposed by it. But all this needs looking at more closely.'<sup>25</sup>

Behind the closed doors of the Committee, Hoggart and his fellow members were to have ample opportunity of looking at it all more closely. They were to work hard and hold seventy-eight whole-day meetings, with subcommittees meeting on another thirty-nine whole days, and with one subcommittee, which included Pilkington, spending nine days in Canada and the United States.<sup>26</sup> They were also to visit many broadcasting centres, including Lime Grove, Television Centre, and Broadcasting House, and to see a demonstration subscription television programme in London put on by Choicevision Ltd. Yet, before the Committee met, Hoggart had already formulated some of his own judgements, both specific and general.

He praised *Monitor*, for example, as an outstanding programme, and noted that *Tonight* and *Panorama* revealed how the procedures of television could 'move a little ahead of conventional expectations'.

<sup>24</sup> *Sunday Times*, 11 Sept. 1960.

<sup>25</sup> *Encounter*, Jan. 1960. Like most forms of mass communication, he argued, it 'raised old questions in new and different forms'. Its main limitation was lack of continuity: it was 'a creature of daily or weekly fresh starts'. Its power was the power to propel change. 'Spend a week regularly watching television on either or both channels and you almost feel the cakes of custom being cracked open.'

<sup>26</sup> The Committee first met informally on 25 Aug. 1960. It took oral evidence on thirty-six Committee days and three subcommittee days. Pilkington accompanied Davies on a visit to the Isle of Man. Australian, New Zealand, and Swedish broadcasting officials were among the foreign broadcasters consulted.

He also took issue with *Dixon of Dock Green*.<sup>27</sup> While describing it as 'probably a more powerful force in general education than a whole range of evening institute classes in non-vocational subjects', he criticized it for failing to present policemen as they were and as they were perceived.

All these were BBC programmes, but Hoggart had also made up his mind on one crucial point concerning the ITA:

In the present situation the single most powerful attempt to alter attitudes—to educate manners—in Britain is being made through the advertisements on ITV. There we can see at its plainest the sort of Britain—the quality of life in Britain—which might emerge if the kinds of force it represents were totally and without qualification or resistance in play.

As far as ITV programmes were concerned, 'we have only to watch the programmes in the peak hours . . . for a few evenings', he added, 'to appreciate which way that organisation *wants* to push this society. They want to push it towards a generalised form of life which looks much like the life we have known and for the rest looks nicely acceptable—but whose texture is as little that of a good life as processed bread is like home-baked bread.' If 'the restraints' were to be made 'slighter', 'the process would go on more quickly'.<sup>28</sup>

*Advertisers' Weekly* made no comment on this revealing article, or, indeed, on the appointment of Hoggart. Instead, when the Committee's membership was announced, it noted generally that while there was 'nothing wrong with these admirable, public-spirited people, of course' (another significant 'of course'), it was 'crazy' not to have included 'a representative of the television advertising practitioners who have experienced the problems of establishing the country's first commercial service and studied future prospects'. It was important that the Committee should have 'the advantage of day-to-day advice from advertising. . . . Vociferous moralists should not have their own way'.<sup>29</sup>

When the Report of the Pilkington Committee appeared belatedly in June 1962, two journalists quite independently, one vituperatively, one flatteringly, chose as the headline of their comments upon it 'Going the Whole Hoggart'. They were writing in the still sharply

<sup>27</sup> For *Dixon of Dock Green* in context, see below, pp. 430–2.

<sup>28</sup> *Encounter*, Jan. 1960. See also *Sunday Times*, 11 Sept. 1960. Hoggart described his experiences with the BBC before 1960 in the second volume of his autobiography, *A Sort of Clowning* (1988), pp. 138–40. The material he referred to in *The Uses of Literacy* had been employed earlier in a number of BBC talks.

<sup>29</sup> *Advertisers' Weekly*, 23 Sept. 1960.

contrasted *Sunday Times* and *Observer*.<sup>30</sup> Yet, as Hoggart himself rightly pointed out, just as important a figure in the preparation of the Report was Dennis Lawrence, the Committee's principal secretary.<sup>31</sup> He did not point out, however, that he had told Lawrence on more than one occasion that he might sign a minority report.<sup>32</sup>

In 1960 of Lawrence, a civil servant, was an Assistant Secretary in the Radio Services Department of the Post Office, where he was to stay and ultimately become its Under-Secretary. It was he, not Hoggart—or Pilkington—who was to summarize the earliest findings of the Committee in the draft of 150,000 words, 'about the length of a couple of novels'.<sup>33</sup> Lawrence was to publish his personal views on broadcasting structures—and they were strong views—at a far later stage in broadcasting history, in a Tawney Society pamphlet in 1986.<sup>34</sup> Hoggart praised his 'exceptional analytic and linguistic command'.<sup>35</sup>

Pilkington himself took a personal interest in the final drafting after talking to Sir Oliver (later Lord) Franks about his responsibilities in this connection. Franks had recommended getting the three or four 'real policy makers' on the Committee to 'a good dinner' before finalizing the draft. Pilkington told Lawrence that he hoped that this did not imply a lack of confidence in his drafting. 'The points where I think you have erred are very small indeed in number to the ones where I think you have done excellently'.<sup>36</sup>

Lawrence's own notes on the work of the Committee, an invaluable source, are now safely preserved in the Public Record Office. They

<sup>30</sup> *Sunday Times*, 1 July 1962; *Observer*, 1 July 1962. Another lively heading in that day's *Observer* was 'All Sir Harry let loose'.

<sup>31</sup> While 'all drafts were toothcombed again and again by the Committee and so became part of an integrated committee document', Hoggart recalled, 'my contribution [and it included drafts on 'the purposes of broadcasting and its relations to society'] would be hard to separate from his now' (*The Listener*, 13 Nov. 1980). At least one member of the Committee, J. S. Shields, recalled in retrospect that in his opinion Hoggart had, 'monopolised comment at great length'. Hoggart himself recalls that Pilkington used him as a 'trouble-shooter, carefully controlled from his chair' (*An Imagined Life*, p. 63).

<sup>32</sup> HO 244/236, Hoggart to Lawrence, 23 [Sept.] 1961.

<sup>33</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 28 June 1962. After reading the final Report, Hudson congratulated Lawrence on laying its 'solid and effective foundations' (HO244/237, Hudson to Pilkington, 20 June 1962).

<sup>34</sup> D. G. C. Lawrence, *Democracy and Broadcasting* (1982). For Lawrence's views on later, broadcasting issues, see below, p. 538.

<sup>35</sup> For the Chairman's dependence on Lawrence, see a letter from Lawrence to Pilkington, 24 Jan. 1962. 'As each chapter is drafted we take into account suggestions made by you and other Members, on the structure of the Report. In many cases we have been grateful for them and accepted them. Some points, however, are more appropriate to other sections. In the light of evidence [some] require to be developed more than had at first seemed necessary' (HO 244/255).

<sup>36</sup> HO 244/256, Pilkington to Lawrence, 5 Feb. 1962.

begin with an 'outline appraisal' of what he conceived of as the Committee's task which was drafted before the Committee met. It is interesting to compare it with the *Observer's* Memorandum. The Committee, Lawrence explained, would have to examine three main kinds of material; factual matter; criticism of, and justification of, the existing system; and proposals for the 'future control, purpose, scope and conduct' of the broadcasting services. Under the second heading, the 'powers of government' would require as careful an examination as the case made by each broadcasting organization to demonstrate that it provided 'the better public service, however that may be defined'.

In an Annex Lawrence set out a possible method of 'tackling the study', while in a second Annex he listed the specific questions which had already been posed. Neither Annex was offered as complete. The purpose of each was to put the Committee's task 'into broad perspective'.<sup>37</sup> At a later date Lawrence prepared for the Committee a note of guidance dealing with themes that were central to the Report as finally published and, in particular, one of the questions that preoccupied the Committee: 'How far should broadcasting authorities assume responsibility for the cultural standards of the Community?' The words 'how far' were essential to Lawrence's own argument, for he claimed that in answering this leading question, two 'extreme positions' were untenable; first, that no responsibility should be acknowledged, and second, that 'paternalism' was necessary if responsibility were to be assured. It was possible to hold either of these two extreme and irreconcilable positions as 'articles of doctrine', Lawrence pointed out. It was possible also, however, to argue that the question was not one of principle, 'either/or', but one of degree. The Committee had to find an answer.

No witness to the Committee, according to Lawrence's notes, had expressly argued either 'extreme case', although the former was 'implied' in the use of 'such slogans as "Broadcasting should give the public what it wants, and not what someone thinks is good for the public".' How, in practice, Lawrence asked, were the broadcasting authorities 'to know who are the public, and what it wants'? It was 'not enough', he claimed, 'to ascertain which of the programme items available are seen by most people'. 'The majority' was not 'the public'. There were minorities, and the broadcasting authorities had to decide how to 'provide for them'. The 'mass audience' was not the

<sup>37</sup> HO 244/4, Paper Sec/BC/3.

public either. It might comprise, say, 10 million individuals, with a low average of enjoyment, or five separate audiences of, say, 2 million, each generally enjoying a different programme for one-fifth of the time.

Lawrence's mode of argument, so different from that either of professional broadcasters or of special interest groups, followed inexorably to a formal conclusion. It was 'neither good logic to conclude that they [the public] do not want to try something new and different, nor good public service to deny them the opportunity'. 'What the public want is the opportunity to find out what they want; and the broadcasting authorities must provide the opportunity.' It was 'the authorities' (a term which itself required and requires examination<sup>38</sup>) that had 'to give a lead'. On the one hand, they had to avoid any sense of 'exclusiveness', above all of 'condescension'—and the danger of 'losing touch with opinion'. On the other hand, they had to avoid the error of 'mistaking the statistical norm for the individual: of supposing that sets switched on is a measure of satisfaction, of restricting public choice to those kinds of programmes that are known to get and hold the mass audience'. 'The Committee might like to consider', the note concluded—in this case the words 'might like' stand out—'whether it wishes to found its examination of broadcasting authorities and programme companies on these arguments.'

It was Lawrence's presumption, which he stated explicitly at the beginning of these notes, that broadcasting had a 'significant effect on the cultural standards of the community'. By that he meant that it influenced already 'that comprehensive range of tastes and interests and of social and moral attitudes in the community which represents its general disposition and character'. There was, alas, he conceded, no 'certain knowledge' about 'the effects of broadcasting'; but for him the presumption none the less had to be that 'broadcasting and especially television—pervasive, capable of dramatic, vivid and reiterated presentation to people in their homes, transient and, therefore, hard to analyze and criticise—has a unique power to influence and persuade'. 'Certainly,' he added, 'many advertisers believe this.' The Committee would have to 'reckon, therefore, with a probability so strong as to amount to a certainty that broadcasting

<sup>38</sup> See my contribution to R. Hoggart and J. Morgan (eds.), *The Future of Broadcasting: Essays on Authority, Style and Choice* (1982), pp. 20–40.

will affect cultural standards; and that if the medium is abused, there is a risk that the effect will be bad or even disastrous'.

There was a further consideration, too, he added. 'A large body of responsible opinion is convinced . . . that television is affecting cultural standards; and that the effect is too often regrettable.'<sup>39</sup> Perhaps he himself should have been asked the question 'How large?' Lawrence was certainly a spokesman of that body of opinion, as well as secretary of a committee. One man who disagreed totally, Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, the new Chairman of the ITA, was to tell the Committee that it was an over-simplification to say that television 'would be a main factor in shaping the values and moral attitudes of our society in the next decades'.<sup>40</sup>

Abstract questioning was not calculated to appeal greatly to most of the directors of the contracting companies, to Sir Robert Fraser at Brompton Road, or to party politicians on either side—politicians who knew, whether they liked it or not, that the favourite programmes of large numbers of their constituents were those to which the Committee (with or without abstract questioning) would be likely to object the most. It was the final version of the Report, of course, which the politicians saw, not the carefully prepared notes. Yet paragraphs 47–9 of the Report followed the notes. Embedded in a remarkable Chapter III on 'the purposes of broadcasting', they admitted, as the notes had admitted, that the Committee's assessment of 'the power of the medium' could not be 'proved'. The two philosophies—'give the public what they want' and 'give the public what the broadcaster thinks is good for it'—were described as 'falsely contrasted'. The first philosophy, which began by underestimating public taste, ended by debauching it. The second philosophy was 'arrogant', an adjective which was to be freely used by critics of the Report itself.

The broadcaster, the Report insisted, had to explore. And it was for this reason, above all others, that ITV was criticized by the Pilkington Committee:

Our general appraisal is that the Authority have too negative a conception of the purposes of broadcasting. In discounting the influence of the medium [the Committee must have had its eyes on Kirkpatrick here], they scale down their responsibilities. In emphasising that society shapes television they do

<sup>39</sup> HO 244/4, Paper BC/Sec/32.

<sup>40</sup> See Sendall, *op. cit.*, vol. 2 (1983), p. 98. In the Pilkington Report itself, para. 156, Kirkpatrick's views are noted: 'He thought society would be largely what it was—with or without television.'



not allow nearly enough for the medium's capacity to reveal new perspectives, for the broadcaster's consequent responsibility to realise that capacity—and, in doing so, to enable a more fully informed audience to choose more freely.<sup>41</sup>

The Committee recognized that some of the contracting companies took what it called a more 'positive' view, although unfortunately it did little to expand on the point.

### 3. Viewers' Choices

Judging from the record had been the main mode of enquiry of previous Committees that had looked into the future of the BBC; and, in line with tradition, the Committee, concerned as it now had to be with competition, agreed at its second meeting that its secretariat should prepare tables comparing the programmes offered by the BBC and ITV for spot periods—the second weeks in November 1958, 1959, and 1960. This was in order 'to show in some measure, how far the two programmes were truly alternative and how far each was balanced'. The tables might show also, the Committee recognized, whether or not 'any significant changes had occurred in the programmes over the two years'.<sup>1</sup>

In both schedules, in 1958 and in 1959, the first programme item had been the same on the Sunday of the week in question. Both BBC and ITV had televised the Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph, although they devoted different periods of time to it. In 1958, only religious programmes, outside broadcasts or Welsh-language programmes, had been permitted on either channel before 2 p.m. on Sundays. In 1959 both channels were showing football on the Sunday afternoon, but not at the same time, with ITV offering viewers the sight not of professional footballers but of a 'Show-biz XI'. For contractual reasons, not explored by the Committee, football had disappeared by 1960, when the BBC was televising the *Phil Silvers Show* and ITV John Betjeman in *The Book Man*, followed by *Bonanza*.

ITV was still presenting an *Advertising Magazine* (in 1958 and 1959 from 4.40 p.m. to 4.55 p.m., in 1960 from 5.20 p.m. to 5.40 p.m.), while the BBC was presenting its *Brains Trust*, a pale version of the wartime

<sup>41</sup> Cmnd. 1753 (1962), para. 164, p. 54.

<sup>1</sup> HO 244/4, Paper Sec/BC/7.

original, in 1959. The BBC included *Sooty* in all three years, ITV *Carroll Levis Junior Discoveries* in 1958, *Robin Hood* in 1959, and *The Last of the Mohicans* in 1960. Both channels broadcast a religious programme after the Sunday break from 6.15 p.m. to 7 p.m. For the BBC it was *Meeting Point*. In 1960 ITV presented a programme about the Quakers. *What's My Line?* was offered by the BBC in all three years, *Sunday Night at the Palladium* by the ITV. In 1959 and 1960 the BBC presented a David Nixon programme. On ITV there was a quiz programme (*Dotto*) in 1958 and the western films *Cheyenne* in 1959 and *Maverick* in 1960, genuine alternatives to the BBC's *Monitor*, shown in 1959 and 1960.

ITV's 'cultural programme' in 1960 was a conversation, *Shapes and Sounds*, between Sir Kenneth Clark and the composer Sir William Walton. Both BBC and ITV offered Sunday night plays: *Sunday Night Theatre* (BBC), in 1960 renamed *The Sunday Play*, and *Armchair Theatre* (ITV). Both included five-minute news summaries. Both ended in 1958 with an *Epilogue*, and although in 1959 ITV switched to - *Sentimental Journey*, a musical programme, it restored the *Epilogue* in 1960.

The members of the Pilkington Committee had it pointed out to them, if they had not noticed it for themselves, that differences in the timing of the beginning and ending of programmes made it difficult for viewers to switch from one service to another. They also had pointed out to them the proportions of each evening's programmes in terms of Light Programme, Home Service, and Third Programme radio equivalents, a dangerous measure. It was easier, perhaps, to judge the proportions on a weeknight than on a Sunday. It was also easier to assess the effect of peak hours ratings on programming at other times.

A comparison of BBC and ITV programming on the three November Wednesdays that were specially surveyed brought out the BBC's grip on sport: *Sportsview* figured in all three years. Only in 1958 did ITV offer floodlit football. In light entertainment the BBC offered Alan Melville, revue writer and light entertainer, in 1958 and 1960, and ITV the *Jack Jackson Show* in 1958 and *Val Parnell's Showtime* in 1960. ITV televised a *Spot the Tune* quiz in 1958, and the BBC *Animal*, *Vegetable*, *Mineral*. Both broadcast a detective play. In 1959, both the BBC and ITV presented two light entertainment shows, one of the BBC's from America, *The Perry Como Show* (the BBC also broadcast a Bing Crosby programme). ITV's programmes were *Tell it to the Marines* and *Sky Port*. The one history programme during the three years was ITV's *Only Yesterday: The Siege of Sidney Street* (1958). In

1959 ITV offered an episode of *Ivanhoe*, and in 1960 an episode of *Edwin Drood*. The BBC offered a science fiction film in 1960.<sup>2</sup> Both channels had to include a Party Political Broadcast in 1960.

On Thursday night there were real alternatives in 1958. Between 6.10 and 8 p.m. three of ITV's programmes were detective series, two of them American, competing against a BBC serial (*Starr and Company*), *Tonight*, a news summary, and the *Charlie Chester Show*. ITV also had an 11.30 p.m. American detective programme, *M Squad*. On the November Friday in 1958 *Tonight* competed directly with the ITV news commentary programme *Roving Report*; David Nixon's *It's Magic*, a popular programme built around a much loved 'personality', with *Take Your Pick*, a quiz; and *Our Mutual Friend*, a superb Dickens serial, with ITV television drama. On the Saturday the BBC's *Six-Five Special* competed directly with *Oh Boy!*; and later in the evening both channels included old films. On Thursday night in 1960 there was direct competition between the BBC's *Ask Me Another* quiz and ITV's *Double Your Money*. On the Saturday of 1960 the BBC's *Juke Box Jury* was competing directly with an ITV documentary *The Sea War*, and later in the evening the Ken Dodd comedy show on the BBC, highly distinctive English entertainment, was competing directly with the American television detective drama series *77 Sunset Strip*. The only 'soap' was ITV's *Emergency Ward Ten*. There was no BBC programme like ITV's *What the Papers Say*.

The BBC itself provided evidence on the question which so much interested the Committee—whether one of the effects of competition had been to reduce the number of 'serious' programmes broadcast at 'peak hours'.<sup>3</sup> (The Committee had sensibly asked for a note defining each of these two terms.) Between 7 p.m. and 10.30 p.m.—these were the hours of 'maximum availability'—at least a third of this time, the BBC submitted, had been filled with 'serious' material. Balance and range, however, were what counted: 'The presentation of a reasonable balance between "light" and "serious" is important but not readily susceptible to a quantitative appraisal. What might generally be regarded as "light", eg "swing" or the TT races, may be taken with the utmost seriousness by some people.'

The relevant BBC background paper, breaking down the concept of a 'mass audience', as Lawrence himself did, drew a distinction between minority programmes placed outside peak hours and what

<sup>2</sup> See below, pp. 423–4.

<sup>3</sup> Cmnd. 1819 (1962), *Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960, Appendix E, Vol. 1*, pp. 210–13.

Television Talks called 'small majority programmes'. 'The aim in "minority" (and some minorities, of course, are large) programmes is to satisfy the informed viewer and to persuade the new viewer to give the programme a try.' This was precisely the kind of language that appealed to the Committee; and indeed it was picked up by it in its Report. 'Serious' programmes in peak hours dealt with 'subjects of universal importance', the BBC stated, 'and we seek for methods of presentation which are of universal appeal'.<sup>4</sup>

BBC Memorandum No. 10, submitted to the Committee in July 1961, listed what were considered to be such 'serious' programmes: news, current affairs, talks and discussions, documentaries, outside broadcasts of events of major importance (but not sport), opera, ballet, and 'serious' music. The list excluded drama—a field where ITV was then more adventurous than the BBC—admitting that it was difficult to draw any acceptable distinction between 'serious' and 'non-serious' drama. Employing these listed criteria, the BBC produced its own analysis of competition. Over the previous two and a half years, the paper claimed, the record of the BBC contrasted sharply with that of ITV:

*Percentage of Serious Programmes  
Broadcast in Peak Hours*

| Time period    | BBC   | ITV  |
|----------------|-------|------|
| Jan.–June 1958 | 35    | 8.4  |
| July–Dec. 1958 | 33    | 12.0 |
| Jan.–June 1959 | 33.7  | 11.3 |
| July–Dec. 1959 | 33.1  | 13.3 |
| Jan.–June 1960 | 33.65 | 9.61 |
| July–Dec. 1960 | 31    | 9.4  |

The last two lines seemed to need little elaboration, although the BBC's own figure had fallen during the last six months. There was, as the Memorandum put it, a 'marked difference between the character of the BBC's service and that of its competitors'.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> \*K. Adam, 'Serious Programmes in Peak Hours', 10 Nov. 1960 (T16/326/2). For the different ITA approach, see ITA, *Independent Television Programmes, More Facts and Figures* (1962). It was highly classificatory, as well as statistical.

<sup>5</sup> Cmnd. 1819 (1962), p. 213. The Memorandum added in two places that it was handicapped by being allowed to present only one television service.

#### 4. The Weight of Evidence

This paper was one of thirty-seven BBC documents submitted to the Pilkington Committee, among 636 papers that the Committee received after it asked at its first two-day meeting, on 20–1 September 1960, for written submissions to be sent into it by the end of November.<sup>1</sup> In addition, fourteen papers were submitted by BBC Advisory Bodies, mainly the Chairmen of Regional Advisory Councils and of Broadcasting Councils in Scotland and Wales and the Councils themselves. Their slant was different, but the focus was the same. As the Memorandum from the Broadcasting Council for Scotland put it, 'the standing of the BBC services is probably unique in this country and the world'.<sup>2</sup>

The total volume of evidence, written and oral, was larger than that collected earlier by Beveridge, with far more of it relating to television. Some of the most interesting non-BBC evidence was submitted by the contracting companies. Anglia, for example, stated even more categorically than the Committee was to do that 'television is an extremely powerful medium for influencing people and therefore that those who control it must accept a social and moral responsibility'.<sup>3</sup> Granada was at pains to point out that 'in the period of debate leading up to the Television Act, Granada was not dedicated to the cause of Independent Television'. From the national point of view, in Granada's opinion, the known weakness of monopoly seemed 'less frightening than the thought of competition, or at least of some of the likely competitors'.<sup>4</sup>

One of the first of the BBC's competitors, ATV, Norman Collins's company, prided itself that in its brief history it had competed keenly with the BBC. It had taken over the main participants in the discussion programme *In the News* from the BBC, and had begun *Free Speech* on 25 September 1955, three days after it had started its

<sup>1</sup> It decided also to take the initiative by inviting representatives of a number of interested organizations—166 in all—to give oral evidence (PRO HO 244/165). There is an interesting summary of the BBC's evidence in *Ariel*, Nov. 1960. BBC staff were kept well informed.

<sup>2</sup> Cmnd. 1819 (1962), p. 321.

<sup>3</sup> Cmnd. 1819-1 (1962), *Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960, Appendix E, Vol. II* p. 603. Cf. the Report itself, pp. 14–15: 'Disquiet about television derived from the view that the power of the medium to influence and persuade is immense . . . we cannot say that this assessment of the power of the medium is proved. So far, there is little conclusive evidence on the effects of television on values and moral attitudes.'

<sup>4</sup> Cmnd. 1819-1 (1962), p. 675.

operations.<sup>5</sup> It had also introduced the first regular half-hour series of religious programmes on Sundays—before the BBC. It had signed on Sir Kenneth Clark as its adviser and consultant on programmes in the cultural field after he left the ITA and William Clark as its adviser and consultant on programmes in the field of public affairs after he left the service of Eden.<sup>6</sup>

Hugh Greene, as Director-General, supervised the BBC's massive operation from the top, ably directed by the BBC's Secretary, Maurice Farquharson, who had joined the BBC in 1935 and had become Director of the Secretariat in 1940. Born in 1899, Farquharson was to remain Secretary of the BBC until his retirement in 1963. His services to the BBC were of incalculable value. Nor did they end with his retirement. He set a standard which has inspired all his successors, whose span of responsibility has varied almost as much as the BBC structures within which they have always had to work. Greene's contribution, however, was quite different. He enjoyed mischief as much as responsibility, and in dealing with Pilkington—and with ITV—he benefited from what he had learnt before 1945 in waging psychological warfare.

Under his command, the BBC had got off to a characteristically brisk start when Greene sent Pilkington a copy of the BBC's general paper on 'Summary of Development, 1952–60' before the other members of his Committee had been appointed. It followed a confidential meeting, and Pilkington was given the copy so that he could peruse it on a visit he was making to Australia between the date of his own appointment and that of his Committee members. No such ITA document was produced, and at the end of the day Greene was highly critical of the way that ITV had presented its case. 'Led by the old victors of the campaign for commercial television, [ITV] made the usual mistake of thinking they were fighting the same war over again and were bound to win. They were lazy in the public presentation of their case and fatally casual, even, I believe, contemptuous, in the presentation of their evidence. They got what was coming to them.'<sup>7</sup>

Hoggart agreed. The BBC's material had been 'very well presented, very well researched, well written, clear [and] cogent' in contrast to the material supplied by the competitor. 'Commercial television was

<sup>5</sup> See A. Sisman, *A. J. P. Taylor* (1994), pp. 230–1.

<sup>6</sup> Cmnd. 1819–1 (1962), pp. 649 ff.

<sup>7</sup> H. Greene, *The Third Floor Front* (1969), pp. 58–9.



a mess.' 'The cavalier presentations of many of their spokesmen suggested that they did not think there was much a Committee such as ours could do about it.'<sup>8</sup> In retrospect, these judgements seem harsh. The companies' written evidence was certainly not uniformly 'cavalier', and Pilkington himself in his speech to the Press setting out the conclusions of the inquiry stressed that he and his Committee had noted that their programmes bore the 'impress of the individual contractors' and that they 'attached importance to the individual character of the programme companies'.<sup>9</sup>

The Pilkington Committee did not treat as confidential the evidence that it received, including the submissions made by the BBC, and points made by particular organizations or individuals might be taken up with others, a procedure which did not entirely satisfy Greene.<sup>10</sup> He knew, however, that the submissions were examined in detail by subcommittees before the whole Committee turned to them—assisted by notes prepared by its secretariat on points to raise in subsequent oral interviews. Greene particularly welcomed the procedure by which Committee visits or visits by individual members to BBC premises were encouraged, both in London and in the Regions. The Committee also mentioned in the final version of the Report seeing the film *This is the BBC* which had been commissioned by Sir Ian Jacob partly with this in mind.<sup>11</sup>

The BBC's written evidence was summarized in a number of papers, particularly Memorandum No. 1 of August 1960, and in two memoranda on technical aspects of television development. There were also papers on pay television and on Eurovision. There were two papers on sound, one on network expansion, and one on local broadcasting. There was also a memorandum on the BBC and its staff.<sup>12</sup> An interesting early memorandum, for internal use only, was called 'Main Issues'.<sup>13</sup>

Sound figured prominently near the beginning of the first memorandum to be submitted, where there was an emphasis on the continuing need for three programmes 'planned as an integrated operation'. A fuller memorandum, No. 11, offered the prospect of more music, 'serious and light', in both Network Three and the Light

<sup>8</sup> *The Listener*, 13 Nov. 1980; *Battles of Broadcasting* (a BBC-2 film), 11 Oct. 1980.

<sup>9</sup> Speech delivered to Press Conference, 27 June 1962 (HO 244/8).

<sup>10</sup> \*Greene, 'Pilkington Committee', 6 March 1961 (R4/4/6/8).

<sup>11</sup> Cmnd. 1753 (1962), para. 3. See above, pp. 234–7.

<sup>12</sup> The memoranda are all printed in Cmnd. 1819 (1962), pp. 77–321.

<sup>13</sup> \*It is dated 6 Feb. 1961 (R4/4/6/8).

Programme, 'without curtailing the many other programmes which are preferred by those who have no ear for music'. There was also to be an earlier morning start to cater for listeners who went to work before broadcasting then began at 6.30 a.m. It was estimated that 29 per cent of the population were at work or on their way to work before 6.30 a.m.

A further memorandum, No. 12, on local broadcasting, put forward a plan to build eighty to ninety stations in five years, each costing around £17,500. Each separate area would be studied individually, so that 'local broadcasting would grow out of the life of the community'. There was to be no standard blueprint. The power of each station would depend on the size of the community it served; the programming of each station would grow out of the life around it. The station managers and their staff, active in local affairs, by their very nature controversial, would not be expected to go for large audiences for their own sake. The stations would operate on VHF, which would mean broadening the VHF band then allotted to broadcasting by the Post Office through international bodies.<sup>14</sup> Plans for such development had already been put to the Post Office, and trial runs had taken place. The new service would amount to 'a fourth programme choice' for listeners in the chosen places. As the 'Main Issues' paper had put it, 'competitors in this field' had already begun to 'reveal themselves', but the BBC hoped to 'persuade the Committee that it could provide a better service than any rival'.<sup>15</sup>

The BBC memoranda on television that were presented to the Committee were more numerous than those on sound, but none was more ambitious than the plan for local radio. The word 'plan' was used too in relation to television in the first BBC Memorandum, which referred back to the BBC's Ten-Year Plan for Television, prepared for Jacob.<sup>16</sup> As far as technology was concerned, the desirability of accepting a 625-line standard was strongly advocated (apart from anything else it would help exports); and as far as policy was concerned, great emphasis was placed on the need for a second channel: 'the Corporation cannot do its work under the Charter to

<sup>14</sup> In 1951 the Beveridge Committee had already recommended that the BBC should develop VHF to increase the scope for local broadcasting (Cmd. 8116 (1951), para. 295). Selwyn Lloyd had taken a stronger line in his Minority Report (*ibid.*, p. 201). See below, pp. 840-3.

<sup>15</sup> \*'Main Issues', 6 Feb. 1961. For local broadcasting, see below, pp. 627-32.

<sup>16</sup> See above, pp. 320-1.

satisfaction through the operation of a single programme.' With two channels, 'Thought and opinion' could be 'set against light entertainment, music against speech, serious drama against light comedy'.<sup>17</sup> The programmes would be complementary, and each would contain a balanced proportion of material. A 'strictly educational service', offered on a separate channel, would be a 'bad solution'.

The introduction of colour television, dealt with, like local radio, at greater length in a separate paper, could await the decision on line standards. No colour receiver could then be produced at a sufficiently low price to command an adequate market—and they all depended upon picture tubes made by the Radio Corporation of America—but standards were improving, and the BBC would be ready to provide a service when the time came.<sup>18</sup>

The cost of the whole BBC package, including a second television service and local radio, was dealt with last in the first Memorandum. It could be completely covered by a combined sound and television licence of about £5, about 2 shillings per week per householder. Some observers had 'quite wrongly' suggested £10. The full proceeds of a £4 licence fee would enable a more limited expansion, including a second television service. In the words of 'Main Issues', the licence-fee system was 'the best guarantee of the independence and public-service character of the BBC'.<sup>19</sup>

The BBC's submission on television was drafted following frank discussions within different departments of the Television Service, planned thoroughly and systematically by Kenneth Adam and recorded verbatim by a palantypist. Unseen by the Committee, they provide, like the discussions leading up to the Marriott Working Party on Sound,<sup>20</sup> an invaluable record for the historian. The first discussion involved the Drama Department.<sup>21</sup> One speaker, Andrew Osborn, who had worked with the contracting companies both as a producer and as an actor, felt that competition had been beneficial.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Cmnd. 1819 (1962), p. 89.

<sup>18</sup> For the history of colour television see below, pp. 848–63.

<sup>19</sup> \*'Main Issues', 6 Feb. 1961. A separate paper was submitted on the feasibility of pay television. No unallocated frequencies should be given to pay television if such allocation would jeopardize the BBC's public service plans. 'The Corporation would not support any action the results of which, in its opinion, were calculated to damage or impoverish the public service of television which it provides for the nation as a whole' (Cmnd. 1819 (1962), p. 169).

<sup>20</sup> See above, pp. 38–43.

<sup>21</sup> See above, pp. 190–4.

<sup>22</sup> For Osborn's role in *Maigret*, see above, p. 193.

There had been 'a sort of tautening of the muscles, a sharpening up generally'. The script-writer Eric Crozier, however, believed that the BBC had lowered its standards in the face of competition—for example, in placing the play *The Ruffians* on a Sunday night to get the largest possible audience. From the chair, Michael Barry concluded that there had been a change in society which had brought forward a new kind of play writing, for the theatre as well as for television.<sup>23</sup> It was his successors, however, notably Sydney Newman, then employed by ITV, who were to exploit it.<sup>24</sup>

Somewhat similar points were made when Eric Maschwitz chaired a meeting on Light Entertainment. Styles, everyone noted, were changing. Instead of established stand-up comedians following established routines, there were now new writers and new artists. Timing was stricter, and there was a 'greater professionalism'. None the less, there had been a 100 per cent increase in costs. George Inns, producer of *The Black and White Minstrels*, and Bill Cotton Jr., then the producer of his father's programme, were both uneasy about artists' agents refusing BBC engagements without reference to their principals. Bill Cotton Sr. had refused an ITV contract, but others had been cajoled into accepting such contracts.<sup>25</sup> There was a difference of opinion at a meeting dealing with women's programmes. Richard (later Sir Richard) Francis, again a man with a future,<sup>26</sup> argued that competition, in driving up fees, had at the same time raised quality, while Monica Sims contended that many artists preferred to work for the BBC even at lower fees.<sup>27</sup>

At a meeting of Outside Broadcasts Producers Peter Dimmock declared that one of the main consequences of competition had been recognition of the need to concentrate on outside broadcasts of major events, sporting or ceremonial, rather than to develop documentary programmes on outside locations on less obvious topics. Two Assistant Heads of the Department with interesting careers ahead of them inside the BBC (and outside), Bryan Cowgill and Aubrey Singer, made very different points. For Cowgill, 'in the minds

<sup>23</sup> \*Report of a Meeting with Drama Producers, 9 Nov. 1960 (R4/4/5/1-2).

<sup>24</sup> See below, pp. 395-7.

<sup>25</sup> \*Report of a Meeting of Light Entertainment Producers, 17 Nov. 1960 (R4/4/5/1-2).

<sup>26</sup> In 1963 Francis became a television current affairs producer, and rose to become Assistant Head of the Group before becoming Controller, Northern Ireland, in 1973. He was later Director, News and Current Affairs, and Managing Director, Radio, before resigning from the BBC and becoming Director-General of the British Council in 1986.

<sup>27</sup> \*Report of a Meeting of Producers of Women's Programmes, 22 Nov. 1960 (R4/4/5/1-2).

of many viewers', commercial television was regarded as more of a regional television service than were the Regions of the BBC. For Singer, a former producer of *Eye on Research*, the BBC was reversing the priorities of its Charter. Instead of seeking to educate, inform, and entertain, it was seeking to entertain, to inform, and to educate.<sup>28</sup>

A third producer, Paul Fox, who had joined the BBC in 1950 and whose distinguished future was to span both 'sides' of television, BBC and ITV, ending in a return to the BBC, asked what was regarded as the 'ideal audience share ratio'. When Adam replied that he would be worried if it fell regularly below 35 per cent, Fox recalled that eighteen months earlier it had fallen to 28 per cent, to which Adam replied that the subsequent recovery had not been at the expense of 'serious programmes' in peak hours.<sup>29</sup>

At a meeting dealing with Schools Television, one of the most recent developments in educational broadcasting,<sup>30</sup> Donald Grattan, a future Controller, Educational Broadcasting, claimed that the need to fight for large audiences in peak hours had eliminated valuable scientific and historical programmes from the weekly timetable.<sup>31</sup> 'I wonder', he added, 'whether the BBC is getting the most out of its Talks Department'?'<sup>32</sup> The same issue was discussed at the meeting of the Television Talks Department when Miall, in the chair, maintained that competition had not had the dire effects predicted at the time of the Beveridge Report. Baverstock agreed, noting that the BBC would have to eat some of its own words uttered during that inquiry and, above all, to know which were the words to eat.

Goldie, then Assistant Head, argued realistically, as she was to do many times in the future, that the most important effect of commercial television had been to force Broadcasting House to recognize the

<sup>28</sup> \*Report of a Meeting of Outside Broadcasts Producers, 15 Nov. 1960 (R4/4/5/1-2).

<sup>29</sup> \*Ibid. Fox, who edited both *Sportsview* (1953) and *Panorama* (1961), was Head of Public Affairs Programmes (1963-5), Head of Current Affairs Group, Television (1965-7), and Controller, BBC-1 (1967-73). Cowgill stayed with sport until he became Head of Sport and OBS Group in 1972. Two years later he was appointed Controller, BBC-1 (see below, pp. 966-7). In 1977 he was to become Director, News and Currents Affairs, but resigned abruptly to become Managing Director of Thames Television. Aubrey Singer had joined BBC TV Outside Broadcasts in 1949, and in 1959, after producing many scientific programmes, became Assistant Head of Outside Broadcasts, Television. Four years later he became Head of Outside Broadcasts Feature and Science Programmes, and in 1967, after a reorganization, Head of Features Group. See also below, pp. 965-7.

<sup>30</sup> See above, pp. 181-2.

<sup>31</sup> Grattan was a mathematics teacher who joined the BBC in 1956 to work in the newly formed Schools Television Department. For his later career see below, pp. 479, 484.

<sup>32</sup> \*Report of a Meeting of Producers of Schools Programmes, 14 Nov. 1960 (R4/4/5/1-2).

importance of television and to concede to television 'a lot of powers, moneys and other important things which were denied before' and which, she believed, would have continued to be denied 'in large measure' if there had been no competitor.<sup>33</sup> Antony (later Sir Antony) Jay, then working on *Tonight*, counter-claimed that during the previous five years the BBC had improved more by competition within itself than by direct competition with ITV.<sup>34</sup>

Huw Wheldon, who was then still editing and presenting *Monitor*, concluded, as others, including Miall, had done, that it was difficult to separate out the effects of competition from the effects of the increase in the numbers of television viewers.<sup>35</sup> Licensing revenues had doubled or trebled since the launching of ITV. Wheldon also formulated 'philosophical' points of his own that he was to expound many times later, both in aphorisms and in expanded form in lectures. While ITV, like American television, polarized its programmes, offering 'mass entertainment' on the one hand and high-brow programmes for minorities on the other, the BBC, he claimed, had always followed the policy of seeking 'the best' in all its programmes, including entertainment: 'do serious or light things as well as you can'. That was what you had to do, 'ought to do', if you were a 'broadcasting authority'.

It was, none the less, proving more difficult than it had been before to prepare 'small majority' programmes which had the chance of increasing their public and becoming 'big majority' programmes. In other words (and Wheldon did not use them), there was less chance of building up a public which initially had not been there. That had always been an aim of the BBC from Reith onwards. But 'mandarin' programmes had been 'out' since Greene had become Director-General.<sup>36</sup> 'Professionalism' was what now mattered, whether programmes being produced were 'light' or 'serious'. Given such stress on 'professionalism', both Miall and Goldie complained that ITV had failed to institute any training schemes. It was signing on BBC staff and broadcasters at higher salaries than they had ever been paid before. 'Why should we bother to train staff?' was ITV's attitude. 'The BBC will do that for us.'

<sup>33</sup> See above, p. 31.

<sup>34</sup> \*Report of a Meeting with Television Talks Department, 10 Nov. 1960 (R4/4/5/1-2). Jay was to leave BBC production in 1964 to concentrate on writing. He wrote the commentary for Richard Cawston's documentary on the *Royal Family* in 1969, and later was co-author of the *Yes, Minister* comedy series. He was knighted in 1988.

<sup>35</sup> For *Monitor*, see above, pp. 167-9.

<sup>36</sup> For Greene's attitude towards programmes, see below, pp. 365 ff.



The Committee was impressed by the thrust of this evidence after it had been smoothed out in BBC memoranda; and in an academic article on 'mass communications', published in 1961, Hoggart was to contrast sharply ITV and BBC programming, describing the former as similar to American programming, even though in Britain there was no sponsorship of particular programmes.

Hoggart had very little to say about 'entertainment', however, and he questioned those who made too much of audience size when dealing with 'serious' programmes. He also drew a distinction—in relation to all television—between diffusion and cultural education. 'Exposure' might sometimes provide a point of departure for viewers interested in acquiring important intellectual and imaginative qualities that they regarded highly: for example, 'width of judgement'. Yet exposure in itself did not ensure 'cultural development'. Indeed, culture was becoming 'a thing for display, not exploration, a presentation, not a challenge'.<sup>37</sup> The 'consumers' culture', represented by ITV, was 'thinner'. There would be an obvious danger if it were to 'spread over all'.

Hoggart's language was somewhat different from that employed in a series of questions that the Pilkington Committee's secretariat suggested should be put to the BBC and the ITA. None the less, the approach was the same. In both cases, the members of the Committee were urged to start, very generally, with 'the purposes of broadcasting' ('information, education and entertainment'). One question to be put to the BBC was not put to the ITA in the same form: 'As to what is broadcast, what is the philosophy?' Nor were four other related questions to be put to the ITA. 'Does it see any risk in public service broadcasting of paternalism?'; 'How far is size of audience a factor?'; 'Is size of audience a more significant factor than it was before the ITA started operating?'; and 'What other factors are there?'

At a later stage, presumably after discussion between the members, the Secretariat added that it was 'necessary to obtain clearly from the ITA the philosophy on which it bases its policy: eg, where, between the means of absolute paternalism and absolute *laissez-faire*, the

<sup>37</sup> R. Hoggart, 'Mass Communications in Britain', in B. Ford (ed.), *Pelican Guide to English Literature*, vol. 7 (1961). This essay, intricate and complex in both its argument and its style, was an extended commentary on what Hoggart called 'one primary need of mass communications—to reach as wide an audience as possible'. Hoggart also quoted Raymond Williams's 'reminder' that 'there are probably no masses at all—only operators in the mass media trying to form masses, and all of us from time to time allowing them'.

mean should be plotted.' The same point was made in relation to the questioning of the BBC, and in this case a different supplementary question was appended: 'Do the BBC feel that they and the ITA have the same responsibilities to the viewing public and should have a common philosophy of broadcasting?'<sup>38</sup>

There were two questions that were by their nature specific to the BBC. The first, 'Does the BBC regard commercial revenue as absolutely excluded?', was followed by a supplementary; 'if not', might there be 'a measure of subscription television' or 'a measure of advertising'?<sup>39</sup> Another set of questions, all of which related to 'choice of companies', were by their nature specific to the ITA. They included as a leading question; 'Do the Authority think any of their choices have been wrong?' There was also a group of questions put to ITA on Press interests. In parallel to the Pilkington Committee, a Royal Commission, headed by Lord Shawcross, was examining the economic and financial factors affecting the production and sale of newspapers, magazines, and other periodicals.<sup>40</sup> It was appointed by Macmillan in February 1961 after questions had been raised in the House of Commons; but after its appointment, the Pilkington Committee specifically retained the remit of examining 'changes in the effective control of television programme companies as a result of mergers or take-overs'.<sup>41</sup>

Both the BBC and the ITA were to be asked questions on 'relations with the Government'. The questions touched in both cases on 'hidden pressure, conscious or otherwise, by the Government' and on 'restrictions placed on them by the Representation of the People Act'. In the case of the BBC a further question concerned whether it had, formally or not, 'to take Government wages policy into account',<sup>42</sup> and in the case of the ITA the question was asked: 'which

<sup>38</sup> HO 244/5, Paper Sec/BC/37.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Cmnd. 1811 (1962), *Report of the Royal Commission on the Press*. The recommendations of the two Committees did not substantially diverge on matters that overlapped. Both objected to the control of programme companies by Press interests, but neither defined with precision the circumstances in which a Press interest in a programme company should be regarded as dominant.

<sup>41</sup> *The Times*, 10 Feb. 1961. A Private Members' motion on the subject proposed by Kenneth Robinson had been accepted by the House in December 1960 (*Hansard*, vol. 631, cols. 719–822, 2 Dec. 1960), and Robinson wished to be reassured about the extent of overlapping (*Hansard*, vol. 634, cols. 630–1, 9 Feb. 1961). A further Committee, chaired by Lord Jenkins, was examining Company Law—Cmnd. 1749 (1962), *The Report of the Company Law Committee*.

<sup>42</sup> The note referred to Cmd. 8550 (1952), *Broadcasting*, para. 36 (it meant para. 37), and went on to ask whether, if the Act applied, it 'significantly hamper(ed) performance'. A supplementary Note, presumably drafted after discussion with members of the

should be regarded as more important—alternative TV programmes (especially at peak hours) or longer hours of TV broadcasting?’

Questions on finance inevitably followed a contrasting course when ITV and the BBC, Dives and Lazarus, were being examined. The first Committee note referring to the ITA read: ‘Excessive profits of programme contractors’; the first note for the BBC read: ‘Are the BBC *in practice* free to pay staff and performers what is necessary to get and keep the right people? Has the BBC’s income been enough for this?’ The fourth BBC question under this heading—the twenty-sixth out of 112<sup>43</sup>—read: ‘Is the BBC quite sure [not underlined] that a £5 licence will suffice for the future they envisage?’

A whole cluster of questions—eleven in all—concerned how the BBC would use a second television channel, a cluster of questions that incorporated a separately defined set of questions put to the ITA on ‘competition in television’. There had been conflicting evidence on this point, as there was on the running of a third channel. According to the *Daily Herald*, only one body giving evidence wanted the ITA to have the third channel—the ITA itself.<sup>44</sup> The TUC and the National Union of Teachers wanted the BBC to run it. Equity wanted it to be handled by a non-profit-making body.<sup>45</sup>

The idea of it being devoted exclusively to education, an issue that was to remain in the air during the 1960s, was also raised.<sup>46</sup> The Viewers’ and Listeners’ Association included a paper on ‘Teaching by Television’ both in schools and in universities. It urged that both should be ‘in the hands of a freshly constituted authority’, but later changed its stance after a vote of its Executive Council.<sup>47</sup> The Association had been formed in December 1960 with T. S. Eliot as President, Peter Laslett as Chairman, Norman Fisher (of *Brains Trust* fame) as Honorary Treasurer, and Lady Violet Bonham Carter, ex-

Committee, read: ‘This question should be directed narrowly to the point of interaction by the Government in the day-to-day business of the Corporation. The question should not at this stage lead to investigation of wages disputes.’

<sup>43</sup> Four supplementary questions were added later.

<sup>44</sup> *Daily Herald*, 13 Feb. 1961.

<sup>45</sup> Cmnd. 1819-1 (1962), pp. 1259-60, 838, 785-6. ‘There must be a television service which is consciously representative of the national attitude,’ the Viewers’ and Listeners’ Association stated, ‘and so is free of those direct importations from the commercial television industry of the United States which are so blatant in the ITV programmes and which make a consistent appearance on BBC programmes’ (ibid., p. 1262).

<sup>46</sup> Hoggart was sceptical about the BBC’s attitude to educational television, however much it advocated it. He believed that the ‘further education section’ of the BBC was the most ‘disillusioned and disappointed section of the BBC’ that he had met (HO 244/236). See below, p. 467.

<sup>47</sup> Cmnd. 1819-1 (1962), p. 1267.

BBC Governor, Hugh (later Sir Hugh) Casson, Sir Julian Huxley, Bertrand Russell, Michael Tippett, and Christopher Mayhew as members of the Executive Committee.<sup>48</sup> Greene found their proposition 'disturbing', and he tried to discourage friends of the BBC, including the ex-Vice-Chairman, Sir Philip Morris, from associating themselves with it.<sup>49</sup>

There were differences of opinion in the Association on a number of issues, all of them carefully scrutinized inside the BBC, but Gordon Mosley, Assistant to Harman Grisewood, reflected positively—if ruefully—that 'however, though in one mood she [the VLA] may take a side-swipe at her niece—the rejuvenated BBC—her real venom is always reserved for the nasty youth in the shop across the street and his get-rich-quick parents'.<sup>50</sup>

Surprisingly, no question was put to the ITA on the effect of BBC competition on its own programming, although there was a whole section on 'discipline'—how the Authority used its powers as a watchdog in relation to the programming of contracting companies. Question 98, put to the ITA directly—there were 120 such questions in all—concerned the central proposal that had already been formulated in the Committee's thinking. 'It has been suggested that the Authority should itself sell advertising time, and then contract with the companies to provide programmes. Would the Authority comment?'

Constitutional questions, including questions relating to complaints procedures, were also put to both the ITA and the BBC. A further key BBC question related to the Governors. 'Do the Governors see themselves essentially as a sounding board on which the executive arm test their more controversial plans? Or as policy initiators? Or both?' 'It might be useful', the note added, 'to ask if they could give examples of cases in which they have intervened.'

<sup>48</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 2 Dec. 1960. The older Sound Broadcasting Society, with which many of the leaders of the new body had been associated (see above, p. 57), remained in existence, and itself gave evidence to the Pilkington Committee (Cmnd. 1819-1 (1962), pp. 1246-9). It supported BBC local radio, but also a separation of BBC radio and television. The Viewers' and Listeners' Association, not to be confused with a later body, the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association (see below, p. 519), was chaired by Norman Fisher (\*see Greene to Oliver Whitley, Appointments Officer, 'Friends of the BBC', 15 Jan. 1960 (R4/4/16/1)). Its Honorary Secretary was Cyril Conner, who had been Head of Overseas and Foreign Relations at the BBC. His role in the Association led to difficulties with Greene.

<sup>49</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 5 Dec. 1960.

<sup>50</sup> \*Mosley to Farquharson, 'Viewers' and Listeners' Association—Analysis', 10 April 1961 (R4/4/16/3).

The Chairman, Sir Arthur fforde, was asked still more pertinently, 'Is he satisfied with the calibre of Governors?'

Although the Stationery Office was to produce two thick volumes of printed evidence submitted to the Pilkington Committee, these contained only memoranda that had been submitted. The oral evidence was never published, and is only now becoming available under the Thirty Year Rule. It is clear from the final Report, however, that there was careful method in the oral questioning and that the questioning seems to have followed the notes prepared by the Secretary. Indeed, the notes are reflected both in the first introductory chapters of the Report and, sometimes quite starkly, in the concluding list of 120 recommendations.

## 5. Recommendations and Reactions

The introduction emphasizes that while the Postmaster-General had told Parliament when the Committee was established that both the BBC and the ITA would continue to exist, there was a distinction 'not always drawn or understood' between the ITA and ITV. No assurance had been given to contracting companies that they would continue to exist after 1964.<sup>1</sup> Given this freedom, the Committee chose to recommend a complete change in the relationships between the Authority and the contracting companies. Recommendation 43, based on eleven paragraphs in the Report, was the pithiest recommendation of all:

The following changes should be made in the constitution and organisation of independent television: (i) The Authority to plan programming (ii) The Authority to sell advertising time (iii) Programme companies to produce and sell to the Authority programme items for inclusion in the programme planned by the Authority.

There was, therefore, to be a complete transformation of the ITV system, with tougher rules about advertising, while the BBC, financed from its licence fees, was to be left completely unchanged, in the future, as in the past, 'the main instrument of broadcasting in

<sup>1</sup> This point had been confirmed by the Lord Chancellor in the House of Lords on 1 March 1961 (*House of Lords, Official Report*, vol. 229, col. 96).

the United Kingdom'.<sup>2</sup> It was also to be 'authorised forthwith to provide a second programme', while ITV was to be authorized likewise only if it was 'reconstituted and reorganised'.<sup>3</sup>

'Our appraisal of the BBC's performance', the Committee concluded,

did not lead us to expect that the Corporation's constitution and organisation would be faulty in any fundamental way; and this our examination confirmed. By contrast, our examination of independent television showed that its failure to realise the purposes of broadcasting derived essentially from a fundamental fault . . . an organic change was required. The change we propose is, in our judgement, the least that will suffice; nothing else will do the job.

There followed the briefest of sentences on competition: 'Our proposals would also, we believe, lead to competition between the two broadcasting services, competition in good broadcasting. Any other competition is at least irrelevant and probably damaging.'<sup>4</sup>

In radio the Pilkington Committee saw no reasons for change, quoting the Musicians' Union in support of the BBC's monopoly, which was not even described as such. In its evidence the Union had stated that 'the BBC had deservedly gained an international reputation for providing the best sound broadcasting service in the world'.<sup>5</sup> Only Granada, not mentioned in the Report, had urged in its evidence that 'sound radio, the quickest means of communication in the world', ought to be separated off from BBC Television with which it was then 'the sleepy partner'. 'We think that there is need for an alert, expanded Sound service.'<sup>6</sup>

The subject of sound broadcasting was disposed of briefly in one chapter, Chapter IV of Part II, which noted that at particular points in the day and week there was still a large audience for sound, with 6 million people listening between noon and 2 p.m. Audiences regularly reached 9 million on Saturday morning, and at midday on Sunday peaked at 17 million. Even on weekday evenings, when television viewing was at its height, the average audience for sound was 2 million. There was, of course, one audience, the blind, for

<sup>2</sup> Cmnd. 1753 (1962), Recommendation 12, p. 288. It followed (Recommendation 13) that 'where it is possible at Royal and State occasions of national importance for only one camera team to be present, the BBC should have the right and duty of undertaking the broadcast'.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 1060, p. 286.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 1056-7, pp. 285-6.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 62; Cmnd. 1819-1 (1962), p. 797.

<sup>6</sup> Cmnd. 1819-1 (1962), p. 685.



whom sound broadcasting was the sole medium, but there was one 'new audience' also. 'The advent of the car radio and the ultra-light transistorised portable set' had taken radio 'out of doors'. There was no intimation in the Report that the question of how sound radio should be structured would prove to be one of the main points of controversy during the late 1960s.<sup>7</sup>

The Pilkington Committee had had prepared for it a note on 'Local Broadcasting: Main Issues', which began with a double question: 'Is it (i) necessary, (ii) desirable *as a service of broadcasting to the public?*' The double question was further subdivided into three questions: 'What worthwhile service can it bring which existing services do not?'; 'Is there a significant public demand, actual or potential?'; and 'What would be the effect on the existing sound broadcasting service, of whatever type, if any, if local sound broadcasting were adopted?' The phrase 'the type of service' was not expanded to describe the type of pop-music service that was to colour all the argument only a few years later.<sup>8</sup>

Although the pirate ship Radio Veronica had already begun broadcasting in March 1961, not directly to Britain, off the Dutch coast,<sup>9</sup> it had little impact on the Committee, which seems to have had no doubt about the conclusion it reached on the basis of its notes, its discussions, and its hearings. 'One service, and one only, of local sound broadcasting should be planned; it should not be financed from advertising revenue; it should be provided by the BBC and financed from licence revenue.'<sup>10</sup> There was one caveat: 'We emphasise also the need to maintain the quality of sound broadcasting, considered as a whole, to ensure that, in the effort to provide this additional service, resources are not spread too thinly.'<sup>11</sup> There should be no service of subscription television, either by wire or radio, not even experimentally.<sup>12</sup> 'No specialised service of educa-

<sup>7</sup> See below, pp. 721–810.

<sup>8</sup> HO 244/S, Paper BC/Sec/68. There was a brief reference in the notes to 'canned music'. 'Would there be a public demand for this?', the Notes asked. In the Report (para. 822) it was noted briefly that the use of gramophone records to sustain the service, as some applicants intended, was prevented by copyright and trade union restrictions. For the pirates, see below, pp. 485 ff.

<sup>9</sup> See below, pp. 563–7, 571–6.

<sup>10</sup> Cmnd. 1753 (1962), Recommendation 89, p. 294. 'We consider that the BBC can *confidently* [my italics] be expected to provide a service of local sound broadcasting. The Corporation's conception of the possibilities of such a service is much further ranging than that of the companies' (para. 842, p. 231).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 844, p. 231. Note also a memorable phrase in para. 811: 'If people do not know what they are missing, they cannot be said not to want it.'

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, Recommendations 100, 101, p. 295.

tional broadcasting should be introduced whether by a new organisation or by either of the existing broadcasting authorities.<sup>13</sup>

The Pilkington Report was published at 11 a.m. on 27 June 1962—with no advance copies being sent, except to Lobby correspondents.<sup>14</sup> These were distributed on 25 June. At the same time Sir Arthur Forde and Greene received copies. A Press Conference was held by Pilkington himself at 12 noon on publication day, at which he delivered a long prepared speech in which he stressed—perhaps over-stressed—that the Committee had not started with ‘any theory’ or ‘some abstract or general ideas about what broadcasting should be’. ‘Our approach has been all the time empirical, starting from the facts.’<sup>15</sup>

That afternoon, the Governors held a special meeting. The Postmaster-General had asked for their views on the Report to be submitted by the end of the week in which it was published, even if some of the reactions might be ‘only of a preliminary nature’.<sup>16</sup> The Post Office had also concluded, Sir Ronald German told the BBC, that it would be ‘wise’ for the Corporation to refrain from public comment, ‘except in the most general terms’, until the Government had produced its own proposals and Parliament had had an opportunity to discuss them.

Reactions to the Pilkington Report, private and public, contrasted more sharply than BBC and ITV programmes themselves. This was because the Pilkington proposals were, as promised, ‘fundamental’, and carried with them far-reaching institutional as well as programming implications. Not surprisingly, Sir William Haley, who through *The Times* had received a copy of the Report before publication, wrote to Greene on the eve of its publication: ‘What a splendid vindication for the BBC. My warmest congratulations.’<sup>17</sup> Equally unsurprisingly, Peter Cadbury, Chairman of Westward Television, who enjoyed flamboyant gestures, burnt a huge effigy of the Report

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, Recommendation 103, p. 295.

<sup>14</sup> \*Sir Ronald German, Director-General of the Post Office, to Greene, 8 June 1962 (WAC file R4/4/15/2). The Chairman and the Director-General of the BBC had seen the Postmaster-General on 7 June to learn of the procedures to be followed.

<sup>15</sup> HO 244/8, Paper BC/Sec/170.

<sup>16</sup> \*German to Greene, 8 June 1962.

<sup>17</sup> \*Haley to Greene, 26 June 1962 (R4/4/15/1). Another former Director-General, Robert Foot, sent similar congratulations (letter of 1 July 1962 (R4/4/15/2)). One of the most senior of former BBC officials, Sir Basil Nicolls, wrote that the BBC had received a ‘marvellous endorsement’, ‘almost embarrassingly so’, and that he was glad Pilkington had had ‘the guts to speak out’ (letter of 9 July 1962).



5. Comment on the fate of Pilkington Report in *Daily Mail*, 28 June 1962

on a bonfire.<sup>18</sup> Jacob, writing not to Greene but to fford, waited until 9 July before he delivered his own verdict. 'I expected a fairly satisfactory result, but not so unanimous a blessing.' The Report had been 'quite a mouthful', and he feared (rightly) that Ministers, MPs, and a lot of others would react without having read it.<sup>19</sup>

*The Economist* was upset. Its lead article, called 'TV with Auntie', began with the words: 'The worst has happened. The Pilkington Committee on television, the biggest and most revolutionary opportunity in human communication since the invention of printing, has fallen hook and line and sinker, to its own dogged good intentions. The important thing now is to see that British audiences are not subjected to this compulsive nannying over everything they want to see and hear.'<sup>20</sup> Philip Purser made the same point in the *Sunday Telegraph*, and applied it to ITA as well as the BBC: 'we don't want

<sup>18</sup> Sendall, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 138. Westward did not start broadcasting until April 1961. For its evidence to Pilkington, which stressed the regional commitment of the company and its desire to make only 'a modest profit' for its shareholders, see Cmnd. 1819-1 (1962), pp. 729-31. Greene made the most of the bonfire. In its evidence, Scottish Television made no reference to profits at all (*ibid.*, pp. 695-700).

<sup>19</sup> \*Jacob to fford, 9 July 1962 (R4/4/15/2).

<sup>20</sup> *The Economist*, 30 June 1962.

“good-er” television, we want better.’ ‘When the ITA has interfered on moral grounds it has done harm.’<sup>21</sup>

The Secretary of the Committee produced a paper summarizing the favourable comments that Pilkington himself had received after the Report was published. Of fifty-seven letters received, forty-four had been favourable, and ‘nobody of note’ had written to say that he or she disagreed with the Report. Many people of note were congratulatory. Lord Beveridge telephoned Pilkington to say how he ‘entirely agreed with the contents of the Report’. Sir John Braithwaite, Chairman of the London Stock Exchange, welcomed the lack of fear or favour in the Report, and the rose-grower Harry Wheatcroft told Pilkington that if he had a ‘world winner of a rose’, he would call it ‘Harry Pilkington’.<sup>22</sup> The *Evening Standard*, which praised the Report, claimed that few recent issues had produced so large a post-bag and that more than 75 per cent of them supported the line that it had taken.<sup>23</sup> T. S. Eliot, who had given evidence, wrote a letter to *The Times* welcoming the report on behalf of the Viewers’ and Listeners’ Association. A co-signatory was Peter Laslett.<sup>24</sup>

Such praise, like praise from Reith,<sup>25</sup> was not calculated to impress any of the programme contractors. The *Evening News* headed its page on the Report ‘The H Bomb: Commercial Tycoons Face “Take-over”’, while Peter Black, described as ‘Britain’s most influential TV critic’, thought that the Committee had spoilt its case by overstatement, and described the scene after the appearance of the Report as ‘Consternation Street’.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>21</sup> *Sunday Telegraph*, 1 July 1962.

<sup>22</sup> HO 244/8, Paper BC/Sec/178. Newton Minnow, then controversial Chairman of the United States FCC, sent ‘a personal message of good will’.

<sup>23</sup> *Evening Standard*, 27 June, 3 July 1962.

<sup>24</sup> *The Times*, 4 July 1962.

<sup>25</sup> In his evidence to the Pilkington Committee, Reith surprised the Committee by stating that he was fully in favour of letting the BBC advertise ‘if they want so long as it is under their control and conditions’. Pilkington told him he was the first witness to suggest sponsored programmes. Reith’s view of what would have constituted an advertisement would not, however, have appealed greatly to any possible sponsor (HO 244/243). Reith, who had consulted Harman Grisewood (\*Grisewood to Reith, 31 Aug. 1960 (R44: Newspapers: The Guardian, 1960–4)), wrote an article in the *Guardian*, 29 Dec. 1960, in which advertising was mentioned. He claimed in it that ‘the idea of a new authority for educational purposes . . . would be the worst possible use of an uncommitted frequency. It would vastly extend the harm which the sound radio Third Programme has done—in freeing the compilers of the other two programmes from any sense of responsibility.’

<sup>26</sup> *Evening News*, 27 June 1962; *Daily Mail*, 28 June 1962.

On the very day of publication, Kenneth Adam, who had succeeded Beadle as Director of Television in 1961, produced a gossipy note for Greene summarizing the views of those programme contractors who had been holding meetings during the previous two days. At that time Sir Robert Renwick had said nothing. Spencer Wills, however, seeking, Adam claimed, to get in before Renwick did so, had issued a communication to all his staff in which he summarized the Report as follows:

The BBC is found innocent of all charges. Its ideals are lofty and must be maintained in the public interest. Independent Television is found 'guilty'. 'Guilty' of what? Guilty of being popular and of making money. In the circumstances, since we are not allowed to abolish ITV, we must do the next best thing—we will nationalise it.<sup>27</sup>

Collins, Adam went on, was taking a different line. He was said to be in favour of the idea that the ITA should become the programme authority, and saw himself as its next Director-General. 'This he says is, after all, what he hoped for when Commercial Television was set up, and he claims he has always been critical of the behaviour of the Authority.'<sup>28</sup> Collins was then Chairman of ITCA, and had supervised the presentation of its evidence.

Having studied both the evidence and the reactions, Adam concluded that any difference of opinion among the programme contractors would not be allowed to show themselves until the political situation became clearer. 'Some attempt to present a unified approach in order to counter the Pilkington findings is likely to develop with the solidifying of Parliamentary opinion.'<sup>29</sup>

By the time Adam wrote, a private meeting of Conservative MPs had already taken place on 27 June between 5.30 p.m. and 6.30 p.m. It had been chaired by Peter Rawlinson, and it was attended by large numbers of MPs who had long been interested in commercial television. The first speaker, the Postmaster-General, put forward 'a balanced view of his own, apportioning a mixture of praise and

<sup>27</sup> \*Adam to H. Greene, 'Report of the Committee on Broadcasting', 27 June 1962 (R4/4/1S/1). The *Daily Telegraph* headline, 28 June 1962, was: 'ITV Shocked by Pilkington: Cheaply sensational and excessive violence'. Black believed (loc. cit.) that while the ITV companies had to some extent asked for their 'comeuppance', it did not follow that the system that they should have worked would not work. 'Behind the report's recommendations to hand over the programming to the ITA I detect the old incurable resentment against the idea of commercial TV and advertising.' The *Guardian* headline (28 June 1962) was 'Decommercialisation'.

<sup>28</sup> See above, p. 8.

<sup>29</sup> \*Adam to Greene, 'Report of the Committee on Broadcasting', 27 June 1962.

blame'. Other MPs, however, were bitterly hostile to the Report and the Committee that had produced it. Among them were William (later Lord) Deedes, MP for Ashford, closely associated with the *Daily Telegraph*, and Geoffrey Hirst, MP for the West Riding. Another group, however, which included Sir Robert Cary, MP for Withington, and Cyril Osborne, MP for Louth, endorsed the findings of the Report. One MP took up the argument put forward by Wills that the ITA was now to be nationalized. This, he said, was nonsense. 'The Report does not mention nationalisation. It emphasises public service broadcasting . . . In a series of reports and exchanges . . . between . . . Reith and Baldwin . . . the supremacy of public service broadcasting had been firmly established . . . We, the Conservative Party were . . . the architects of the BBC and not the Labour Party.'<sup>30</sup>

In all this talk there were echoes of the fiercely contested debates on the breaking of the BBC's monopoly in the previous decade, as there were also in Renwick's letter to ATV shareholders sent out at the end of the month: 'The Pilkington Committee have tabled a biased report which has one apparent objective—to destroy in one vicious blow the whole structure which has given the public the programmes they enjoy and in its place to set up a second monolithic State institution. This is Lord Reith all over again.' Since 1955, 'through energetic competition', 'Commercial TV [he did not hesitate to choose the adjective] has raised the lethargic standards of the BBC'. What the Pilkington Report had outrageously proposed was 'utterly contrary to the whole tradition of a free enterprise country'.<sup>31</sup>

The effect of Renwick's letter was to make the Stock Exchange jittery. 'Dragging politics into business' was thought to be a very dangerous game to play.<sup>32</sup> Yet some of the Press comment was as hostile as Renwick's. The Pilkington Report, Maurice Wiggan began an article in the *Sunday Times*, was such 'gobbledygook' that it could only have been composed by 'people who don't have to live by selling what they write'. And when he turned from style to content, Wiggan found himself 'shying', he said, 'like a startled horse'. 'Reading this Report you would think that there is practically

<sup>30</sup> \*Roger (later Sir Roger) Cary, Management Training Organiser to Harman Grisewood, 'Pilkington Report: Private Conservative Meeting, June 27', 28 June 1962 (R4/4/15/1).

<sup>31</sup> Sir Robert Renwick to ATV shareholders, 30 June 1962. Renwick's Board included Collins, Lew Grade, Val Parnell, Prince Littler, Hugh Cudlipp, and the Earl of Bessborough.

<sup>32</sup> \*J. A. C. Knott to Greene, 'Renwick's Letter to ATV Shareholders', 10 July 1962 (R4/4/15/2).



nothing wrong with the BBC, and practically nothing right with ITV. This is not the truth as I see it—and I have been watching television solidly, seven nights a week, forty-eight weeks a year, for eleven years. Which is a lot more than Sir Harry Pilkington or probably anyone else can say.' The Report smacked of a 'deep-rooted fear of free enterprise and a completely unrealistic attitude to the simple commercial facts of life'. 'To make the ITA into another BBC'—that was 'the hopeless last resort of men who fundamentally fear the operation of a free society'.<sup>33</sup>

In the sharpest of contrasts, the *Observer* published somewhat later an article by Hoggart, in which he took it upon himself to offer Bevins 'his paragraph in British social history' if he would have 'the courage to make the right decision against enormous pressure'.<sup>34</sup> Yet that was never how Bevins saw it, nor how the substantial majority of the Government's supporters in Parliament saw it. It was not merely that they were responding to the pressure of interests, strongly represented though these were in Parliament. They believed also that they were responding to opinion, particularly opinion in their own constituencies.

So, too, indeed, did significant numbers of Labour MPs, for, as the BBC's perceptive Political Correspondent, Hardiman Scott, reported in July 1962, 'the Party was about equally divided between those who broadly accepted the whole of Pilkington and those who did not'.<sup>35</sup> Mayhew was strongly in favour; Gaitskell was not.<sup>36</sup> At the Labour Party Conference in October 1962 Mayhew tried to speak, and could not—but when Fred Mulley stated on behalf of the Party's Executive that Labour was not against *Coronation Street* or advertisements 'in the present services', there were loud cries of 'Shame'.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>33</sup> M. Wiggin, 'Going the Whole Hoggart', *Sunday Times*, 1 July 1962.

<sup>34</sup> *Observer*, 7 Oct. 1962. For Hoggart's analysis of the post-Pilkington debate, see his article 'The Difficulties of Democratic Debate', *Teachers College Record*, May 1963, repr. in Hoggart's *Speaking to Each Other*, Vol. I: *About Society* (1970), pp. 185–200. 'A great many people seemed unable or unwilling', he complained, 'to rethink in the way Pilkington had tried.'

<sup>35</sup> \*Scott to Greene, 'Pilkington', 13 July 1962 (R4/4/1S/3). It was Gaitskell who gave him this assessment. For Gaitskell's own views see P. Williams, *Hugh Gaitskell, a Political Biography* (1979), p. 670.

<sup>36</sup> Mayhew had written a Fabian pamphlet, Tract 318, in 1959, *Commercial Television—What is to be Done?* It suggested changes to both ITV and the BBC, in which 'the television service should be made more independent of sound and less burdened with top level pressures of various kinds'.

<sup>37</sup> *Guardian*, 3 Oct. 1962. See also C. A. R. Crosland, 'Pilkington and the Labour Party', *Socialist Commentary*, Aug. 1962.

On both sides of the House there were MPs, generally favourable to the BBC, who objected to the 'moral authoritarianism' of the Report; and while some of these, like Cary, spoke out in favour of the Report when Pilkington addressed a meeting of Conservative MPs on 4 July, it was felt that Pilkington himself did not make a good impression. He was 'discursive and detailed', and before he had finished his speech, 'Members were said to be fidgety and bored'.<sup>38</sup> Iain Macleod told Hardiman Scott that the majority of Conservative MPs had been 'irritated' by the Report. There was no doubt, he claimed, it was unpopular.<sup>39</sup> None the less, there was evidence that when 'all the fuss has died down', there would be strong pressures within the Conservative Party on Government 'to do the right and responsible thing'.<sup>40</sup>

## 6. Aftermath

There was little surprise when the Government which had commissioned the Pilkington Report did not accept many of its most important recommendations, for this had been predicted in 1960; and in February 1962, when it was clear that the Report would be seriously delayed, the Cabinet set up a Broadcasting and Television Committee under the chairmanship of Butler, the Home Secretary, to start to prepare for the publication. It hoped to complete its work before the summer recess.<sup>1</sup>

At its fourth meeting on 4 June it decided that, in view of the late arrival of the Report, it would produce not one White Paper but two. The view was forming—and it was articulated more fully at a Cabinet meeting on 28 June 1962—that 'the tone of the Pilkington Report was intemperate and that its criticisms . . . particularly of triviality and violence in many programmes, applied at least as much to the

<sup>38</sup> \*Cary to Grisewood, 'Sir Harry Pilkington Seen by Conservatives, July 4, 1962', 5 July 1962 (R4/4/15/2). Back-bencher critics of the BBC, like Orr-Ewing and Hirst, were not present at this meeting.

<sup>39</sup> \*H. Scott to Greene, 'Broadcasting White Paper, and After', 5 July 1962 (R4/4/15/2).

<sup>40</sup> \*Scott to Greene, 'Pilkington Repercussions', 28 June 1962 (R4/4/15/1).

<sup>1</sup> Eleven meetings were held between then and Nov. 1962 (PRO CAB 134/1449). At the first meeting on 28 Feb. those present included Butler and Bevin, Viscount Kilmuir, the Lord Chancellor, Macleod, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Hill, then Minister of Housing, and Edward (later Lord) Boyle, then Financial Secretary at the Treasury. Pilkington had reported confidentially to Bevin on a number of points before the meeting. Bevin's own views were stated at the fourth meeting on 4 June.

programmes of the BBC as to those of the ITA'. At the same time, Ministers, who were unanimous in considering 'unworkable' the Committee's proposals for a change in the structure and responsibilities of the ITA, were not agreed on what specific recommendations to accept and to reject. They were unanimous too in stressing that 'any show of irritation at the tone of the Report should be avoided'.<sup>2</sup>

On 4 July, one week after the Report appeared, the first White Paper (Cmnd. 1770), which had been prepared in outline beforehand, set out the Government's immediate plans for the future of broadcasting. It was described as 'interim', and the Government's position was carefully reserved on a number of broadcasting issues, among them BBC local radio and television for big screen public display, the latter development rejected by Pilkington, pay TV, and, most important of all at this stage, the future of ITV.

A second White Paper (Cmnd. 1893) was issued in December 1962 after careful deliberations and revisions of the first draft.<sup>3</sup> It further postponed any decision on BBC local radio,<sup>4</sup> agreed that proposals for big screen television showings could be considered, provided that they did not monopolize 'public spectacles and sporting events of overwhelming public interest', and approved a limited experiment in pay television by cable, said to be favoured by the Prime Minister.<sup>5</sup> On the most important matter of all, the restructuring of ITV, it totally rejected the Pilkington Committee's proposals. It did, none the less, propose 'a more positive role for the ITA in regard to programme standards and control of networking and advertising'.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Cabinet Minutes*, 28 June 1962.

<sup>3</sup> The first draft, approved by the Ministerial Committee on Broadcasting, was studied by the Cabinet on 15 Nov. 1962. The Committee had left a number of questions unresolved in the draft, though there had been full agreement on the rejection of Pilkington's proposals for the ITA. Considerable time was spent on the question of Press interests and their possible influence on broadcasting. A proposed paragraph on the finance of the BBC was omitted. There had been considerable discussion of this, with Bevins anxious not to raise the licence fee (*Cabinet Minutes*, 15 Nov. 1962).

<sup>4</sup> There was a growing lobby for local commercial radio. Woodrow Wyatt backed it in *Reynolds News*, 9 July 1961.

<sup>5</sup> \*Scott to Greene, 'Pilkington Repercussions', 28 June 1962. Cmnd. 1893 stipulated that such pay TV would have to include all available BBC and ITV programmes, including the future BBC-2, and that it should not carry separate advertising. At the Cabinet Meeting on 15 Nov. it had been agreed that 'safeguards could be devised against the pre-emption of major feature programmes by pay-television' and 'that there was insufficient ground for withholding permission for experiments by wire' (*Cabinet Minutes*, 15 Nov. 1962).

<sup>6</sup> Cmnd. 1893 (1962), *Broadcasting*, paras. 34, 11, 12, 31, and 32; CAB 129/111, 'Memorandum by the Postmaster-General to the Cabinet: Second White Paper on Broadcasting and Television', 13 Nov. 1962.

There was nothing surprising about either this total rejection or the approval of an experiment with pay television. Indeed, while the Pilkington Committee was sitting, the Cabinet had considered an experiment in subscription television which was strongly supported by the President of the Board of Trade, Reginald Maudling. Butler had been asked to discuss the matter with Pilkington, and it was only after he had done so that Macmillan told a divided Cabinet that, whatever the strength of the case for experiment, the Government could not take the risk of an open breach with Pilkington over it while his Committee was sitting.<sup>7</sup> In Butler's view, there would have been too much 'acrimony'. In the month when the Report appeared, Macmillan was said to be 'strongly attracted by the possibility of subscription programmes of high quality for minority tastes—such as opera, ballet, new films and plays'.<sup>8</sup>

Taking the two White Papers together, there were many positive results as far as the BBC was concerned, particularly the decision to authorize it to start a second television service on 625 lines in the UHF bands by mid-1964. This would give it a great advantage over ITV. It was also authorized to introduce colour television on 625 lines once the preferred system was finally agreed. As far as sound broadcasting was concerned, the BBC was to be authorized to increase its hours, an increase which, while adding to expenditure, would make possible new developments in programming.

Following the Pilkington Committee's proposals, more broadcasting hours were to be authorized for adult education, carefully defined, for both the BBC and ITV.<sup>9</sup> Also following Pilkington, ITV advertising was to be limited to an average of six minutes an hour, with a maximum of seven, and advertising magazines were abolished. The Pilkington Committee had claimed that they blurred the distinction between programmes and advertisements.

How could these programme developments be paid for? While the BBC had emphasized that it required 'adequate finance from an

<sup>7</sup> *Cabinet Minutes*, 21 Dec. 1960, 31 Jan., 21 Feb. 1961. CAB 129, vol. 104, C(61)18, 'Subscription Television', Memorandum by Butler, 20 Feb. 1961. Bevin was opposed to the experiment. Indeed, he told Forde in 1961 that pay TV did not have a future ('Sir A. Forde, 'Note of Meeting with Postmaster-General', 26 July 1962 (R4/4/15/3)). Peter Thorneycroft, Minister of Aviation, had a positive interest in it through 'his responsibility for the electronics industry'.

<sup>8</sup> *Sunday Express*, 1 July 1962. For an earlier defence of 'pay as you view', see an article with that title by Brian Inglis in the *Spectator*, 27 June 1958.

<sup>9</sup> For the consequences, see below, pp. 473–4.



6. 'Do, please, dear Sir Hengist, explain to me why, if the Government always knows best, do they go to all the trouble and expense of appointing special Commissions?', Osbert Lancaster, *Daily Express*, 3 July 1962.

in his autobiography he was to go further. Stating that he had been irritated by what he called the BBC's assumption that if it asked for an increase in the licence fee the Government should provide it, he stubbornly refused and deliberately forced the BBC to borrow, hoping it would make them cut out 'extravagance'.<sup>15</sup>

The second White Paper had nothing to say about finance at all. The Cabinet took out a proposed paragraph 38 that it did not feel 'added materially' to what had been said non-committally in the first

independent source, ie the licence revenue',<sup>10</sup> the first White Paper was non-committal, a sign that the Government was temporizing. 'The Government', it was stated, 'accepts its responsibility to see that the BBC can secure sufficient income to finance adequate services.'<sup>11</sup> The furthest Bevins would go was to promise that from the autumn of 1963 the BBC would receive the proceeds of the existing £4 licence (less collection charges) and would no longer have £1 excise duty deducted on each licence.<sup>12</sup>

Bevins told Lobby correspondents who asked him why the White Paper had been non-committal on the matter of the licence fee that it had been deliberately so: old-age pensioners could not be asked to pay £6 for a licence,<sup>13</sup> Indeed, in presenting the draft of the second White Paper to the Cabinet, he stated that most of his colleagues on the Ministerial Committee shared his view that any increase in licence fee before 1965 was 'politically unrealistic'.<sup>14</sup> In his

<sup>10</sup> \*Note from L. G. Thirkell, Head of Secretariat, to Regional Controllers, 'The Pilkington Report and the White Paper', 13 July 1962 (R4/4/15/3).

<sup>11</sup> Cmnd. 1770 (1962), para. 59. In his speech to the Press after his Report had appeared, Pilkington had suggested £6. 'It would in any other country be regarded as cheap.'

<sup>12</sup> The deduction had been made since 1957.

<sup>13</sup> Bevins, op. cit., p. 119.

<sup>14</sup> CAB 129/111, 'Memorandum by the Postmaster-General', 13 Nov. 1962.

<sup>15</sup> Bevins, op. cit., p. 119.

White Paper. The 'Ministerial Committee had accepted in principle the Pilkington recommendation that the BBC should be financed only from licence revenue, and means of ensuring this result would have to be further examined'. The paragraph as it had stood might have been held to imply that the Government might make 'some form of contribution', and 'it would be better that no such inference were drawn'.<sup>16</sup>

There was to be no increase in licence fees until after the fall of the Conservative Government in 1964, and even then the new Labour Government prevaricated before deciding in mid-1965 to raise the combined licence fee to £5 and the licence for sound alone from £1 to £1 5s.<sup>17</sup> By then, as Bevins had noted in 1962, the BBC would have used up its borrowing powers, and the presence of a second BBC programme would 'make it easier to justify an increase'.<sup>18</sup>

Whatever the political complexion of the Government, government control of the level of licence fees was to raise some of the most difficult problems for the BBC in the future—in a way that it never had done in the past; and at what in retrospect was a historic meeting on 25 July 1962, between the two White Papers, fforde pointed out to Bevins what he believed were the dangers in this situation. While the number of television licences was increasing, as it then was, BBC income would rise consequentially, but that would not always be the position. And whatever the position, a change in the way in which the licensing system operated would have long-term consequences. For this reason, any new financial arrangement which might throw doubt on the independence of the BBC—for example, a subsidy from ITV profits—would be 'unacceptable to the BBC'.<sup>19</sup> So, too, would 'an arrangement which left it to the BBC to agree annually or at any frequent interval with the Treasury. The Overseas Services were [already] in that position and it was only tolerable because the rest of the BBC was not'.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Cabinet Minutes*, 15 Nov. 1962. Earlier in the year Henry (later Lord) Brooke, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, had warned against including any references to finance (CAB 129/111, 'Broadcasting and Television', 27 June 1962). At the next Cabinet meeting, when the White Paper was discussed, 29 Nov., it was also agreed that there should be no reference in it to discussions about party political broadcasts which were proceeding with the leaders of the parties.

<sup>17</sup> See below, pp. 501–2.

<sup>18</sup> CAB 129/111, 'Memorandum by the Postmaster-General', 13 Nov. 1962.

<sup>19</sup> How to deal with ITV profits was a question that was preoccupying the Government, and in 1962 its ideas on the subject were as vague as its ideas on future BBC finance. Cmnd. 1893 pointed to a levy on the pre-tax profits of the contracting companies (see Sendall, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 164).

<sup>20</sup> fforde, 'Note of Meeting with Postmaster-General', 26 July 1962.



Once again, friendly elements in 'the public' were mobilized privately and by public statements; and in July 'potential friends', who had given evidence to the Pilkington Committee, were circularized: 'You were good enough in your evidence to the Committee to express support for the concept of public service broadcasting as it is carried out by the BBC . . . The comprehensiveness of the BBC's service, warmly noticed by the Committee, is . . . closely linked to the maintenance of the licence fee principle.'<sup>21</sup> At this point in broadcasting history, few real or potential friends of the BBC needed to be reminded of the linkage. Nor was the BBC itself confronted by financial problems that seemed insuperable. BBC income from television licences continued to grow at an annual rate of 15 per cent, and even after allowance for inflation at 4 to 5 per cent, it proved possible both to develop existing programmes and to finance new ideas, even a new channel.

There was to be a quite different problem, however, as the decade went by, for many BBC policies alienated a substantial section of the listening and viewing public, particularly the latter. The BBC's Director-General, Greene, was never without friends—in the last resort as well as in the first resort—but in what proved for many reasons to be a turbulent decade in broadcasting history, he was also to have formidable critics. All this was round the corner in 1962. The BBC, which under Greene's leadership was changing its image, did not in the long run emerge unscathed. Indeed, it was during the years after Pilkington that its position was challenged not by 'the competitor' but by successive Governments. Worst of all for Greene personally, he was to end his own BBC career with a Chairman of Governors, Charles Hill, with whom he had no sympathy and who, in his considered view, had little sympathy with him. Yet before joining the BBC, Hill, whose experience of broadcasting debate was being extended every year and who sat on the Ministerial Committee of 1962, was to serve 'the competitor' as Chairman of the ITA from July 1963. By the time that he moved to Broadcasting House in 1967, the Pilkington Committee had already, very quickly, faded into history.

<sup>21</sup> \*Draft letter to potential friends, undated (R4/4/15/3).



## Greene and His Critics

If it [the BBC] did not fall in with changing habits, it might come to be regarded as merely cobwebby . . . (but) I would always resist competing in vulgarity or degeneration of the programmes.

SIR ALEXANDER CADOGAN, 1954

Greene light at the BBC.

PETER BLACK, *Daily Mail*, 22 July 1959

Time proved that he [Greene] could achieve little more than a facelift.

NED SHERRIN, *A Small Thing—Like an Earthquake* (1983)

If you were to ask me who, above all, was responsible for the moral collapse which characterized the sixties and seventies, I would unhesitatingly name Sir Hugh Carleton Greene.

MARY WHITEHOUSE, *Whatever Happened to Sex?* (1977)

---

## 1. The Director-Generalship

When Hugh Greene appeared at a Director-General's Liaison Meeting immediately after the publication of the Report of the Pilkington Committee, his senior staff gave him a warm ovation. Characteristically he had already prepared his own response—'What a lot of Russians you are, clapping yourselves.'<sup>1</sup> This was very much the mood of the moment, although it was a mood that was to change more than once during the seven remaining years of Greene's Director-Generalship that culminated in Hill's appointment as Chairman.

Greene retained the support, much of it enthusiastic, of most of his staff, throughout the whole period, particularly those working in Television Centre, and he had many admirers outside the BBC; but as the years went by, he offended a dangerously large number of politicians and a substantial section of public opinion. It was with some difficulty also that he held on to the whole-hearted support of his Board of Governors, support on which he knew that he depended. They had been unanimous when he was appointed to the supreme post on Jacob's recommendation, for he had been well prepared, and the *Ariel* leader in the month that he took over showed that the staff felt the same. It was headed simply 'One of Us'.<sup>2</sup>

Of the two BBC posts that Greene had held most recently, that of Director of Administration, which he took up in October 1956 only after some initial hesitation, had been designed to give him the opportunity of securing an overview of the whole organization, and he had found, somewhat to his surprise, that he enjoyed it. His final post before becoming Director-General, that of Director of News and Current Affairs, had been a new post, created after sharp internal argument inside the BBC. It had been designed to give him the opportunity of transforming what he regarded as a 'strategic area of BBC development'.<sup>3</sup> The departure of Tahu Hole, who resigned from the BBC in March 1960 very much at Greene's prompting, gave him

<sup>1</sup> BBC-2 film *Battles of Broadcasting*, 11 Oct. 1980.

<sup>2</sup> *Ariel*, Jan. 1960. 'Hugh Carleton Greene has grown up with public service broadcasting.' He had been offered the post by the Chairman, Sir Arthur Forde, in July 1959 ('Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 23 July 1959).

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 152.

a 'dream start'.<sup>4</sup> It would have been impossible for Hole to have worked side by side with Greene as Director of Administration. Greene skilfully used his new freedom to demonstrate that he had clear ideas of his own about the future of broadcasting, before an official committee was appointed to report on it.

Greene was right in 1962 to recognize with a quip that when that Committee praised the BBC, treating it in a well-chosen phrase of Reginald Bevens as 'whiter than white', it was saluting a collective, not an individual achievement, what both he and they thought of as a professional achievement. Yet his own personal contribution to the outcome was both immense and distinctive. He had played the star role in dealing with the Pilkington Committee, and he had played it in his own way, manoeuvring, lobbying, and using every kind of contact, particularly political contact.

Quite deliberately he had set out also to 'unsell ITV'—a relevant image inside ITV circles—at the same time as he pressed the BBC's case. For example, with this in mind he collected a secret 'Black Book', which assembled data about ITV companies and their connections with each other and with other branches of industry. After Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, Chairman of the ITA, had learnt of this and upbraided him at a party in February 1960, Greene concluded that there had been a leak, and subsequently discovered evidence that suggested that it was Hole who had leaked the information to Norman Collins. He summoned Hole to Broadcasting House on 17 May 1960—after Hole had left the Corporation with a golden handshake—and, after listening to his explanations, told him in his own words 'rather roughly', 'Tahu, get out and never show your face in this building again.'<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> P. Fox, review of M. Tracey's biography, *A Variety of Lives* (1983), *The Listener*, 22 Sept. 1983. For Tahu Hole, see above, p. 68. See also \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 24 March 1960, Minute 147. This notes that Hole's retirement 'had been the subject of a Resolution of the Board recorded in Minute 146' of the previous meeting (10 March 1960). This Minute, however, is missing from the typed Minutes. In his \*Interview with Frank Gillard for the Oral History Project (March 1977), Greene recalled 'very sticky meetings' with the Governors before he was able to 'get rid' of Hole. One Governor in particular, Lord Macdonald, the National Governor for Wales, objected to Greene using a new broom in a 'ruthless way'. Greene had to agree, therefore, to a propitiatory public announcement being made (15 March 1960). 'The Corporation regrets that Mr. Hole's long association with its activities is to end, but recognises that his decision to resign has been influenced by his desire to be free to develop his other interests while still comparatively young.'

<sup>5</sup> \*Interview with Gillard for the Oral History Project, March 1977. Kirkpatrick himself, according to Greene, said that he was disturbed by the way that the information had come into his possession.

There was toughness as well as roughness in this. There was toughness too, however, in most of the ITV companies, and Greene's conclusion that the leak had been made to Collins, whom he regarded as an inveterate enemy of the BBC—itsself a partial judgement—irritated him profoundly.<sup>6</sup> Yet he was just as tough in his attitude towards Sir Robert Fraser, whom he often underestimated. When he spoke to the Manchester Luncheon Club in November 1960, he complained that Fraser in a talk to the Club a few months earlier had described the BBC and ITV as by then having become 'assimilated'. 'It is no doubt in some ways flattering to us that commercial broadcasting should wish to come in out of the rain under the public-service umbrella,' Greene told the Club, 'but as the umbrella belongs to the BBC I shall, I hope, be forgiven if I say that there is no room under it for commercial broadcasting. The difference between us and our aims is a real and permanent one . . . Let us have no more talk about "homogeneity" or "assimilation".'<sup>7</sup>

Greene's 'unselling' of the ITA, as well as of the companies, can still be thought of as unfair. Yet Greene was proud of his success in a cause that to him transcended all else, and he found a spice in life in repeatedly going on the attack. He was particularly proud when success could be measured in figures as well as words. During the quarter from October to December 1962, when the Government was considering what to do with the Pilkington Report, the BBC's share of the viewing audience was greater than ITV's for the first time since 1955.<sup>8</sup> Of people in areas where there was a choice between the two channels, 52 per cent favoured the BBC, 48 per cent ITV. The comparative figures a year earlier had been 39 per cent and 61 per cent.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> For the role of Collins in BBC history, see Briggs, *Sound and Vision* (1979), esp. pp. 226–31, 452–6.

<sup>7</sup> Greene, 'The Future of Broadcasting—National and Local', speech at the Manchester Luncheon Club, 9 Nov. 1960, published in the pamphlet *The BBC as a Public Service* (1960). The assimilation theory was, none the less, to become part of the orthodoxy of the 1970s.

<sup>8</sup> Reminiscing years later ('Interview with Gillard, March 1977), Greene said that he had given priority to raising the share to a 50 : 50 basis by the time that Pilkington was expected to report. 'Why should people . . . pay an additional . . . fee for an organisation whose programmes they were not viewing?' The achievement had been possible through 'more skilful programme planning'.

<sup>9</sup> \*Audience Research Bulletin, Oct.–Dec. 1962. The figures for Oct.–Dec. 1961 had been 45 : 55; for April–June 1962, 46 : 54. This early improvement was partly accounted for by an Equity dispute with ITV, which in Jan.–Mar. 1962 raised the BBC's share from 43 when the dispute began to 48 when it ended. Yet the improvement in trend had preceded this. See *BBC Record*, 13 (July 1962), 'The BBC's Audience'.

Encouragingly, there had been an increase in listening also during this same quarter. Sound had not been relegated to history. As transmission hours increased, more people 'had the radio on', and they listened longer, the average hours of listening rising from 7.9 hours a week to 8.5 hours.<sup>10</sup> 'It is the great strength of the BBC as the national instrument of broadcasting', Greene was to proclaim in April 1963, 'that we operate in both sound and television and I believe that as time goes by we shall achieve a still closer working relationship between the two media, each doing the jobs for which it is best fitted.'<sup>11</sup>

The unity of the BBC had been one of the main themes in the BBC's evidence to the Pilkington Committee. In face of those critics who complained that it was too large and should be broken up—it then had a scattered staff of over 20,000—the Governors, like Greene himself, had themselves affirmed that 'the capacity of the Corporation for useful service to the nation' depended on this unity.<sup>12</sup> The Pilkington Committee not only accepted the BBC's case. It extended it. Paragraphs 441 to 443 of their Report were headed 'The BBC an organic whole', and the middle of the middle paragraph read: 'We attach great importance to the fact that the creative and regulatory elements are comprised . . . in a single organisation which is an organic whole. It makes, in our view, for a more perceptive understanding on the part of the Board of Governors, acting in its regulatory capacity, of the positive purposes of broadcasting: purposes which are translated into programming fact at the planning levels of the organisation.'<sup>13</sup>

The BBC's external services, where Greene had first made his mark, were for him an essential part of the picture. 'The Home Services, sound and television, gain . . . from the fact that they are part of an

<sup>10</sup> \*Audience Research Bulletin, Oct.–Dec. 1962. There had even been a small increase in 1962 in the total number of people owning sound receivers, from 45.9 to 46.3m. although the number of people with sound receivers only decreased in 1962 to 5.5m.

<sup>11</sup> *Future Prospects in Broadcasting*, Sixth Bishop Bell Memorial Lecture, 30 April 1963. The Light Programme began to broadcast earlier in the morning. The Third Network wavelength was employed for far longer hours to provide a daytime 'serious music' service on Sundays and a similar, though limited, service on weekdays. (See below, p. 579.)

<sup>12</sup> Cmnd. 1819 (1962), *Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960, Appendix E, Vol. I* p. 94. The whole of this section of the BBC's Memorandum No. 1, 'Summary of Development, 1952–60', was headed 'One BBC'. For the size of the staff, see below, Appendix B.

<sup>13</sup> Cmnd. 1753 (1962), *Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960*, paras. 441–3, p. 131.



organization of world-wide scope.' Not surprisingly, given Greene's own experience, emphasis was placed more specifically on the fact that the members of the BBC's staff could be 'freely transferred . . . from any one part of the Corporation to another'. This meant that both the sound and television services had 'a wide field of talent and experience to draw upon in filling their key positions',<sup>14</sup> including talent in Bush House. If, in a vivid phrase, 'some Pied Piper of Aldwych were now to call back those who spent their early years in the External Services, many notable gaps would appear elsewhere'. The Director-General headed the list, operating from Broadcasting House and not from the new Television Centre.<sup>15</sup>

Despite his stress on the need for teamwork in sound and in television—and, given the inevitable tension in broadcasting, Greene always had to stress it—he was very much of an individualist in both his public and his private life. Moreover, his friends and enemies always knew, as did his colleagues, that this was so.<sup>16</sup> He liked raffish people. His own way of life deliberately defied convention. He cared nothing for appearances. These mattered most during his last months in the BBC. In 1968 his break with Elaine, whom he had married in 1951 after a previous divorce, came less than a year after he had been deeply shocked at the move of Hill in July 1967 from the Chairmanship of the ITA to the Chairmanship of the BBC. Before Hill had assured him that a man's private life was his own affair,<sup>17</sup> he had already set up house with Tatjana Sais, an actress who was to become his third wife after the second divorce became absolute

<sup>14</sup> Cmnd. 1819 (1962), p. 95.

<sup>15</sup> The Pied Piper passage appears in a separate paper submitted to the Pilkington Committee in May 1961, 'Movement of Staff across its Internal "Frontiers"' (ibid., pp. 302–6). It followed a discussion when the BBC was giving oral evidence on 14 April 1961. In a review of Tracey's book, Michael Heffernan, who joined the BBC in the late 1960s, noted that 'it was more than a myth that independent journalism and public service had acquired their political face in Bush House' (*New Statesman*, 7 Oct. 1983).

<sup>16</sup> Alan Franks gave the title 'The Making of a Hughdunnit' to his review of Tracey's book (*The Times*, 23 Sept. 1983). This was an apt title, given that Greene had by then anthologized the rivals of Sherlock Holmes in detective fiction. Oliver Whitley, who knew Greene extremely well as a colleague, began his review with words that carried the same image: 'described as a biography this is also a detective story' (*London Review of Books*, 6–19 Oct. 1983). The title of Charles Moore's review in the *Daily Telegraph* (28 Sept. 1983), 'Sir Hugh Greene as Auntie', carried with it more conventional images. The *Star*, however, extended the conventional imagery, commenting at the time of Greene's appointment as Director-General, that he was 'the best kind of Uncle—the kind who isn't stuffy, prefers chuckles to a frown; wants his nephews and nieces to treat serious things seriously, but doesn't wish to spoil anybody's fun' (the *Star*, 17 Dec. 1959).

<sup>17</sup> Lord Hill, *Behind the Screen* (1974), p. 85.

in December 1968.<sup>18</sup> He had first seen her in a Berlin cabaret before the War. Some of the Governors, including the 'liberal minded ones', were 'condemnatory'.<sup>19</sup>

Paradoxically, it had been Greene who had succeeded in drawing into the Pilkington campaign Lord Reith, so different from himself—not least when divorce was mentioned—and this was a considerable achievement in itself. He had gone on, too, to establish a personal and institutional relationship with Reith that was to last for four years, a surprisingly long period, before it finally proved impossible to sustain.<sup>20</sup> 'Although I did not have the honour of serving under you myself,' he told Reith in the first letter that he wrote to him, 'I have always during my years with the BBC been impressed by the feeling of loyalty which you still inspire among those who did. It would be a great satisfaction to all of them if we could have you with us from time to time.'<sup>21</sup>

In making this approach, Greene was supported by his Chairman of Governors, Sir Arthur Forde, with whom Reith talked for the first time in the summer of 1960.<sup>22</sup> Forde, a solicitor by profession, before he became headmaster of Rugby, had taken over the Chairmanship in December 1957, when Cadogan retired.<sup>23</sup> He was consistently helpful to Greene, who found him sympathetic and understanding. Yet he was temperamentally as different from Greene—and from Reith—as anyone could have been. His manners were gentle, and his

<sup>18</sup> For Greene's private life see Tracey, *op. cit.*, esp. pp. 298–307. Tracey notes some of his colleagues' critical comments in 1968. In a review of Tracey's book, which he called more like autobiography than biography, Frank Gillard wrote that he found it 'embarrassing to read some of the letters from Hugh to his wives' (*Combroad*, Dec. 1983). Paul Fox found them 'just a little boring'. 'Not for one moment do they add to or detract from one's view of Hugh Greene' (*The Listener*, 22 Sept. 1983). Thanks to Michael Tracey and Graham C. Greene, I have had the opportunity to read the full Tracey manuscript on which the biography was based.

<sup>19</sup> Tracey, *op. cit.*, p. 285, where he reports soundings taken by one of them, Sir Robert Lusty, who himself thought it 'an extremely difficult situation'.

<sup>20</sup> The first intermediary between Greene and Reith was Sir Basil Nicolls, a former Director of Home Sound Broadcasting. I was the second. There were several others. Reith had refused to take part in the BBC's twenty-first birthday celebrations. He was willing to take part in the celebrations of the fortieth.

<sup>21</sup> 'Greene to Reith, 31 Dec. 1959 (Reith Papers at WAC, S60/6/15, pt. 1). Ironically, in the week of Greene's appointment as Director-General, one newspaper headline read: 'Now Reith takes over State.' It referred to Reith's acceptance of the chairmanship of the State Building Society. Ned Sherrin noted the ironical coincidence in *A Small Thing—Like an Earthquake* (1983), p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> In Feb. 1960 Greene told the Board of Governors of the 'rapprochement that was in view', and the Board expressed its great satisfaction at the prospect (*\*Minutes*, 25 Feb. 1960).

<sup>23</sup> See above, p. 136.

style was unobtrusive, and he was not given to making public statements. Fortunately he enjoyed working with Greene, and when he retired in 1964, he borrowed the language of the BBC's Royal Charter and thanked Greene and the Board of Management for six years and more of 'informative, educational, entertaining, and, therefore, entirely enjoyable experience'.<sup>24</sup>

By then, Greene and Reith had realized not only the differences between them, but their fundamental incompatibility. Reith wrote quite frankly that he did not want to have 'anything more to do with *him*' (my italics).<sup>25</sup> 'Hugh and I were in complete opposition of outlook and attitude. I lead, he follows the crowd in all the disgusting manifestations of the age.'<sup>26</sup> It was not merely that some of the programmes that the BBC was transmitting during the Greene years were anathema to Reith. That in itself did not prevent the two men from talking together. Moreover, after breaking with Greene, Reith did not completely break with the BBC as he had done earlier. He kept his contacts.<sup>27</sup>

Reith should have recognized from the start just how different he and Greene were. Instead, for a time he closed or half-closed his eyes to the difference. Doubtless he was flattered when in an interview with Kenneth Harris, Greene described him as one of the two 'great men' he had known: 'he towers above everything.' 'Directly or indirectly he still influences everybody who works here.'<sup>28</sup> None the less, Greene had made his own position clear when he had adopted Ed Murrow's argument that radio and television should 'hold a mirror to what was going on in contemporary society', an honest mirror, reflecting what was there, whether it was 'bigotry . . . and intolerance or accomplishment and inspiring achievement'.<sup>29</sup> Reith had never held that view, and the final rupture between the two men came not face to face, but with a telephone call, Reith's favourite mode of communication. After complaining about a *Radio Times* cover, Reith asked Greene: 'Don't you think, Hugh, that dignity is

<sup>24</sup> ffordre to Greene, 29 Jan. 1964 (letter reproduced in *Ariel*, Feb. 1964).

<sup>25</sup> Reith, *Diary*, 1 Jan. 1964; *ibid.*, 6 Aug. 1963: 'Terribly sad that the BBC has lost all I put into it'; 7 Sept. 1963: 'The BBC, particularly in television, has utterly discarded everything I did.'

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 Jan. 1964.

<sup>27</sup> He was on 'friendly terms' with John Arkell and in 1966 had a long lunch with the Director of External Broadcasting and his five controllers.

<sup>28</sup> K. Harris, *Conversations* (1964), pp. 97–8.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in Tracey, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

the most important quality?' 'I'm afraid, John, I do not' was the reply.<sup>30</sup>

The contrast, which one of Greene's colleagues called a contrast between 'dignity' and 'impudence', was stark.<sup>31</sup> Yet, while they both lived, the two men were more often compared than contrasted with each other. Indeed, in his own lifetime Greene came to be set alongside Reith as 'the other great Director-General of the BBC', the creator of the new BBC as Reith had been the creator of the old.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, it was generally recognized that they both brought the world—and not just Britain—into the reckoning when they proclaimed their messages. Greene maintained as resolutely as Reith had done that, in an 'age of communications', the BBC stood for a public service approach to broadcasting which had international as well as national ramifications. Its experience was as relevant to Nigeria or Malaya as it was to Scotland or Wales.

The two men were alike also, it was claimed, even after their relationship was over, not only in physical height—Greene was 6 feet 5¾ inches, Reith 6 feet 6 inches—but in moral stature. When they talked to each other, they could look each other in the face without flinching. There was a touch of stubbornness in them both. Greene, however, had a sense of mischief, while Reith, with much in his life to hide, was vulnerable to flattery. He had been especially flattered when he learned from Greene's wife Elaine that, when her husband had been asked at a BBC staff seminar at Uplands what he regarded as 'the most important or significant thing he had done as DG', he had replied, 'getting Lord Reith back into association with the BBC'.<sup>33</sup>

One man who knew them both, although he got to know Reith late, was Malcolm Muggeridge. Impressed by Reith, after interviewing him in the late Sixties,<sup>34</sup> Muggeridge had paid a glowing tribute to Greene in 1960 when he called his appointment as Director-

<sup>30</sup> \*Greene interviewed by Gillard, March 1977.

<sup>31</sup> *London Review of Books*, 6–19 Oct. 1983.

<sup>32</sup> When Greene retired from the Director-Generalship of the BBC in 1969, John Freeman, then British Ambassador in Washington, wrote to him, 'as one of your old servants—if only on an *ad hoc* contractual basis . . . I cannot see the last days of your Director-Generalship without wishing you farewell and God speed . . . I believe you have done as much for public service broadcasting as Reith did—and this will be recognised' (quoted in Tracey, *op. cit.*, p. 307).

<sup>33</sup> Reith, *Diary*, 12 Sept. 1963. Reith himself took part in several Uplands seminars.

<sup>34</sup> *Lord Reith Looks Back*, BBC-1, 23, 30 Nov., 3 Dec. 1967. Muggeridge and Reith agreed that 'our civilisation' had run into decline. Reith stated, however, that he saw 'rescue coming'. By then, the transformation of Muggeridge from a gadfly into a seer was accelerating.

General 'a capital choice'. 'He is a man of unusual intelligence and perception,' he added, 'tall, whimsical, adventurous and kindly.' Trusting that he would rid the BBC of 'the many mandarins who have lingered on from the monopolistic Sound broadcasting time', he urged Greene not 'to bother himself about the . . . protests which, inevitably, would fall around his head'. It was an advantage for the new Director-General, he believed, that his attitude towards the established order was 'well this side of idolatry'.<sup>35</sup>

Muggeridge would doubtless have included Jacob among the BBC figures whom he described as depressive, irritating, and muffling in their effect on the BBC.<sup>36</sup> It was Jacob, he was sure, who as 'Sir Ban' had been most opposed to him when he had criticized the monarchy.<sup>37</sup> Yet Muggeridge was wrong about Jacob, as he was about so many other public figures, and if convincing comparisons as well as contrasts are to be drawn between the BBC's Director-Generals of different periods, the most relevant comparison to draw in Greene's case is that with his immediate predecessor. Jacob did more than anyone else to assure him an easy succession; even more, as Greene fully recognized, he prepared the way for much that he was to choose to do himself.

None the less, there were abundant contrasts here also. Greene was tall: Jacob was short. Greene was attracted to Bohemia: Jacob was at home in Whitehall. Greene's father was a schoolmaster: Jacob's a field-marshal.<sup>38</sup> Greene took pains to be on good terms with Reith: Jacob did not care. Because of his military background and his impressive wartime record at Churchill's side, he was unimpressed by Reith's reputation. Nor was he influenced by any Reithian conception of his own responsibilities. He saw them in staff terms.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, when he was offered the Director-Generalship, he was working with Churchill for a second time—on secondment from the BBC as Chief Staff Officer to the Minister of Defence.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>35</sup> *Sunday Pictorial*, 26 July 1959. After leaving the BBC Greene was offered the editorship of *Punch*, which Muggeridge had edited from 1953 to 1957.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> See above, pp. 145–7.

<sup>38</sup> For an account of the Greene family background, see Michael Hamel-Green, 'Who Were the Greens?', *Glasgow Illustrated*, July 1967, and H. C. Greene, 'On the Track of Great Uncle Charles', *History Today*, Jan. 1970.

<sup>39</sup> Grace Wyndham Goldie complained that he treated television producers as subalterns (*Facing the Nation* (1977), p. 220). There were sometimes good reasons for this.

<sup>40</sup> For Churchill's reaction, see C. Richardson, *From Churchill's Secret Circle to the BBC* (1991), p. 233. 'I see that your Director-General is going. Who will get the job?' Jacob had replied: "I don't know, but I suppose I have some claims to it." "I suppose you have", said Churchill.

Conversely, Reith had never found Jacob at any point acceptable. This was perhaps on account of his Churchillian connection, a source of suspicion, even contempt, for Reith; although there were other differences of stance and behaviour, deliberately accentuated by Reith. When he learned during Greene's Director-Generalship that a portrait of Jacob was to be unveiled in Broadcasting House, Reith told fforde, with whom he was prepared to talk—he liked headmasters—that 'if his picture was in the Council Room, I would like mine to come out of it'.<sup>41</sup>

Like Greene, Jacob had first entered the BBC through Bush House, in his case as Controller, European Services, in 1946;<sup>42</sup> and by the time Greene returned to Bush House on 15 January 1949 to run the BBC's East European Service, including the Russian Service, Jacob had been promoted to the senior post of Director, Overseas Services. He immediately recognized Greene's abilities, and became his mentor, sending him off from time to time on attractive foreign assignments. When he moved to Broadcasting House as Director-General in 1952—at the age of 53—he promoted Greene to the post of Assistant Controller, Overseas Services. For one year, 1955–6, Greene was Controller, Overseas Services,<sup>43</sup> before moving at Jacob's suggestion to Broadcasting House as Director of Administration. There had been a parallelism in their careers, though Jacob had no mentor.

The circumstances in which their careers unfolded were quite different. Greene began by having to deal with the Pilkington Committee, while Jacob had to deal with Government and Parliament during the fierce debates on the Television Bill. He had to adopt a different line from his immediate predecessor, Haley, taking action, not fighting a war of words. It was in the light of the 1954 Act and the competition that followed from it that he had found it necessary to recommend far-reaching changes in the BBC's institutional structure. A vigorous defender of corporate planning before the term became fashionable, he had pressed from the start for a BBC 'ten-year plan', the outlines of which were filled in during his first year as Director-General.<sup>44</sup>

Jacob had also come to the conclusion, never reached by Haley, that there were ample resources to implement the plan, the first BBC

<sup>41</sup> Reith, *Diary*, 29 Jan. 1963.

<sup>42</sup> See Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, p. 18.

<sup>43</sup> The Assistant Controldership, the post he had previously held, went to Oliver Whitley, with whom he was to have a close BBC relationship. See below, p. 388.

<sup>44</sup> Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 115, 410 ff., 892.



plan to make television development a top priority, particularly if difficult and inevitably controversial cuts were made in sound broadcasting;<sup>45</sup> and in 1957, when the BBC was celebrating twenty-one years of its regular television service, Jacob was prepared to look forward constructively across the next twenty-one years. He considered that under Haley the BBC had been 'too much depressed by considerations of economy and that initiative was being squelched', and while he admired Haley's sense of responsibility, he had no sympathy with what he called 'the rather puritan streak in him'. Greene would have felt the same, but even more strongly.

Both Jacob and Greene were convinced, too, of the importance of transforming news broadcasting. Far less involved in journalism than Haley had been—or was to be at *The Times*—Jacob set out deliberately to force the BBC to reorganize news management and news reporting. Although somewhat uneasy with journalists, he was convinced that television was the natural medium for news. This, in particular, was a compelling credo for Greene, who did not need to be converted to it. He was a real newspaperman. Kingsley Martin, Editor of the *New Statesman*, had sent him to Berlin when he left Oxford in 1933, and he had made his journalistic reputation with the *Daily Telegraph* before becoming Head of the BBC's German Service during the War.

After Greene became Director-General, the post of Director of News and Current Affairs, especially created for him, was abolished, and it was stated specifically that Donald Edwards, who succeeded him as Editor, News and Current Affairs (E.N.C.A.) would be 'responsible under my [Greene's] general direction for the co-ordination and policy of current affairs output in Sound and Television'. As Editor-in-Chief, Greene was determined that it would be he and no one else who would continue to run the News and Current Affairs Directorate. Moreover, it would retain its own separate budget, always a matter of crucial importance in BBC history.

The Note announcing the new set-up was issued only four days after Greene became Director-General, and it showed just where his own priorities lay.<sup>46</sup> He was more interested in today than in

<sup>45</sup> \*Jacob interviewed by Frank Gillard for the Oral History Project, 6 Oct. 1976. Haley, Jacob said, had been 'extremely chary of authorising more money, more people and more equipment' for television—on national as well as BBC grounds. Haley always maintained before and after he left the BBC that to put large sums of money into the development of television would be an economic and cultural mistake for the country to make. See also below, pp. 831–2.

<sup>46</sup> \*Staff Announcement, 'News and Current Affairs', 5 Jan. 1960.

yesterday or tomorrow. A later announcement on 11 May 1960 stated that, as from 1 June, Edwards would assume responsibility for the staff as well as for the policy of Current Affairs programmes in sound and that the present staff of Current Affairs Talks Department (Sound) would be transferred from Talks Division, the Division which had played a key role in broadcasting history. J. A. Camacho, close to Greene, would become responsible for the 10 o'clock news and *Radio Newsreel*. He would head a new department, Current Affairs (Sound).

Jacob, who would never have sought to be an Editor-in-Chief of news, approached his varied tasks methodically and unpretentiously, rather than dramatically, and with a matchless consistency of temperament and purpose.<sup>47</sup> He made few enemies, therefore, and when he retired, fforde could quote with approval a still relevant passage from the BBC's house magazine *Ariel* which had been written at the time of his appointment. Some people, it had commented, are born and remain conspicuous, and others inconspicuous; but Jacob belonged to a third category, 'those who can make themselves invisible when they wish to, but (if they wish) can compel attention and dominate those with whom they are dealing'. This for fforde was 'a true assessment', although he added to it the further observation that 'one measure of the success of this kind of person is that he very seldom needs to do the latter'.<sup>48</sup>

Greene carried on where Jacob had left off, but he very seldom chose to make himself invisible. Nor could he easily make himself invisible when perhaps he would like to have been. There was more of Montgomery in him than of Eisenhower. He enjoyed winning campaigns. In the process he showed little patience with people whom he did not like, and before he moved to Broadcasting House, there had been tension in Bush House between himself and Tangey Lean, with whom he had quarrelled during the War when he was Lean's superior. There was to be further tension, too, in 1966.<sup>49</sup> For Hole, as has been explained, he had nothing but contempt. He did not want to surround himself with people who were temperament-

<sup>47</sup> None the less, he was Editor-in-Chief of Current Affairs, taking a close interest, e.g., in the contents of each week's *Panorama*. He made both queries and suggestions.

<sup>48</sup> *Ariel*, Dec. 1959. The same number includes a leader written by Jacob himself, 'The Director-General says Farewell'.

<sup>49</sup> Lean, who was Controller of European Services from 1949 to 1952, served for twelve years as Assistant Director of External Services, before becoming Director for a brief spell from 1964 to 1966. (See below, p. 387).

ally like himself; but, whatever their temperament or outlook, he expected a shared sense of purpose and trust.

Whenever he could do so, Greene tried to relate differences of outlook and of tactics not to personalities but to principles. In the 'battles of broadcasting' in which he was engaged, he liked to believe that principles were at stake.<sup>50</sup> In particular, he never wished to appear to be standing still—even for a moment. He liked a phrase that he attributed to Henry Fairlie, that he was opening the windows in Broadcasting House and turning down the central heating.<sup>51</sup> 'I believe we have a duty to take account of the changes in society, to be ahead of public opinion, rather than always to wait upon it', he exclaimed in one of his most comprehensive statements, delivered not in London but in Rome—to the International Catholic Association for Radio and Television.<sup>52</sup>

Greene attached importance to Director-General's speeches, and many of the most revealing of them were made abroad. He was not a good speaker—indeed, at first he was 'terrified' of making speeches<sup>53</sup>—but he could hold an audience, and what he said was carefully perused afterwards by many people who had not been present and had read his words only in print. There are more published speeches by Greene than there are by any previous Director-General. Not all of them, however, were written by himself. They all require exegesis. In the remarkable Rome speech, for example, he changed the flavour of one key sentence which had appeared in a draft prepared for him by Charles (later Sir Charles) Curran, then Secretary of the BBC and was to succeed him as Director-General, with help from Kenneth Lamb, then Head of Religious Broadcasting.<sup>54</sup> 'Relevance' was the key to programming, Curran had written, 'relevance to the audience, and to the tide in society. Outrage is wrong. Shock may not be good. Provocation can be healthy and, indeed, socially imperative. These are issues to which

<sup>50</sup> 'Battles of Broadcasting' was the title chosen for the BBC-2 film about Greene transmitted in 1980, seven years before his death.

<sup>51</sup> \*Interview with Gillard, March 1977.

<sup>52</sup> *The Conscience of the Programme Director*, 9 Feb. 1965.

<sup>53</sup> Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 97; \*Interview with Gillard, March 1977.

<sup>54</sup> Lamb, born in 1923, had joined the BBC in 1955. The Archbishops were consulted, as was the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool, before a layman was appointed to the post of HRB (\*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 7, 21 Feb. 1963). Lamb was to serve as Secretary of the BBC from 1967 to 1968, and as Director, Public Affairs, from 1969 to 1977. After retirement from the BBC, he was to be Secretary to the Church Commissioners from 1980 to 1985.

the broadcaster must apply his conscience.' In the sentence 'shock may not be good' Greene eliminated the word 'not'.<sup>55</sup>

It was in Ottawa in November 1961 that Greene stressed how important it was that the BBC be free from both political and commercial pressures. 'Nobody in Britain seriously regards the BBC these days as a servant of government, dancing to whatever tune the government calls.' 'We are outside the business ring which largely controls the British entertainment world.' The Corporation had a 'peculiar place in national life . . . Other things being equal, the public clearly prefers the BBC for both the lighter and the more serious sides of life.'<sup>56</sup>

When he lectured in Germany, as he did on several occasions, Greene referred back to his post-war years in occupied Germany, where as Controller of Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk, NWDR, he had been responsible after 1946 for creating a new post-war broadcasting structure.<sup>57</sup> In Germany he had been asked to transplant the concept of the BBC into a very different society from Britain, a society that was ravaged by defeat, and he was determined that public broadcasting should be a weapon of democracy.

By contrast, when Greene lectured in the United States, he was discussing the politics of broadcasting in the world's greatest democracy, victorious in war, but now itself under new management: Kennedy had succeeded Eisenhower after defeating Richard Nixon in the Presidential election of November 1960. There never had been—nor was there ever to be—any real opportunity for a transplantation of BBC structures into the United States; yet there were

<sup>55</sup> The story is told in Tracey, *op. cit.*, pp. 242–3. In his 'Interview with Miall for the BBC Oral History Project, Jan. 1978, Curran referred to this passage, but did not make the point. He described in some detail his work in preparing speeches for Greene. For Curran's later role, see *inter alia*, pp. 610–11, 705–11, 973–6.

<sup>56</sup> 'Speech to the Canadian Club of Ottawa, 24 Nov. 1961 (WAC file R44/548). In this speech Greene referred to the 'many and often fiendishly complicated problems' faced by the Pilkington Committee, and told his audience of how he himself had once chaired a committee of inquiry into the future of broadcasting in the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. See Tracey, *op. cit.*, pp. 146 ff. He wrote more fully of his broadcasting experiences in other countries years later in an article entitled 'The Freedom of the Air' (*New Statesman*, 27 May 1976).

<sup>57</sup> Tracey devotes the sixth chapter of his biography to Greene's post-war German experiences. His eighth chapter deals with Greene's mission when on secondment to Malaya, where he was asked in 1950 to advise on psychological warfare during the jungle war. His name had been put forward by Patrick Gordon Walker, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations in the Labour Government, who had worked under him in the German Service of the BBC during the War. For Gordon Walker's role in relation to the BBC, see above, p. 109, and below, p. 516.

many critics of television's 'wasteland' there,<sup>58</sup> and public broadcasting was to establish a relatively small, but significant, presence. Moreover, there was considerable respect for the BBC. It was a respect that encompassed both radio, particularly external broadcasting, and, increasingly, television, as was well known to the succession of BBC Representatives in New York, a coveted and influential position.<sup>59</sup>

In the United States, Greene talked more of broadcasting than of the BBC, although he never left the BBC out of the picture. The anniversary lunch of the National Broadcasting Company, NBC, was used by him to proclaim that 'the true purpose of the BBC [was] . . . concerned with the whole of life. The broadcaster opens a window on the world and for many, especially for the young, it is a window opened for the first time . . . The new age of broadcasting which lies before us should not stand in the service of governments, political parties, big business or sectional interests.'<sup>60</sup> The venue—and the audience—might have been strange, but with Kennedy in Washington and Newton Minow, his nominee as Head of the Federal Communications Commission, the phrase 'new age of broadcasting' did not sound at all strange.<sup>61</sup>

## 2. The Sense of Change

One early sign that Greene contemplated a new age on *this* side of the Atlantic had both practical and symbolic significance. It related not to television but to sound. On 11 May 1960 the BBC announced that the evening news bulletin in the Home Service would be

<sup>58</sup> See, in particular, Newton Minow's address to the Thirty-ninth Annual Convention of the National Association of Broadcasters, 9 May 1961, reprinted in Newton N. Minow, *Equal Time* (1964), pp. 48–64. Cf. *New Yorker*, 16 Nov. 1963, which described television as 'a vast, phosphorescent Mississippi of the senses, on the banks of which one can soon lose one's judgement and eventually lose one's mind.'

<sup>59</sup> Miall served in the post from the end of 1966 to 1971. He was succeeded by David Webster, who had joined the BBC as a sub-editor in Bush House in 1953, and worked for many years in Television Current Affairs. Webster became Director, Public Affairs, in 1977, and was Director, USA, from 1981–5. For the post, see also below, pp. 716–17.

<sup>60</sup> 'Broadcasting the BBC Way', 13 Nov. 1961 (WAC file R44/548).

<sup>61</sup> Minow, coiner of the application of the word 'wasteland' to American television, visited the BBC in Feb. 1963, when he had meetings with many of the senior staff (\*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 7 March 1963). 'He expressed admiration for various aspects of the BBC's operation, especially on the engineering side.'

transmitted not at 9 p.m. but at 10 p.m. starting on 19 September. After that date it would form part from Mondays to Fridays of a 'compendious' daily programme, *Ten o'Clock*, which would combine news and current affairs. Usually it would last for half an hour. The change was itself news, for the 9 o'clock news was already part of British history. First broadcast before the War on 3 October 1938, the 9 p.m. news during the War had often been listened to by as many as 20 million people, and in 1960 it seemed a fixed event in a moving world.

The public reason given for the change was not the competition of television, although by then there had been a sharp fall in the audience for all sound news programmes.<sup>1</sup> More than half the listeners to plays, people were told, wanted them to finish by 10 p.m. In future they would be able to do so. They would also be able to listen to other 'major programmes in the middle of the evening'.<sup>2</sup> There would also be scope after a 10 p.m. news for a fuller discussion of current affairs. *At Home and Abroad*, broadcast on Tuesdays and Fridays, had been a success, but 'a still more lively and comprehensive service could be given if time was available every night for current affairs'.<sup>3</sup>

There was logic in this, and Greene did not expect that the decision to switch the time and change the content would cause any stir. He did not regard '9 o'clock' as in any way 'sacrosanct'.<sup>4</sup> Nor had the Governors thought so either. Although the proposal had been mentioned to them earlier, the shift in the time of the news had not been singled out as a special item for discussion or decision when Greene told them about the arrangements for sound broadcasting in the autumn at their meeting on 21 April.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, there was a sharp, immediate public reaction to the change, followed by a series of chain reactions; and although at the next meeting of the Governors, on 19 May, Greene described the reaction as not 'large', both they and he obviously had to take account of it.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 220.

<sup>2</sup> *Radio Times*, 16 Sept. 1960.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> \*Greene interviewed by Gillard, March 1977.

<sup>5</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 21 April 1960. The note contained a substantial discussion of the prospect of local broadcasting. See below, p. 626 ff. The *Minutes* of 25 Feb. 1960 note that he had reported the proposed change, and that the Governors had approved. 'No public announcement of this decision would be made', the *Minute* ends.

<sup>6</sup> \**Ibid.*, 19 May 1960.



No less a public figure than Dr Fisher, the Archbishop of Canterbury, had been in 'misapprehension' about the change as a result of reading a leader in *The Times* which described the decision as 'like the ending of an epoch' for many listeners. The leader had concluded that the BBC might be departing from its established practice of maintaining a clear separation of news and comment 'from views' by removing 'the quarantine' that cut off the preparation and presentation of news bulletins from the activities of the rest of the Corporation.<sup>7</sup> The previous Chairman of the Governors, Cadogan, was disturbed by this leader also. He, if not the Archbishop, may well have known that News and Current Affairs were to become the joint responsibility of the Editor of News and Current Affairs on 1 June, and that, indeed, was the ending of an epoch.<sup>8</sup>

On this substantive point, which was crucial to Greene's plans for the BBC, the advice of the Governors—and of Greene—on 19 May was that 'a word with the Editor of *The Times* . . . might be valuable'. Whether or not such a word was ever uttered is not clear. Nor is it at all clear whether such a word with Haley would have had any effect. Haley's attitude to news was very different from Greene's, and not surprisingly, what the BBC described inadequately as continuing 'misconceptions' persisted. After the matter had been raised again by two Governors—Mrs Cazalet-Keir and Sir James Duff—at the Governors' meeting on 2 June, Greene complained that there had even been a 'misleading' article in *The Listener*.<sup>9</sup>

In leaving it to Greene 'to take what action he might think fit' the Governors do not seem to have considered some of the broader issues raised in *The Times* leader. Before stressing the requirement to keep news and comment separate, it had referred to 'the tug-of-war within the BBC between those who believe in news values and those who believe in programme values', a tug of war which it claimed was not new. There was the implication too that in television the tug of war was being won by the wrong team. 'It is to be hoped', the leader went on, 'that the programme officials will continue to be kept at bay where the news is concerned. This is as necessary in television as in sound broadcasting. News values and judgements should be exactly the same in both.' The BBC should not set out to be 'all papers to all viewers and listeners'.

<sup>7</sup> *The Times*, 12 May 1960.

<sup>8</sup> See above, pp. 61 ff.

<sup>9</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 2 June 1960. *The Listener* article had appeared on 19 May. There had also been a similar article in *Time and Tide*.

There were shades of the Tahu Hole argument in this leader. And there may well have been a leak to *The Times* from some members of the BBC's Current Affairs Talks Department (Sound) who did not wish to become members of Edwards's staff. Of interest to the historian of broadcasting there were intimations also of future criticisms of BBC news policy as it was to evolve over the years.<sup>10</sup> Finally, there was an underlying suspicion of increasingly fashionable 'magazine-type' programmes, a main feature of the new pattern of broadcasting.<sup>11</sup> Ironically, *The Times* itself was to change in its format and approach in the years that followed,<sup>12</sup> but its message on 12 May 1960, as firm as any statement by Greene, was directly opposed to Greene's own line of thinking. So also was *The Listener* piece to which Greene referred—not an article but a critique by the prolific author and reviewer Joanna Richardson in 'The Spoken Word' column that was headed 'The Real News'. 'The 9 o'clock news', she claimed, was 'the news *par excellence*, and one can understand the television addict who switched off at five to nine, and said "And now let's listen to the real news".'<sup>13</sup>

In the rest of her critique, Joanna Richardson also directly attacked magazine programmes. The prospect of 'hundredweight Sunday newspapers every single day of the week' was not pleasing. 'The BBC should keep news and comment absolutely distinct. It should not concede too much to popularity; and it should cater for listeners . . . who like to have the news straight, and form their own opinions. The powers that be . . . have shown a curious disregard for one of the most respected programmes in sound broadcasting.'

To deal with what he had to describe as 'misapprehensions', Greene himself wrote to *The Times*, insisting—and it was necessary to do so—that there would be no blurring of the distinction between news and current affairs. The word 'bulletin' would continue to be used in the new programme, and the impartiality of the BBC as a reporter of

<sup>10</sup> See below, pp. 755–6.

<sup>11</sup> See above, pp. 222–4.

<sup>12</sup> One much-discussed change in format, the printing of news on the front page, was made when Haley was Editor. Following 'Operation Breakthrough', the change was made on 3 May 1966. Interestingly, the time registered on the clock at the centre of the masthead was changed from 6.06 a.m. to 4.30 a.m. A bigger and more complex change took place in 1967, when Roy Thomson, after 1964 Lord Thomson of Fleet, acquired *The Times*, having previously acquired the *Sunday Times*, not then associated with *The Times*, in 1959. See I. McDonald, *The History of The Times*, Vol. V: *Struggles in War and Peace, 1939–1966* (1971), and O. Woods and J. Bishop, *The Story of the Times* (1983).

<sup>13</sup> *The Listener*, 19 May 1960.

news would not be in question.<sup>14</sup> There was no question either, he added, of the BBC being 'all papers to all viewers and listeners'.<sup>15</sup> The Governors at their meeting on 16 June thanked Greene for his short but forceful letter, which undoubtedly stilled the most important and fundamental criticisms of BBC news policies. Yet neither they nor he had dispelled opposition to the ending of the 9 o'clock news. Nor had they disposed finally of Richardson's critique, which still retains its relevance in the 1990s.

The immediate opposition now came from a different quarter. In a further spate of correspondence in October, it centred not on the impartiality of BBC news or the need to separate news from comment, but on what would happen in future to the chimes of Big Ben. The *Radio Times* had told listeners on 16 September that in future only the first stroke of Big Ben would be broadcast and that, in consequence, the words 'Big Ben Minute' could no longer be used in the announcement of the programme. Cutting the strokes would make time for more news.<sup>16</sup> And impatient listeners would no longer have to wait for so long.

The Council of the Big Ben Silent Minute, a body which had remained in existence since the dark days of 1940, had already protested against the ending of the 9 o'clock news, which it regarded as a kind of national sacrilege. Now it defended the chimes themselves. They had been introduced live before the news bulletin in place of the Greenwich time signal,<sup>17</sup> and although it had been left open to wartime listeners to decide for themselves whether or not to treat the period after the chimes as a 'dedicated minute', a Big Ben Silent Minute movement, which had strong right-wing political

<sup>14</sup> The word 'bulletin' had been used in Britain since 1922 for what Americans called a regular 'newscast'. For Americans a bulletin was what was called in Britain a 'news flash'.

<sup>15</sup> His letter appeared in *The Times* on 7 June. When a letter supporting Joanna Richardson's views appeared in *The Listener* on 2 June 1960, the Editor stated that it was 'the intention of the BBC to maintain a perfectly clear distinction between news and comment when news programmes are reorganized in the autumn'.

<sup>16</sup> *Radio Times*, 16 Sept. 1960. The article added that the change would also clear up the misunderstanding as to when Big Ben really struck the hour: 'The answer, of course, is on the first stroke—not the last.'

<sup>17</sup> There was to be no argument—but rather 'considerable misunderstanding'—when in 1971 the Greenwich time signal, which had kept its original form since 1924, was changed. The six short pips were replaced by five, with a longer one at the exact minute. On 31 Dec. and 30 June a positive or negative 'leap second' was introduced (see E. Pawley, *BBC Engineering, 1922–1972* (1972), p. 441).

support, perpetuated its belief in the spiritual significance of the chimes after the War ended in victory.<sup>18</sup>

The Press made much of the fact that Greene's own eldest brother, Herbert, took up the cause of the chimes and rallied thousands of supporters, including General Frederick Morgan, one of the planners of D-Day, to urge that Big Ben be allowed 'to boom with all its chimes' in the future as in the past.<sup>19</sup> There was strong emotion behind this reaction, a different reaction from that of *The Times*. Yet Greene, who now decided on a gentle retreat, even in retrospect thought of the row as no more than a 'silly rumpus'.<sup>20</sup>

At their meeting on 6 October the Governors agreed that a 'clear distinction' should be drawn between the decision to replace the 9 p.m. news by the 10 p.m. news, 'which was a decision of policy not open to review', and 'the treatment of Big Ben at 10 o'clock, which had been the subject of an executive decision which was open to reconsideration if that was desirable', and Greene declared himself willing to 'explore the practicability of mounting a short item in the 10 o'clock comment period to illustrate the basis on which the Big Ben decision had been taken'. He also agreed to invite listeners' views as to which of the various alternative treatments of Big Ben was preferable, adding that 'this would imply a readiness on the part of the BBC to adopt any particular course that might receive overwhelming support'.<sup>21</sup>

'Exploring the possibilities' meant talking first to Stephen Bonarjee, who had been switched back from television to Broadcasting House to edit the new *Ten o'Clock* programme, and it was 'under orders' that Bonarjee went on to give one of the few broadcasts he ever gave in his life on 19 October. Greene handed him a script of what to say. In the script Bonarjee explained why the change in the chimes of Big Ben had been proposed, and asked for listeners to 'write in', expressing their views concerning how to treat Big Ben in future. They responded enthusiastically; letters poured in—over 3,000 of them. The Governors, having listened to management, responded in turn, offering, not surprisingly, 'a compromise course'. The chimes of Big Ben would gently fade away as the reading of the news

<sup>18</sup> The Governors discussed the subject more than once during the Second World War, for the last time on 9 March 1944. The words 'Big Ben Minute' appeared in the *Radio Times* announcement of the news.

<sup>19</sup> *Daily Mail*, 17 Oct. 1960. The gossipy article was headed 'All about the civil war in Greene land'. Hugh Greene was supported by the best known of his brothers, Graham.

<sup>20</sup> \*Greene interviewed by Gillard, March 1977.

<sup>21</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 6 Oct. 1960.

bulletin began. There would be coexistence.<sup>22</sup> Bonarjee has described the poll as 'one of the few programme polls of its kind that the BBC has ever had'.<sup>23</sup>

In fact, opposition persisted even after the poll, but Greene now told the Governors that he would not receive any deputation on the subject, thereby setting a pattern for his future conduct. He told them also that they were to be left entirely to their own discretion in deciding how to deal with the flood of letters with which they were threatened, although they could have 'recourse to the Secretariat if they wished'.<sup>24</sup> That was almost the last Minute of the Governors on the subject, except that they noted on 1 December that no large number of letters had been received.<sup>25</sup>

Looking back, the 'silly rumpus' had had its non-silly side. The change in the presentation of news and current affairs was in line with all that Greene believed in and that he was determined to achieve, and he was prepared to face opposition to achieve it; but neither he nor the Governors had been prepared for the vigour of the reaction to the decision to cut the chimes of Big Ben, thereby breaking what had become a tradition. In retrospect, Greene referred to 'some very strange people' who had been roused in opposition to him, and at the time he treated their opposition as reactionary, prepared to let 'the shock waves of horror bounce off him'.<sup>26</sup> They soon did, and after the publication of the Pilkington Report, Greene felt that he could afford to do other things to confirm how little he cared for people he found strange or reactionary.

He always had backing for his intransigence inside and outside the BBC, as he had had in March 1960 when he proposed—and the Board agreed with him—that the restriction on the use of the novelist P. G. Wodehouse's works should be lifted and that Wodehouse should be invited to broadcast in person 'as suitable opportunities might arise'.<sup>27</sup> None the less, it was the 9 o'clock news controversy that first provided a pointer both to the kind of 'trials of

<sup>22</sup> \*Ibid., 3 Nov. 1960.

<sup>23</sup> \*Bonarjee interviewed by George Scott for the Oral History Project, 21 April 1980.

<sup>24</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 3 Nov. 1960.

<sup>25</sup> \*Ibid., 1 Dec. 1960. Mrs Cazalet-Keir had suggested a standard acknowledgement letter. Governors were free to reply to personal correspondence as they wished.

<sup>26</sup> Tracey, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

<sup>27</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 10 Mar. 1960. For the background of the ban, see I. Sproat, *Wodehouse at War: The Extraordinary Truth about P. G. Wodehouse's Broadcasts on Nazi Radio* (1981). See also D. A. Jasen, *Wodehouse, a Portrait of a Master* (1981), and F. Donaldson, *P. G. Wodehouse: A Biography* (1982).

strength' that he was to meet in the later 1960s and to the kind of way he would choose as Director-General to deal with them.

It was television, not radio, that was to provoke most future trials of strength, and already before 1964 the term 'trial of strength' had been used not by him but by Mary Whitehouse, then an unknown schoolteacher in Shropshire. Disturbed in the summer of 1963 by what she described as the BBC's advocacy of the 'New Morality' (with capitals), she approached Greene, who was abroad, and instead secured an interview with Harman Grisewood.<sup>28</sup> According to Mrs Whitehouse, Grisewood, who was a Roman Catholic, listened sympathetically to her complaints about the impact of BBC television on young people, and later accepted an invitation from her to supper to meet some of the young people she had in mind. In making her complaints, she also had particular programmes in mind, like *This Nation Tomorrow*, which on 14 July 1963 had shown Dr Alex Comfort defending premarital sex. Soon plays were to figure on Mrs Whitehouse's agenda as regularly as discussion programmes.<sup>29</sup> Grisewood described Mrs Whitehouse as a 'sincere person' who 'expresses herself well', and told George Camacho that 'she might be a useable speaker in some situations'.<sup>30</sup>

When it became clear later that the BBC had no intention of changing its approach to programming, Mrs Whitehouse turned to campaigning, rather than protesting by telephone call or letter.<sup>31</sup> She believed that the Corporation, instead of listening, seemed quite deliberately to be entering upon 'a trial of strength with its viewers', by 'producing programmes even more likely to affect the good taste of the country'.<sup>32</sup> Before beginning her campaign, which was organized by herself and a friend, Norah Buckland, wife of the Rector of Longton, she also approached ITA, her local MP, Jasper Moore,

<sup>28</sup> She also approached ffordre. Tracey (op. cit., p. 231) quotes a Note of ffordre's secretary on 31 July 1963. 'A Mrs. Whitehouse phoned. She was extremely forceful and wants very much to come and see you about what she describes as a personal matter.' ffordre did not see her.

<sup>29</sup> See below, p. 519. In 1961 the Roman Catholic Church in its evidence to the Pilkington Committee had complained of plays and other programmes which showed 'a lack of restraint' which could lead to 'a serious infringement of both modesty and morality'. It added that competition between the BBC and ITV had been of 'a destructive rather than of a creative character, because each has been driven by the desire for large audiences' (*Daily Telegraph*, 16 Feb. 1961).

<sup>30</sup> Grisewood to Camacho, 16 Dec. 1963. Camacho added in a Note: 'I deeply regret that through an oversight I have held this up' (Goldie Papers at BBC Written Archives).

<sup>31</sup> After launching the campaign, she herself was to receive large numbers of letters, on one occasion 322 in a day. Appropriately her home was called 'Postman's Piece'.

<sup>32</sup> M. Whitehouse, *Cleaning Up TV: From Protest to Participation* (1967), pp. 19-20.



Enoch Powell, a former neighbour who was then Minister of Health, and the Bishop of Hereford. There was a Moral Rearmament connection too. Both Mrs Whitehouse and Mrs Buckland had been associated with MRA for several years.<sup>33</sup>

The campaign began with the drafting of a Manifesto that minced no words. It opened boldly with the affirmation 'We women of Britain believe in a Christian way of life', and in its third clause it referred to 'the propaganda of disbelief, doubt and dirt that the BBC projects into millions of homes through the television screen'. The fifth clause called upon the BBC 'for a radical change of policy'. 'Programmes which build character' should be broadcast in place of programmes which destroy it. They should 'encourage and sustain faith in God and bring Him back to the heart of our family and national life'.<sup>34</sup>

The word 'family' now stands out, and so it did at the time for the local Birmingham Press—and, indeed, inside the BBC. 'Mothers Campaign for High TV Morals' was a headline in one paper,<sup>35</sup> and the *Church of England Newspaper*, which printed an early article on the Clean Up TV Campaign, favourable in tone, already had a family page. For Greene, who was suspicious of all such talk about the family, Mrs Whitehouse's views were intolerant prejudices, by their nature dangerous to freedom. He none the less welcomed the support that he himself received not only from humanists but from Christians of various denominations who did not share all his own views—and also from the Mothers' Union.<sup>36</sup>

The Whitehouse campaign was launched at a mass meeting in Birmingham Town Hall on 5 May 1964, attended by a large number

<sup>33</sup> Roy (later Sir Roy) Shaw, then Professor of Adult Education at Keele University and a future Secretary-General of the Arts Council (1975–83), made much of this point in an article in *New Blackfriars*. He wrote to Greene suggesting that they carry out a counter-assault on what he described as 'dark forces'. See also M. Tracey and D. Morrison, *Whitehouse* (1979), which originally had as its subtitle 'A Study in Moral Protest'.

<sup>34</sup> Mrs Whitehouse stated that the reason why the ITA was not mentioned was that she regarded the BBC 'as part of our national life' (op. cit., p. 33). She also stated that she regretted that the Manifesto had not expressed appreciation of 'the many people working in the BBC whose programmes were first class in every respect' (ibid., p. 24). In later versions of the Manifesto such a clause was added.

<sup>35</sup> *Birmingham Evening News*, 27 Jan. 1964.

<sup>36</sup> \*Doreen Stephens, Head of Family Programmes, Television, to Stuart Hood, 'The Birmingham Women's "Vigilante" Group', 4 May 1964 (WAC file T16/S85). This enclosed a copy of the Summary of Diocesan Mothers' Union Reports on Reaction of Television Groups to the Manifesto from 'The Women of Britain'. Out of thirteen dioceses only two reported that a majority of members were in favour of the Manifesto.

of women.<sup>37</sup> For Mrs Whitehouse, it was a huge success, 'snowballed into existence' and interrupted only by a 'few hoodlums acting the fool' in the presence of BBC television cameras.<sup>38</sup> For Kenneth Bird, the BBC's Midland Region Information Officer, who produced a report for the BBC, it was, by contrast, 'comical', 'sinister', and 'menacing'.<sup>39</sup> It seemed consistent that the playwright David Turner, whose BBC plays were among the programmes under attack, was not allowed to speak from the platform.<sup>40</sup>

The meeting concluded with the sending of a telegram bearing 120,000 signatures to the Queen and Prince Philip and with a request to Lord Normanbrook, who by then had replaced Forde as Chairman of the BBC's Governors, to receive a representative deputation. The telegram to the Queen was referred to the Postmaster-General. The proposed deputation was not received. Consistently thereafter Greene refused to see Mrs Whitehouse. But that was not to be the end of her. She outlasted Greene himself and the Greene years.<sup>41</sup>

For Mrs Whitehouse, Greene stood out from the start as the man personally responsible for changing the image of the BBC and for transforming the range and content of its programmes. None the less, he was not directly involved, whatever his critics might say, in the choice of most of the programmes, a very varied range of programmes, that generated immense topical public interest during his Director-Generalship. Indeed, he was solely responsible for suggesting only two programmes that were put on the air: *Perry Mason*, the American trial series first broadcast on 4 January 1965, and *Songs of Praise*, once described by a comedian as 'an oasis of innocence and goodness in television schedules full of programmes about sordid people doing disgusting things to one another'.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>37</sup> *The Times*, 6 May 1964: 'What sort of people come to these meetings? . . . Although men were present, most of the audience were middle-aged women. Perhaps never in the history of Birmingham Town Hall has such a successful meeting been sponsored by such a flimsy organisation.'

<sup>38</sup> Whitehouse, op. cit., pp. 34–7.

<sup>39</sup> \*K. Bird to H. J. Dunkerley, Controller, Midland Region, et al., ' "Clean-Up" TV Campaign at Birmingham: 5th May 1964', 6 May 1964 (T16/585).

<sup>40</sup> 'He had already had ample opportunity to speak not to a mere 2,000 people, but to the whole country—now it was our turn' (Whitehouse, op. cit., p. 37).

<sup>41</sup> See below, pp. 890–1. Mrs Whitehouse wrote a later and more ordered version of her life, described as her own 'Personal inside story', *Mary Whitehouse, a Most Dangerous Woman?* (1982).

<sup>42</sup> Rowan Atkinson, quoted in the *Radio Times*, 5–11 Oct. 1991, on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of *Songs of Praise*. Greene was told about *Perry Mason* while having drinks with Ian Fleming, author of the James Bond stories, who had seen the series in

At one of his first meetings of the Board after becoming Director-General, he told the Governors somewhat awkwardly—or so it is minuted—that ‘violence was another aspect of television programmes as to which a certain degree of corrective treatment was called for’, and mentioned the most recent episode of the western *The Range Rider*. The oddly written Minute ends: ‘The Board strongly endorsed DG’s view both as to *The Range Rider* in particular and as to the need for the sheets to be taken in a bit as regards violence in general. It was left to the DG to take any necessary action in the matter.’<sup>43</sup>

In an interview of 1965 Greene generalized correctly in the light of his own experience that ‘programmes have their own life and when you put something on the air it’s often different from what was originally in mind’; and surprisingly, perhaps, he took an old radio programme as his example on that occasion, *The Archers*. Originally, he claimed, it had been far more ‘educational’ in purpose than was generally recognized, but it now consisted of ‘60 per cent entertainment, 30 per cent information of a genuine character likely to be of interest to farmers, countrymen and townspeople alike, and 10 per cent direct education’.<sup>44</sup> Greene did not mention another old radio programme, *Mrs. Dale’s Diary*, which in 1962 had its name changed to *The Dales*, and which in February 1963 took its ‘new look’ a little further and lost the well-known voices of Dr and Mrs Dale.<sup>45</sup> It took time for the 7 million listeners to get accustomed to that of Jessie Matthews, a familiar voice in a new setting. Nor did he mention new television ‘soap operas’ like *Dr Kildare*, first broadcast on 20 October 1961, and *Compact*, first broadcast on 2 January 1962.

America. He was given the idea of *Songs of Praise* by Dame Megan Lloyd George (Tracey, op. cit., p. 232). The first *Songs of Praise* programme came from the Tabernacle Baptist Chapel in Cardiff on 1 Oct. 1961.

<sup>43</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 28 Jan. 1960.

<sup>44</sup> Harris, op. cit., p. 102.

<sup>45</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, ‘Report by Director of Sound Broadcasting, Dec. 1962–Feb. 1963’, 12 Mar. 1963; *Daily Telegraph*, 20, 21 Feb. 1963. Many letters protested against the dropping of Ellis Powell, who had played Mrs Dale since the programme began on 5 June 1948, and James Dale, who had played Dr Dale for nine years. One hundred letter-writers applied for jobs in the new cast, and Jessie Matthews and Charles Simon were eventually given the key parts. See E. Powell, ‘It’s Like Losing All Your Family’, *News of the World*, 24 Feb. 1963. Cf. *Poole and Dorset Herald*, 6 March: ‘Poole Woman Leads Fight to Save Mrs. Dale: Plan by Fans for BBC Boycott’. When the series was dropped in April 1969, questions were raised in Parliament. See *The Times*, 19 April 1969. In the *Radio Times*, 25 July 1968, one listener compared the Dales and the Archers. The latter, she said, were ‘real people’.

The latter were only two of a wide range of programmes of the Greene years which sought to ensure that the BBC would hold large audiences in face of continuing ITV competition. An ITV 'medical' programme, *Emergency Ward 10*, a home-grown soap opera, had proved an undoubted success; but when the BBC in response purchased a series of six *Dr Kildare* programmes from NBC in New York in May 1961, the critics were not impressed.<sup>46</sup> None the less, whatever they thought or said, numbers were on the BBC's side, and *Dr Kildare*, starring Richard Chamberlain as a young intern at Blair Hospital, had such appeal that, towards the end of the first series, Kenneth Adam, Director of Television, could write that it had been the great success of Friday evenings. 'The travel and animal films have had a loyal and appreciative audience, but the great popular success of the evening has been *Dr Kildare* and the comedy show following it.'<sup>47</sup> Audience Research noted that *Dr Kildare* had become a 'Friday night institution, a programme not to be missed on any account'.<sup>48</sup> After a second and third series had been shown, the impression remained equally favourable. Indeed, a peak audience of 15 million was attracted. The programme was brought to an end after 190 episodes on 24 November 1966, by which time Chamberlain himself, a talented actor, had grown out of his image.

*Compact*, an English programme, created by Hazel Adair and written with Peter Ling, which had Eric Maschwitz as its godfather,<sup>49</sup> was originally to be called 'World of Eve'. It focused on the affairs of a magazine called *Compact*, and dealt with the highly temperamental group of people who produced it. The programme, which was transmitted on Tuesdays and Thursdays after *Tonight*, also

<sup>46</sup> Gordon Smith, the BBC's Purchasing Manager, who had arranged the deal with NBC—and had seen the NBC pilot—reported in Oct. to Denis Scuse in the BBC's New York Office that almost all the critics compared it unfavourably with *Emergency Ward 10* (\*Smith to Scuse, 'Dr. Kildare Press Reviews', 27 Oct. 1961 (T46/2653/1)).

<sup>47</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report of the Director of Television, Jan.–March 1962'.

<sup>48</sup> \*Audience Research Report VR/62/314. Mrs Whitehouse was disturbed by one episode of *Dr. Kildare* that dealt with childbirth and which, she claimed, so terrified a group of her girl pupils that they told her they were determined never to have babies themselves (quoted in M. Caulfield, *Mary Whitehouse* (1975), p. 19). She was not the only viewer who was uneasy about some of the editions. 'Operation Lazarus', the last of the first series, was about a controversial drug treatment for mental illness, and Dora Nirva in BBC Purchasing wrote to Ronald Waldman, General Manager, Television Promotions, on 1 May 1962 that she did not consider mental derangement a proper subject for an entertainment programme (\*Nirva to Waldman, 'Note Re "Dr. Kildare" ' (T46/2653/1)). This particular programme, none the less or consequentially, won the highest reaction index of the series (74) (\*VR/62/314).

<sup>49</sup> \*Maschwitz to Tom Sloan, Head of Light Entertainment, 28 March 1962 (TS/624/2). Maschwitz was then on special contract as adviser to BBC Television. See above, p. 197.

met with sharp initial criticism from both outside and inside the BBC. It was called 'empty-headed', 'hollow', even 'worthless', and was unfavourably compared both with *Emergency Ward 10* and with *Coronation Street*. It quickly built up a sizeable following, however, and almost effortlessly established a natural rapport with women's magazines.

In the summer of 1962, Adam told the producers and cast of *Compact* that on a visit to the Channel Islands he had found that the serial had 'a firm hold—I would almost say iron grip'. 'Life in the Islands—already sweetened by cheap drink and tobacco—is now, it seems, even pleasanter as a result of *Compact's* arrival.<sup>50</sup> A few months later he reported to Sydney Newman, recently appointed Head of Drama Group, Television, who did not like the programme, that the National Governor for Wales, Mrs Rachel Jones, had told the Board that it was compulsory viewing in parts of Wales, and interfered seriously with social occasions. She hoped that 'we would not be ashamed of our popular success and we would not give up hope of improving it'.<sup>51</sup>

When the programme eventually came to an end in July 1965, it was facing the ITV competition not only of *Emergency Ward 10* and *Coronation Street* but of *Crossroads*, which was first broadcast by ATV, although not nationally networked, on 2 November 1964. Adair and Ling had themselves conceived of this new competitor, which was set in a motel run by Meg Richardson, and which starred Noele Gordon, who had been hostess in *Lunch Box*, ATV's first 'chat show', a new term in Britain, in 1956.<sup>52</sup> When *Crossroads* reached its 3,000th episode, a record, in 1978, it was claimed that to its fans there did not seem ever to have been a time when it had not existed. It had become part of their lives.<sup>53</sup>

Most of such popular programmes—and there were many of them on BBC and ITV—have subsequently faded into history, although

<sup>50</sup> \*Adam to Hood, 'Compact', 25 June 1962 (T5/624/2). Hood, then Controller, Programmes, had noted in May that the programme had a very large number of young viewers, and 'we must take care not to get involved too deeply in moral problems' (\*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report of Director of Television, Jan.–March 1962', 2 May 1962).

<sup>51</sup> \*Adam to Newman, 'Report to the Board: "Compact"', 25 Jan. 1963 (T5/624/2). The series came to an end on 30 July 1965. For Newman, see below, pp. 395–7.

<sup>52</sup> *Crossroads* was originally broadcast by ATV five days a week in the Midlands area. For the critical attitude of the ITA to it see B. Sendall, *Independent Television in Britain*, vol. 2 (1983), pp. 235, 386. See also D. Hobson, *Crossroads: The Drama of a Soap Opera* (1982).

<sup>53</sup> *Crossroads*, 'Special Souvenir Issue', 1978.

they often dealt with 'human interest' situations, usually by formula, which quite erroneously were, or seemed to be, timeless. Another of them was *The Newcomers*, a twice-weekly serial, based on a London family living in a country town, which reached its 200th episode in September 1967.<sup>54</sup> Devised and written by Colin Morris, it was felt to deal with real problems of 'our time'.<sup>55</sup> There were, indeed, many programmes, both on BBC-1 and after April 1964 on BBC-2, which seemed to catch the spirit of a new and more adversarial age as much as any news bulletin. They recorded it too for posterity—at least, when tape and telerecordings were kept. Unfortunately, for various reasons, mainly financial, they were not always so recorded. There are awkward gaps, visual and documentary.<sup>56</sup>

The adversarial element both in the programmes and in the assessment of them derived from disagreement, some of it fundamental, about what the 'spirit of the time' really was, about what form 'a new age' in the making would eventually take, and about how to think, feel, and behave in a period of change. Although no one disputed that 'change' was at the heart of the period, there were quite different interpretations of what change meant; and if Greene thrilled to it, Mrs Whitehouse and her allies were not alone in disliking the way that things were moving.<sup>57</sup> There was nothing new about such differences, although many of them were now accentuated and heavily publicized. When the decade began, 'Keeping Pace with Pace' and 'The Tense Present' were two of the headlines in Jocelyn Stevens's fashionable magazine *Queen*.<sup>58</sup>

What mainly distinguished this time from others in the history of broadcasting was that the BBC itself as an institution—with Greene

<sup>54</sup> *Ariel*, Aug. 1967.

<sup>55</sup> \*Audience Research Report VR/65/550, 8 Nov. 1965.

<sup>56</sup> Unfortunately, documents relating to the inception and development of popular programmes were not always kept either. There are, for example, no surviving documents relating to the beginning of *Juke Box Jury*. (See above, pp. 206–8.)

<sup>57</sup> An important article by Anthony Crosland in *Encounter*, Oct. 1960, started from the premise that 'a dogged resistance to change now blankets every segment of our national life . . . No doubt we still lead the world in certain historical spheres . . . but whenever innovation is required, we see a frightful paralysis of the will . . . complacent ignorance . . . [a] colossal resistance to change.'

<sup>58</sup> In the transformation of *Queen*, which Stevens had acquired in 1957, key figures were Mark Boxer, layout editor, and Anthony Armstrong-Jones, photographer, later Lord Snowden. See C. Booker, *The Neophiliacs* (1969), p. 46. Booker also refers to a special issue on 'the consumer boom' and to the magazine's appeal to youth. Colin MacInnes, who had interviewed two teenagers, concluded his article: 'So over to you, Alex and Jean, while we ancients the wrong side of 25 keep our palsied fingers crossed. For the prospect of seeing, in the next decade, what kind of men and women the first wave of teenagers of the 1950s turn out to be, is perhaps the greatest fascination.'



as its Director-General—considered it necessary to align itself with change and to spotlight its own preoccupation with it. In 1962, for example, it prescribed the subject of the Reith Lectures given by Professor G. M. Carstairs, then Professor of Psychological Medicine at the University of Edinburgh, who was later to become second Vice-Chancellor of the new University of York. Carstairs was invited to present ‘nothing less than a review of the state of the nation, in the light of changes which have come about in the community and in private life since the beginning of the century’.<sup>59</sup>

The approach set out by Carstairs in his first lecture, ‘This Island Now’, which suggested that society’s values were not ‘immutable’ and that institutions were ‘man-made, imperfect, requiring and capable of constant modification’, was close to Greene’s own philosophy, and produced relatively little public reaction. The third lecture, however, on ‘Vicissitudes of Adolescence’, in which Carstairs discussed sexual behaviour, produced a rash of editorials and letters to the Press.<sup>60</sup> It touched the nerves that Alex Comfort was to touch in July 1963 when he defined a chivalrous boy as ‘one who takes contraceptives with him when he goes to meet his girlfriend’.<sup>61</sup> Clearly all advice about sexual behaviour was controversial, because there were differences in outlook between young and young, and for that matter, old and old, as well as between young and old.

‘Permissiveness’, a favourite noun of the 1960s, most often, but not always, used as a term of abuse, was a new preoccupation. The word had been employed on only a few occasions in Geoffrey Gorer’s *Exploring English Character*, published only seven years before.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> G. M. Carstairs, *This Island Now* (1963), p. 7.

<sup>60</sup> There were public controversies about other Reith Lectures later in the 1960s—controversies which attracted attention when the lectures were delivered, as well as when they subsequently appeared in book form. They gave publicity to the series. One controversy centred on Edmund Leach’s *A Runaway World* (1967). Leach, social anthropologist and Provost of King’s College, Cambridge, told listeners that ‘we are still trying to work with the same cultural tool-kit when the whole human situation is becoming different’. The brochure on the Lectures concluded: ‘He wishes men to behave like gods—because it will all be so much more interesting.’ The year after Carstairs, Albert Sloman, the Vice-Chancellor Elect of the new University of Essex, lectured on *A University in the Making*. The new universities seemed to be at the centre of change—and controversy—during the 1960s.

<sup>61</sup> See above, p. 332. Another programme in the BBC’s *Meeting Point* series, ‘What Kind of Loving?’ (8 March 1964), was picked out by others besides Mrs Whitehouse. They included Paul Johnson, Editor of the *New Statesman*. ‘Nobody was prepared to take the orthodox line of traditional Christian morals. The clergyman was twice pressed to say whether or not fornication was a sin, but declined to give any direct answer’ (quoted in Whitehouse, *A Most Dangerous Woman?*, p. 8).

<sup>62</sup> G. Gorer, *Exploring English Character* (1955). His chapter 6, ‘Growing Up’, begins: ‘Slightly more than half the population of England consider that they themselves were

Much of the controversy during the 1960s centred on manners and morals. Far less was said about economics than about sociology and psychology, hitherto neglected subjects.<sup>63</sup> The welfare state was (almost) taken for granted. So, too, was most post-war nationalization.

Curiously Carstairs, like Gorer before him, had nothing to say in his Reith Lectures about the Press. The media did not form part of his survey, although it was the Press, along with the BBC, which identified most sharply the issues of the times. Indeed, as the decade went by, some critics claimed that they—and the BBC in particular—had actually created them. Carstairs included only one sentence which brought in the BBC—and then indirectly—a sentence which was more concerned with structures than with values and which carried with it no note of alarm. ‘We have shown that we still have a particular aptitude for evolving institutions . . . which show a compromise between complete autonomy and governmental control: a compromise which may not be logical, but which seems to work.’<sup>64</sup> In retrospect, Carstairs sounds optimistic, yet the challenge to his judgement was to come after the 1960s were over—in a period when economics became paramount again.

Greene was always interested, as the Governors were, in the choice of Reith Lecturers, and although his direct intervention in programming was small, his was undoubtedly an ‘enabling regime’ that encouraged programme makers, including script-writers, to experiment and to take risks. He believed in the creative role of producers in the broadcasting process. He wished them to respond to a sense of challenge. As Donald Baverstock, who rose and fell during the Greene years, put it later, ‘Good things happen when people do what they want to do well.’<sup>65</sup>

“exceptionally” shy.’ ‘Stated schematically’, he goes on, ‘the typical English position would appear to be: shyness is a natural but undesirable condition of youth, from which many people suffer severely, but which most eventually get over’ (p. 77). Such a schematic conclusion would have been extremely unlikely in 1965.

<sup>63</sup> For an increasing interest in ‘culture’, which was studied along interdisciplinary lines, see below, p. 461.

<sup>64</sup> Carstairs, *This Island Now*, p. 94.

<sup>65</sup> Interview between Baverstock and John Cain, 3 June 1987.

### 3. The End of the Old

For some producers, however, bad things could happen also. There was consternation in Sound, headed from August 1963 by Frank Gillard, when the old Features Department disappeared in 1965, and in both Sound and Television there had been earlier signs of discontent when Children's Programmes and Women's Programmes were reorganized in 1964 to form a short-lived new department called Family Programmes.<sup>1</sup> Broadcasting House had been disturbed, too, very soon after Greene took over, by the ramifications of the dissolution of the old Talks Division in March 1961. John Green, its Controller since 1956, was proud of his Division and of the programmes it presented. Moreover, the way in which the change was announced was not calculated to appeal to the producers associated with him, some of them young and active.

The BBC statement referred to 'the increasingly important part played by television in the work of the Schools and Religious Broadcasting Departments', and, in announcing the merger of what was left of Talks with Current Affairs Talks, both now placed under Camacho, it threatened the disappearance of a range of talks that were deemed to have no topical interest. Green, a former President of the Cambridge Union and barrister, who had joined the BBC in 1934, had been responsible for many programmes on current affairs, but his span was broad. Now he was despatched to Australia 'to do a report on sound broadcasting developments there in both the public service and commercial fields'.<sup>2</sup> Thereafter, he left broadcasting for farming, which had always interested him. He had established agricultural broadcasting before the Second World War, and from 1963 to 1968 was Chairman of the Agricultural Advisory Council. He was a strong and forthright character in his own right.

Green's departure from the BBC took place without provoking Press or public reactions, even though the classic conception of the BBC 'Talk' went with him or soon afterwards, when a number of other

<sup>1</sup> Press Announcement, 5 Feb. 1964.

<sup>2</sup> \*BBC Announcement, 'Sound Broadcasting: Talks Reorganisation', 22 March 1961. The services of Green had been called upon in pre-Greene days to act as Jacob's go-between in the question of news co-operation between Tahu Hole and McGivern (\*D. P. Wolferstan, 'Note of Dinner with John Green, Bonarjee, Balkwill, and Newby, 25 May 1973', June 1973).

senior officials left Broadcasting House during the Greene years.<sup>3</sup> In the case both of Features and of Children's Programmes, there was an extremely strong public reaction, beginning in April 1961 when the name 'Children's Hour' was dropped.<sup>4</sup> The furore was as great as it was when the nine o'clock news bulletin ceased to be broadcast. Indeed, the two changes were directly related to each other in the Press. 'The BBC ought to value the loyalties it has gathered over many years instead of playing fast and loose with them,' wrote the *Birmingham Post*. 'The Nine o'clock News has been abandoned, Big Ben truncated, and now it seems that *Children's Hour* is to be treated with the same indifference to public sentiment.'<sup>5</sup>

The audience for *Children's Hour* had been falling as television, never without controversy, captured its youngest audience. It was said in 1961 to be 'as low as 250,000'.<sup>6</sup> This was not, however, the only reason given for the change. 'Modern children', it was argued, ceased to want to be called children earlier in life than their parents had done. Their needs and preferences would now be met by *Playtime*, to be broadcast in the Light Programme from 4.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m., a gramophone records programme, designed to appeal to 'young people *and adults*' (my italics), whilst on the Home Service between 5.00 p.m. and 5.55 p.m. younger listeners would be able to enjoy *Junior Time* and other programmes for young people. Two old programmes would be retained, *Toytown* on the Home Service and *Children's Favourites*, the record request programme at 9.00 a.m. on Saturdays on the Light Programme.<sup>7</sup>

The BBC's handling of the change, like the handling of the change in the nine o'clock news, did not disarm criticism. Thus, when Trevor

<sup>3</sup> For the older BBC approach to 'the Talk', see Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 529 ff. 'The Talk' as a genre has its own history, as has 'the Interview'. Both had already shown many signs of change before 1955. Talks, as the BBC developed them, were quintessentially British. Interviews had first been devised in the USA.

<sup>4</sup> The last programmes called 'Children's Hour' had been broadcast in Easter week 1961 (*Radio Times*, 6 April 1961). It was stressed that 'young listeners' would have more programmes in future than in the past. The Governors approved of the change which was recommended to them by Lindsay Wellington (\*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report by Director of Sound Broadcasting', 18 Jan. 1961, *Minutes*, 26 Jan. 1961).

<sup>5</sup> *Birmingham Post*, 9 Feb. 1961.

<sup>6</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 8 Feb. 1961.

<sup>7</sup> \*Press Statement, 3 Feb. 1961; *Radio Times*, 6 April 1961, which noted that *Children's Favourites* had an audience of 23/4 m. children. An interesting programme on *Children's Favourites*, *Hello Children . . . Everywhere*, was broadcast on 31 Dec. 1988. It traced the changing patterns of children's requests. Steam train music remained popular after the last steam train to be built left the Crewe workshops in 1958. By 1961, however, there was increasing evidence of children demanding 'jive and skiffle'.

Hill, North Region *Children's Hour* organizer, explained that 'the aura of sanctity' around *Children's Hour* was 'ridiculous', and added that if 'we regard children's programmes as untouchable we shall get nowhere', he was 'stirring a gale' not among children but among adults.<sup>8</sup> *Junior Time* was itself an unattractive title, and there was a widespread sense that *Children's Hour* was a national institution.<sup>9</sup> When Ronald Lewin, then Head of the Home Service—and a defender of 'the talk'—wrote a letter to *The Times* after the change, claiming that 'the traditional high quality of BBC programmes for children has not declined', Eleanor Farjeon replied that she wished she could 'persuade Mr. Lewin that the effect of one word can never be the equivalent of another'.<sup>10</sup> For Monica Furlong, writer and later BBC producer, more than words were at stake. 'On sound radio enough of the old hands are still at work partially to maintain the old tradition, in spite of official insensitivities and stupidities like dropping the old title. On television, the general standard is deplorably low, and the situation screams for one supervisory genius with a passionate sense of the possibilities in children's programmes.'<sup>11</sup>

However much they might be accused of 'nostalgia', critics were right to discern in 1961 that more than the name *Children's Hour* would soon go. David Davis, Head of *Children's Hour* since 1953, who remained in charge under the new dispensation, was committed to a conception of children's broadcasting that to many of his colleagues seemed dated. Yet, as the audience for the post-*Children's Hour* children's radio programmes continued to fall, drastic changes were contemplated—reluctantly—by Lindsay Wellington's successor, Gillard.<sup>12</sup> The ratings undoubtedly mattered,

<sup>8</sup> *Yorkshire Post*, 8 Feb. 1961, 'Children's Hour Goes'. This piece was written by Jean Rook, then Women's Editor, who did not complain about the change, which she stated correctly would not be 'great' or 'rapid'.

<sup>9</sup> A correspondent to the *Manchester Evening Chronicle*, 15 Feb. 1961, called *Junior Time* American. Every child there was addressed as 'Junior'. A letter-writer to the *Liverpool Post*, 19 April 1961, suggested that the BBC was putting old heads on young shoulders. The *Blackburn Evening Telegraph*, 7 April 1961, describing *Children's Hour* as an institution, said that 'the old radio set isn't going to seem the same'.

<sup>10</sup> Lewin was himself replying to a critical letter from Rumer Godden (*The Times*, 27 Nov., 1, 5 Dec. 1961). See also *Punch*, 6 Dec. 1961, 'Roses by Other Names': 'As far as I'm concerned children will remain children until someone can bring me a better substitute than juniors, kids or teenagers.' *John o'London's*, 4 Jan. 1962, gave a different dimension to the protest: 'We read in the Bible, "Suffer little Children . . ." Are we to "suffer little juniors"?'

<sup>11</sup> *John o'London's*, 22 March 1962. From 1961 to 1968 Monica Furlong was on the staff of the *Daily Mail*. From 1974 to 1978 she was a BBC producer.

<sup>12</sup> Davis had stated in 1957 that in *Children's Hour* he was seeking to accomplish four things: first, 'to provide children with an interesting and entertaining programme which

although the BBC was facing no radio competition. On 13 February 1964, when Derek McCullough, 'Uncle Mac', for years the pillar of the *Children's Hour*, was guest on *This Is Your Life*, the young playwright Dennis Potter, reviewing the programme, compared it with 'a faded family snapshot', but added that the sentiment expressed in the programme seemed 'legitimate, if only because a TV tribute to the old radio programme was needed. Now the children are to be given the Mersey beat instead.'<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, though Monica Furlong might complain that children's television programmes were sliding 'further and further into banality, cheapness, vulgarity and plain boredom',<sup>14</sup> children themselves were increasingly drawn to them, ITV more than BBC.

The final blow in radio fell on 27 March 1964—Good Friday—when *For the Young*, as the children's radio programmes were then called, came to an end with a religious service from St Michael's College, Tenbury (itself to disappear later in the century), and, somewhat incongruously, a story by Oscar Wilde, 'The Selfish Giant', told by 'David', Davis himself.<sup>15</sup> *Playtime* continued on the Light Programme: it had an audience of over a million.<sup>16</sup> It was now decided to increase its length by thirty minutes a day. Yet *Playtime*,

will give them a definite and high standard of values'; second, 'to interest children in life in all its many aspects: past, contemporary, and that to which they will succeed'; third, 'to make our contribution to the child's moral and religious education'; and fourth, 'to encourage the development along good lines of the listening tastes of our future adult listeners'. 'It is not our brief to impart religious instruction,' he added, 'but that there is a spiritual basis to all our work, few of us, I think would deny.' He believed then that in an age of television a radio *Children's Hour* would survive, although much would depend on the parents. (\*Davis, 'Sound and Television Programmes for Children', 1957 (Publicity file: Children's Seminar, 1958).)

<sup>13</sup> *Daily Herald*, 14 Feb. 1964. For the view of another distinguished broadcaster of a different generation, see K. Allsop in the *Spectator*, 28 Feb. 1970: 'The voice of *Children's Hour* was quiet, even, dulcet yet manly, pleasant in a thin, controlled way, but stopping short of jovial, in accents of standard English.' He added that his children took television as 'a standard household fitting, like plumbing'.

<sup>14</sup> One of the last BBC 'Aunties', Doris Gambell, who had joined the BBC in Liverpool in 1924, moved from *Children's Hour* to television to join the Harry Worth Show (*Guardian*, 15 Nov. 1962).

<sup>15</sup> *Radio Times*, 19 March 1964. On 30 March 1964 a new magazine programme was introduced at 5 p.m., *Home This Afternoon*, slanted to older listeners and encouraging them to keep their independence and to 'stay in the mainstream of life as long as possible'. It would include *Can I Help You* and 'Radio Doctor' items, but also record requests (*The Times*, 17 Jan. 1964). Gillard noted that such older listeners continued to be 'very radio minded' (*Cambridge News*, 20 Feb. 1964). At the same time, the new programme would not be 'nostalgically and pathetically geriatric' (\*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report of the Director of Sound Broadcasting', 29 Jan. 1964).

<sup>16</sup> \*Note by Gillard, 'BBC Children's Programmes', undated but filed Feb. 1964 (R34/1257).



**POCKET CARTOON**

by OSBERT LANCASTER



7. 'Dear, kind Sir Hugh Greene, please, please give us back our Children's Hour. Your heart-broken little friend, Toodles', Osbert Lancaster, *Daily Express*, 22 Feb. 1964.

still largely gramophone records, was timed to end at 5 p.m. so that a very large section of its audience could 'switch over to the telly'.<sup>17</sup>

This time, Parliament was stirred, and while sections of the Press, particularly the provincial Press, published fierce leaders, seven Labour MPs, headed by Bruce Millan, member for Glasgow, Craigton, lodged a motion protesting against the BBC 'in its monopoly position' neglecting an important minority.<sup>18</sup> Conservative MPs, including Francis (later Lord) Pym, joined in the protest.<sup>19</sup> When the matter reached the floor of the House on 20 February, Bevins, the Postmaster-General, while refusing to issue a 'direction' to the BBC, none the less acknowledged the strength of feeling. Two of the speakers, both from the Labour Opposition, James Boyden, a future Minister of Educa-

tion, and, from the front bench, Roy (later Lord) Mason, a future Postmaster-General, claimed that the Postmaster-General should have used his power to intervene before the matter had reached that stage. 'All minorities are being ignored, blind children and people in fringe areas which are not receiving television and those without television sets.'<sup>20</sup>

It has sometimes been claimed that *Children's Hour* had a 'middle-class' flavour, and that it did not appeal to children from lower income groups. In fact, the strongest protests against its abolition in 1964 came from Labour MPs. There were protests, too, from veteran

<sup>17</sup> J. Holmstrom, 'Vanished Uncles', *New Statesman*, 3 April 1964, described sensitively and in detail what had happened between 1961 and 1964. He called Davis 'ageless', and described him as 'one of the most inspired story-readers in the history of broadcasting', who had been 'at it' since 1935. For children's broadcasting on the eve of the change see *The Times*, 3 Aug. 1963, 'How We Entertain the Children in 1963'.

<sup>18</sup> *Aberdeen Evening Express*, 6 Feb. 1964.

<sup>19</sup> *Cambridge News*, 20 Feb. 1964.

<sup>20</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 689, cols. 1198-1201, 19 Feb. 1964; *The Times*, *Scotsman*, 20 Feb. 1964.

broadcasters, among them John Snagge, renowned for his *Boat Race* commentaries, and the actor Norman Shelley, who described what had happened as 'nothing but assassination'.<sup>21</sup>

Before the Parliamentary debate, BBC Television had got rid of its own Children's Department and merged it into a new Children's Programmes and Women's Programmes Department called 'Family Programmes'.<sup>22</sup> It was headed by Doreen Stephens, with Ursula Eason, former Assistant Head of the Children's Programmes Department, as Assistant Head.<sup>23</sup> Already between 1961 and 1964, while Davis was under scrutiny in radio, Owen Reed had been under even closer scrutiny in television, sharply, in his view even brutally, criticized by Hood and Baverstock,<sup>24</sup> and in an important television reorganization of January 1963 eight drama producers in children's television, some highly experienced, were transferred to the newly formed Drama Group, headed by Sydney Newman.<sup>25</sup> Thereafter Reed, with a low budget at his disposal, found himself being forced to defend programmes for which he himself had not been responsible, among them what he thought was an unnecessarily violent version of *Oliver Twist*. Like Davis, Reed had values which were under sharp review inside the BBC during the early 1960s.

Doreen Stephens, who paid tribute to Reed as 'a perfectionist, questing and seeking to push back the protective net surrounding

<sup>21</sup> J. Snagge and M. Barsley, *Those Vintage Years of Radio* (1972), pp. 45–7. Snagge's assessment of the size of the audience for *Children's Hour* was grossly exaggerated. L. du Garde Peach questioned (letter to *The Author*, summer 1964) the assumptions behind Kenneth Adam's statement 'we shall no longer expect a children's hour producer to be able to cope with a music programme today, a play tomorrow, some light entertainment next day, and so on'.

<sup>22</sup> The term 'family' was in vogue in the BBC at the time, just when 'family values' were themselves under threat. Thus Ronald Lewin introduced the radio changes of March 1964 in a *Radio Times* article (26 March 1964) headed 'Fare for the Family', promising programmes after 5 p.m. as 'fare . . . for all the family to enjoy'. The fare included Shaw's *The Man of Destiny*, Michael Flanders and Donald Swann in *At the Drop of a Needle*, *Nature Parliament*, readings from T. H. White's *The Goshawk*, and *The Count of Monte Cristo*.

<sup>23</sup> \*BBC Announcement, 'Television Service: Family Programmes Department', 5 Feb. 1964. Owen Reed, the Head of Children's Programmes Department, Television, was transferred to become Head of Staff Training.

<sup>24</sup> \*Reed interviewed by John Lane for the Oral History Project, 14 Dec. 1977. The criticisms were particularly strong at the Programme Review Board, when BBC/ITV ratings were compared. In a heartfelt note to Hood (\*Children's Television, 28 Nov. 1961 (T16/45/3)) Reed complained that he was having 'a rough ride'. 'For some time now we seem to have been moving away from the classic concept of Children's Television as a sacrosanct minority service and have come more and more to be regarded as only one of several sources of miscellaneous family material, vaguely defined and liable at any moment to be moved out of the way to suit planning convenience or to seize a competitive opportunity.'

<sup>25</sup> See above, p. 179.

television for children',<sup>26</sup> had edited a small Women's Programme Department before taking on the whole family. In the lecture in which she paid this tribute, she herself talked of offering children programmes 'they would *choose* [her italics] to watch'. She also talked of 'overcoming timidity' in programme making. She did not believe that 'violence and tension' would 'necessarily harm a child in normal circumstances', and claimed that 'in middle-class homes of the twenties and thirties, too many children were brought up in cushioned innocence... protected as much as possible from all harsh realities'.

What she said was in line with statements of persons superior to herself in the new BBC hierarchy. She stayed in her post, however, only until 1967, when she resigned from the BBC, having been a member of a successful group of largely BBC broadcasters who won the London Weekend Television franchise.<sup>27</sup> On her resignation the name Children's Programmes Department was restored, and Monica Sims, who had been editor of *Woman's Hour* from 1964 to 1967, became its new Head at Huw Wheldon's invitation. She had moved twice from radio to television since joining the BBC as a talks producer in 1953, and she was to move back to radio as Controller, Radio 4, in 1978 and Director of Programmes, Radio, in 1983. In her new 1967 post she had to repair as well as create. She had felt that the mix between children's and women's programmes had not worked: 'the cultures were different.' Her own contribution was a substantial one. She both restored morale, and encouraged creativity.<sup>28</sup>

'Creativity' was a key word in an angry debate about the closing of the BBC's Features Department on 1 March 1965.<sup>29</sup> The Department was then twenty years old, although 'the Feature' as a radio form, at its best an art-form, had been developed during the pre-war years.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> D. Stephens, 'Television for Children', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 5th ser., 19 Oct. 1966.

<sup>27</sup> Others included Joy Whitby, who had introduced *Playschool* and *Jackanory* to television, Michael Peacock (see below, pp. 407–10), Humphrey Burton, and Frank Muir.

<sup>28</sup> Notes of a talk between Monica Sims and John Cain, 12 Nov. 1991. See A. Home, *Into the Box of Delights* (1993), pp. 38 ff.

<sup>29</sup> The decision was promulgated on 18 Dec. 1964, but the change did not take place until March 1965.

<sup>30</sup> See Briggs, *The Golden Age of Wireless* (1965), pp. 156–7; *idem*, *The War of Words* (1970), p. 531; *idem*, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 641 ff. The evolution of the 'feature' is well described in B. Coulton, *Louis MacNeice in the BBC* (1980). See also D. G. Bridson, *Prospero and Ariel* (1971), and for a highly personal account, R. Heppenstall, *Portrait of the Artist as a Professional Man* (1969). See also D. Cleverdon's invaluable monograph prepared for

From its establishment in July 1945, the Department had been headed by Laurence Gilliam, a distinguished producer himself, who had joined the BBC as a writer in the *Radio Times* in 1932, and who had subsequently created a Department which was described by Joanna Richardson as his 'private army'. The Department had included since 1945 Dylan Thomas, Louis MacNeice, Alan Burgess, Rayner Heppenstall, D. G. Bridson, and Douglas Cleverdon. Richardson described Gilliam as 'the kind of intellectual commando which any large institution needs, high in its ranks'.<sup>31</sup> In other circumstances such qualities would have greatly appealed to Greene, but even before Gilliam was taken seriously ill in 1963—and on sick leave—Gilliam, and Features, were on their way out. The last new recruit had been Sasha Moorson, who joined in 1953 and left in January 1961 after marrying Michael (later Lord) Young.

'Ageing' was one reason given for the closure of the Department by Gillard, who had to 'grasp the nettle' and implement a decision taken, in effect, before he became Director of Sound Broadcasting.<sup>32</sup> A second reason was the incursion of television, which was developing its own features. Gilliam and his closest colleagues believed in the unique merits of 'pure radio'. The screen seemed a barrier. A third reason was that they were impatient with 'management', and management was impatient with them. Gillard, who 'hated' having to break up David Davis's group in children's programming (hated was his own word), felt quite differently about the break-up of Features. 'The reasons for closing the Department lay in the directions of good organization and the achievement of high professional standards.'<sup>33</sup>

The 'amateurish' and 'undisciplined' attitudes of the staff of the Features Department shocked Gillard. They seemed to be 'taking the

UNESCO, 'The Art of Radio in Britain, 1922–1966', and F. Dillon, 'Some Features of the Past', *The Listener*, 7 Jan. 1971.

<sup>31</sup> *The Times*, 23 Nov. 1964. This was an obituary notice. Gilliam, who knew that his department would be closed, died on 15 Nov. 1964. The obituary notices were all favourable. Many recalled his Christmas Day broadcasts. Marsland Gander (*Daily Telegraph*, 16 Nov. 1964) said that inside Broadcasting House he was known as 'Lorenzo the Magnificent'. In March 1964 there had been several reports in the Press, denied at the time, that he was being prematurely retired from the BBC (e.g., *ibid.*, 8 March 1964).

<sup>32</sup> His crucial meeting with the staff took place on 10 Feb. 1964. See also *The Times*, 7 March 1964, 'Ginger Group that Matters at the BBC'.

<sup>33</sup> He wrote a confidential paper, 'The Closing of Features Department in BBC Radio', 28 April 1976 (Man. Reg. folio E2/RD46–4). See also 'Gillard's interview by Helen Fry for the Oral History Project, March 1978. He felt that other people in sound shared his view. Some of them thought of Features as 'an outrage'. Coulton, *op. cit.*, pp. 174–5, writes that 'the self-sufficiency of the producers aroused resentment in other departments'.

BBC for a ride'.<sup>34</sup> They themselves, however, were confident not only that they were loyal to what had become a tradition, but that, whatever their age, they were as 'creative' as their predecessors had ever been; and they could point too to the work of other 'creative' producers like Charles Parker, whose *Ballad of John Axon* was chosen as the BBC's entry for the Italia Prize in 1958 and whose *Singing the Fishing* won the Prize in 1960.<sup>35</sup> It cannot have helped that Gillard believed that, unlike music or drama, 'the productions of Features Department were not manifestations of an Art, but rather of specialised and sometimes stylised forms of communication in Radio'.<sup>36</sup>

When the Department was closed—and financial reasons seem to have played some part in the closure—some of its members talked of a conspiracy, a charge denied by one of their own number, Alan Burgess,<sup>37</sup> and feelings remained strong years later when the controversial report *Broadcasting in the Seventies* was being discussed and, later still, when a television programme was produced re-creating the exploits of the Department.<sup>38</sup> All passion was not yet spent. Ironically, some of the surviving Features writers, who had been highly suspicious of television, were more happy to win praise on the television programme about them than to have any doubt cast on their own version of why the Department came to an end.<sup>39</sup> There

<sup>34</sup> \*Interview with Fry.

<sup>35</sup> Parker, working in Birmingham, produced left-wing 'actuality' radio ballads, conceived of as a 'new form', in eight feature programmes broadcast between 1958 and 1964. They included folk songs by Ewan McColl. One ballad dealt with the building of the M1. Parker had joined the BBC in 1948. See T. Fisher, *Charles Parker: Aspects of a pioneer* (1986). He also produced a feature about pop music, *Vox Pop*. Parker retired early from the BBC in December 1972. MacNeice's last 'feature', broadcast on 30 Dec. 1959, was called *Mosaic of Youth* and included interviews with young people (Coulton, op. cit., p. 173).

<sup>36</sup> \*Gillard, 'The Closing of Features Department', 28 April 1978. Gillard, none the less, recognized that 'without any question, the Department had a most distinguished record and a worldwide reputation'.

<sup>37</sup> Report of a discussion with Miall, July 1981. After the closure of the Department, Christopher Holme, then Assistant Head of Features, became an Assistant Head of Drama, and Bridson became Programme Editor, Arts, Science, and Documentaries, under Camacho. Seven other producers were transferred to the Drama Department, and five to Talks and Current Affairs (\*BBC Announcement by Gillard, 'Sound Broadcasting: General Division—Reorganisation', 18 Dec. 1964). There had been earlier protests from the Association of Broadcasting Staff when it seemed that the output of features programmes would be reduced, and when producers had asked to be transferred *en bloc* to Drama.

<sup>38</sup> *Omnibus*, 3 Nov. 1977. Philip Donnellan set out to explore 'pure radio' with the help of pictures.

<sup>39</sup> See Briggs, 'Echoes of Sound', *Radio Times*, 19–25 Nov. 1977, and D. Lytton, 'The Golden Age of Radio', *The Listener*, 10 Nov. 1977.

had already been another touch of irony in 1967, when a Features Group was created in television, with Aubrey Singer as its Head, and it too was to have an intricate history.<sup>40</sup>

#### 4. The Shock of the New

For all the fervent belief in 'pure radio', it was television that produced the most publicized programmes of the 1960s, and there was one particular programme with which Greene himself was directly associated—even in its inception—that seemed to catch the spirit of the times. *That Was The Week That Was (TW3)*, a programme notorious before it became famous, has subsequently come to represent the 1960s, if somewhat misleadingly, for posterity. Yet only thirty-seven numbers of *TW3* were made, and the last of them was broadcast as early as December 1963, while the decade was still taking shape. There were many changes of preoccupation and mood around the corner. The programme belongs to the early Greene years.

*TW3*, the first series of which opened at 10.50 p.m. on 24 November 1962, was described by Goldie, who knew the inside story, as an entirely new kind of topical television programme, 'with new sketches, new songs, new and barbed portraits of leading political figures and new lyrics which embodied sharp comments on the contemporary social scene'.<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps surprising that she put so much stress on the music:<sup>2</sup> it was, however, an integral element in the mix, as it was in *Tonight*, the earlier programme that most influenced both the format and content of *TW3*. Unsurprisingly, Goldie emphasized also the role of the studio audience, which did much to generate a sense of atmosphere. It had a different role also: it was in on the act. Like *Tonight*, *TW3* considered itself to be 'on the side of the audience', both inside and outside the studio.<sup>3</sup> As for the studio itself, no attempt was made to disguise it. Cameras themselves were in shot.

There was one extra element in the programme that made *TW3* genuinely 'new'. Satire, biting satire that in time came to shock some of the Governors as well as a substantial section of the public, was of

<sup>40</sup> See below, p. 965.

<sup>1</sup> G. Wyndham Goldie, *Facing the Nation* (1977), p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> *TW3* had its own jazz group.

<sup>3</sup> See N. Sherrin, 'That Was the Show That Was', *Observer Review*, 16 Jan. 1983.



its essence. There was no way by which satire and 'dignity' could go together, and there were to be few months when *TW3* was not on the Governors' agenda. None the less, the Board began by giving satire a blessing, and most of the Governors continued to do so, albeit critically. They were influenced largely by their confidence in Greene, for they knew how much the programme meant to him personally. In consequence, they did not always say all that they thought.

For his part, Greene treated the Governors more as 'interpreters of public opinion' than as 'guardians of the public interest',<sup>4</sup> and they themselves, fortunately, were well aware of their limitations in this respect. Indeed, for knowledge of opinion they turned largely to the newspapers. In doing so, they could never overlook the fact that there was seldom a week, let alone a month, when *TW3* was not in the news, on account of either particular controversial items in it or the language and tone in which even non-controversial items might be discussed.

With an audience far larger than anticipated—it quickly doubled to 8 million, and reached a peak in April 1963 of 12 million—opinions were bound to be polarized. Some people liked the vitality of *TW3* and the absence of cant; others objected either to smutty schoolboy jokes—these seemed at best trivial—or at the deepest level to what they considered 'blasphemy'. The performers in the programme welcomed the polarization. What they were offering was in sharp contrast both to popular programmes that sought consensus, as wartime programmes had done, or to the 'Butskellite' language of many leading politicians. Nothing bland would do. For the makers of the programme to have 'againsts' as well as 'fors' was a test of the effectiveness of the satire on offer. They were media-conscious, to use an adjective coined later, an adjective that they themselves did not use; public reactions always figured on their own agenda.

Newspapers were an essential part of the *TW3* process. They picked up all the news of *TW3*, and set it out, usually in gossipy form. They also wrote leaders about it, and these (along with the news itself) provided much of the material for the programme. Increasingly the media were living on and off each other. One of the items in the programme, soon to be made familiar even in radio, was a survey of the Sunday newspapers, the first editions of which had already been printed when the programme was transmitted. The fact that there

<sup>4</sup> Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 101.



8. 'Stop laughing, you fool—they're taking the mickey out of people like us', Anton in *Punch*, 20 March 1963.

was little satire in most of the Sunday newspapers made them even more interesting to *TW3*.

For their part, the Sunday newspapers were bound to be fascinated by television. The 'quality' newspapers were at the stage of introducing Sunday colour magazines in which advertising was the major element, and this was their own major response to television, which by then had become the dominant medium in advertising.<sup>5</sup> They were concerned in such interplay not with the BBC but with ITV, and it was they, not ITV, that won the first colour game. Interplay with the BBC, which was about to win the television colour game, was reserved for the black-and-white leaders, for the news pages, and, above all, for the correspondence columns. *TW3* featured too in a number of substantial, long, and often well-informed features. It called for judgement.

Greene himself could occasionally try a touch of satire when he talked to the Press. Thus, he was to tell the *Guardian* in 1963, when *TW3* was scheduled to be taken off, that it was in his capacity as 'subversive anarchist' that he had 'yielded to the enormous pressure

<sup>5</sup> See W. Fletcher, 'The Agency Viewpoint', in B. Henry (ed.), *British Television Advertising: The First Thirty Years* (1986), p. 429. The first *Sunday Times* colour supplement, edited by Mark Boxer, 4 Feb. 1962 (see above, p. 184), had as its headline 'A Sharp Glimpse at the Mood of Britain', and included features on Mary Quant, the fashion designer, and on pop art. It also announced a new James Bond story. Roy Thomson, who had prospered with Scottish television, believed that it would be a winner. Most critics disagreed.

of my colleagues who were also subversive anarchists' to put on *TW3* in the first place. 'It was as a pillar of the Establishment that I yielded to the Fascist hyena-like howls to take it off again.'<sup>6</sup> On another, later occasion, after the fourteenth complaint from Scotland had come in, he snapped, 'Who will rid me of this turbulent show?'<sup>7</sup> The fact that Greene's speech-writers helped him with such quips did not detract from their effectiveness.

Scotland was a centre of many complaints, but so too were some other areas—or places—in the provinces, particularly those mentioned derisively in the programmes. The metropolitan emphasis of *TW3* could itself be a matter of complaint. 'Swinging London' repelled as well as attracted. None the less, there were provincial as well as national sections of opinion that welcomed *TW3*. The Minutes of the meetings of the BBC's General Advisory Council record this.<sup>8</sup> Nottingham, Liverpool, Bradford, and Brighton, for instance, had their own sense of swing and their own ways of expressing it.

When *TW3* began, there were new strands of satire on which the BBC could draw, above all the immediately captivating 'Oxbridge' satire of *Beyond the Fringe*, satire that amused more than shocked, but that certainly had an edge, including a political edge, to it.<sup>9</sup> The show, which moved from Edinburgh<sup>10</sup> to the Fortune Theatre in London in May 1961—via Cambridge and Brighton—was called 'fresh', 'witty', and 'high-spirited', and on one occasion it was graced by the presence of the Queen *incognita* in a private party accompanied by Lord Home.

<sup>6</sup> *Guardian*, 4 Dec. 1963.

<sup>7</sup> *Sunday Telegraph*, 29 Dec. 1963. Peter Black had tried satire before Greene did. In his *Daily Mail* column (13 Aug. 1960) headed 'Why TV Finds it Hard to Put Over Anything New' he described how, subject to contract, the Dependent Television Authority had accepted the application of Basset Television to 'supply programmes in this mainly agricultural and industrial area'. The Duke of Omnium was on the Board and would be in charge of programming. His principal adviser was Sir Richard Scatcherd, who had made his fortune after the War selling surplus army trucks back to the Americans, and had subsequently been employed as a lorry driver, a car salesman, and a professional wrestler. 'The BBC has given [the people of Basset] a raw deal,' he said. 'In show business you can't stand still. We intend to introduce a new TV game called *Twenty-Five Questions*. All the time the BBC had it they didn't get past 20. That's what I mean by the heavy hand of monopoly.' Scatcherd and others figured regularly in Black's columns. Photocopies of a number of examples of his satire are assembled in an envelope in a BBC file on *TW3* (T32/1649/1).

<sup>8</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 23 Oct. 1963. See also below, p. 360, for reactions of the provincial Press.

<sup>9</sup> See above, p. x.

<sup>10</sup> (See R. Wilmut (ed.), *From Fringe to Flying Circus* (1980), pp. 14–15.

The four members of the brilliant *Beyond the Fringe* team were Jonathan Miller, Peter Cook, Alan Bennett, and Dudley Moore. The first two were ex-public school boys, the second two ex-grammar school boys. All had highly creative lives ahead of them. Miller was the first to have broadcast. While still at school, he appeared three times in a radio programme called *Under Twenty on Parade*, and when at Cambridge he figured in another programme, *The Man from Paranoia*, which told the story of a Cambridge don who owned a flying goldfish. He also appeared on the London stage when two Footlights revues were shown in 1954 and 1955. Cook, a great fan of *The Goon Show*, was the linkman between *Beyond the Fringe* and other related activities. While at Cambridge, he had appeared in the 1959 Footlights revue *The Last Laugh*, which broke with previous tradition by bringing in a woman performer, Eleanor Bron, soon to acquire BBC fame, and by introducing a marked political concern. He went on to develop *Private Eye* as an underground paper, and to found the Establishment Club in Soho, London's 'First Satirical Night club'. Moore took part in films and wrote music for shows on both sides of the Atlantic. Bennett was to become a superb writer for television—and a performer—but he has always refused to look back at *Beyond the Fringe* with any nostalgia. He has pointed out also that its four participants were 'very unlike'.<sup>11</sup> But so, too, were the 'angry young men'.

Ken Tynan described *Beyond the Fringe* as 'the funniest show since the Allies dropped the bomb on Hiroshima'.<sup>12</sup> It also successfully crossed the Atlantic to New York and Washington, where a more mordant strain of satire was already fashionable, if in strictly limited circles.<sup>13</sup> As British satire moved into television—or into the pages of the new *Private Eye*, the first of them mimeographed—it too became far more aggressive. The element of invective was strengthened. So, too, was the element of insult. *Beyond the Fringe* was a prelude, therefore, not a prototype. There was some loss, however, when the audience grew and when weekly editions were called for. It proved

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 20, 27. Wilmut's book explores in detail the university background of the participants—and other performers of the period.

<sup>12</sup> *Observer*, 14 May 1961. There was an equally favourable review by Bernard Levin in the *Daily Express*, 11 May 1961.

<sup>13</sup> Kenneth Tynan described American satire in the *Observer* in the Spring of 1959: 'It was unlikely in the US, but impossible in Britain.' He referred to Mort Sahl, Lenny Bruce, who 'used words as a jazz musician used notes', Terry Southern, and Irwin Carey (K. Tynan, *The Life of Kenneth Tynan* (1987), p. 152).

difficult, if not impossible, to keep the sharpness of the cutting edge. Too many bludgeons began to be employed. There were fewer rapiers.

*Beyond the Fringe* has often been treated as a Cambridge product with its origins in Footlights, a club with a long history stretching back to 1883 that in the 1950s was presenting an annual revue. Both *Beyond the Fringe* and *TW3* owed much, however, to Oxford as well as Cambridge. So, too, indeed, did the BBC itself, both before and after Greene. It depended largely on an Oxbridge duopoly, to be broken by the end of the 1960s as the new universities, which had a great appeal to students interested in the media, came increasingly into the picture.

During the early 1950s the Third Programme had provided substantial patronage for a number of Oxford and Cambridge dons, and a few of them now figured in the world of satire.<sup>14</sup> For the most part, however, the new openings of the early 1960s were for recent graduates. For example, Ned Sherrin, the wholly irreverent producer of *TW3*, who has written by far the most perceptive history of it, had produced *Oxford Accents* while in his last year as an undergraduate.<sup>15</sup> It is often overlooked that not all those who were drawn in were interested in the stage. Another Oxford graduate who was invited at once to take part in *TW3* was Gerald Kaufman, a socialist who had joined the political staff of the *Daily Mirror* in 1955. From the beginning, too, Bernard Levin was indispensable.

The compère of *TW3*, David (later Sir David) Frost, who was to be hailed by Baverstock as 'the most remarkable man to emerge since television began',<sup>16</sup> had both stage and writing experience as an undergraduate at Cambridge. Born in the year when the Second World War broke out, Frost, the son of a Methodist minister, proved to be exactly the right man for the right time. He had his parents to surprise and shock as well as the public. While at Cambridge he had edited *Granta*, and he had starred in the 1961 Footlights revue. Yet Frost had not been the first choice, nor when he was chosen had it been intended to make him sole presenter.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> See above, p. 44.

<sup>15</sup> Sherrin, *op. cit.*, ch. V. One actress with a future who played in *Oxford Accents* was Maggie (later Dame Maggie) Smith, then at the Oxford Playhouse.

<sup>16</sup> He also called him 'The Television Man'. See W. Frischauer, *David Frost* (1972), p. 52.

<sup>17</sup> In the first pilot programme Brian Redhead, then a *Tonight* presenter, was Frost's co-compère.

The man originally suggested had been John Bird, who had directed the much praised *The Last Laugh* and who had moved on from Cambridge to become an assistant director at the Royal Court Theatre.<sup>18</sup> It was Bird who had thought of the catchy title of the programme, a title which Stuart Hood considered cumbersome. Sherrin, whose antennae were working well, realized immediately that the title would register perfectly. Viewers would share with performers the Saturday-night feeling that they were 'purging' (a key word) the memories of each dying week.

In a note of 6 November 1962 to Lamb, then Chief Assistant, Current Affairs, Television Talks, Sherrin had already made the point long before he wrote his autobiography. 'From 11 o'clock to 12 o'clock on Saturday night has been described as the "most irreverent hour of the week". It is an hour in which to expand, complain and guffaw. "That Was The Week That Was" which starts at 10.50 p.m. this Saturday will try to catch this irreverent hour with the most irreverent programme on television.'<sup>19</sup>

Each departing week, Sherrin went on, develops 'a character of its own'. Some weeks are anxious, some farcical. In some weeks nothing happens.<sup>20</sup> The sense of such rhythmic coming and going, whatever the 'content' of the news, was captured perfectly in the first two lines of the opening lyric that Sherrin and Caryl Brahms, a highly creative partnership, wrote to accompany Ron Grainer's signature tune:

That was the week that was,  
It's over, let it go.

The lines anticipated the Beatles' 1960s song 'Let It Be'. Each week, however, the rest of the words in the *TW3* programme were new. They pinpointed the distinctive character of the week as it moved—or did not move—into history.

Frost, who proved at once that he could think on his feet, took each week on its own current terms. He did the same with every indi-

<sup>18</sup> He turned it down because he had made plans to take the cast of the Establishment Club to America.

<sup>19</sup> \*Sherrin to Lamb, 'Promotion Material for "That Was The Week That Was"', 6 Nov. 1962 (T32/1649/1).

<sup>20</sup> Sherrin had written a full and illuminating Note to Baverstock called 'Saturday Night' before the title of *TW3* was established. 'At this time of night,' he remarked in the middle, 'a place would be found for the sort of discussion that television usually ignores—in which it is not necessary to maintain the fiction that the participants like one another' (\*Sherrin to Baverstock, 27 Feb. 1962 (T32/1649/1)).



vidual item, too, for he was adept at what Sherrin in another well-chosen word called 'multiplicity'.<sup>21</sup> He could choose words well himself, including casual catchwords that would stick. 'Seriously though he's doing a grand job' was one of them. Frost's accent, a very different accent from Sherrin's, was an asset too. Some thought it 'classless'; others called it 'cheeky'. All called it 'nasal'. All, for or against, were aware that it carried with it no traditional BBC resonances. One early critic foolishly described Frost as a 'nonpersonality'. Nothing could have been further from the truth.

The members of the versatile *TW3* team included a few performers who already had had television or stage experience. Millicent Martin, the singer or *diseuse*, had already appeared frequently on *Tonight*, as had Bernard Levin. Lance Percival, one of the first recruits, had performed in cabaret at Quaglino's and the Blue Angel, where Frost had been watched by Sherrin, and had played in a Michael Codron revue *One Over the Eight* in which some of the sketches had been written by Peter Cook and in which Kenneth Williams had starred. William Rushton arrived from Joan Littlewood's Theatre Royal, Stratford East. Richard Ingrams, who had been at Shrewsbury School with Rushton and with Christopher Booker, had helped to create *Private Eye*.

The long list of writers whose names appeared on the screen at the end of *TW3* included Booker, who wrote the first political sketch with David Frost; John Albery, a don at University College, Oxford, who was to become its Master, who produced among other pieces a profile of Robert Maxwell; John Braine; Keith Waterhouse; Dennis Potter; John Cleese; and the playwright Peter Shaffer. There was a talented cartoonist also, Timothy Birdsall, another ex-member of the *Footlights* club, whose early death was greatly mourned.<sup>22</sup>

The story of *TW3* has often been told, beginning with what purported to be an authorized version. Kenneth Adam's lavishly illustrated *The BBC Book of That Was The Week That Was* (price five

<sup>21</sup> Frost's short pre-BBC life brought out both 'multiplicity' and fascination with the media. He had given impersonations of Eamonn Andrews and Gilbert Harding at a Methodist Holiday Centre. The subject of the first satirical piece that he submitted to *Granta* was the *Reader's Digest*. In *Footlights* revues Frost had liked to play the part of a television announcer. The *Epilogue* was part of his material. His first appearance on television was for Anglia's *Open Air*. When he joined AR, his first assignments were on *This Week*.

<sup>22</sup> \*In one of the first papers on 'Saturday Night' (7 Feb. 1962 (T32/1649/1)), Sherrin had suggested quite different writers—among them Ralph Miliband, Johnny Speight, and Michael Frayn. He also mentioned Frost in this paper.

shillings) was published by the BBC just before the second series of *TW3* programmes began in September 1963.<sup>23</sup> According to this version, which was highly selective, Greene himself had been the programme's main, if not sole, begetter. His recollections of what people in Germany had told him of satirical cabaret before the days of Hitler led him after he had become Director-General to suggest that the BBC should now find a place for televised satirical cabaret. The pomposity of public figures should be pricked through 'the power of laughter'. Greene thought, however, that such a type of programme would appeal to a substantial minority audience of viewers rather than to a large audience. Any shock effects, therefore, would be restricted.

Adam, Director of Television since March 1962,<sup>24</sup> with whom Greene discussed such a programme, thought of it differently—less in terms of German cabaret than of sophisticated English revue—but English revue, too, he believed, would not be majority fare. It had almost always had a smooth surface; it had always exercised its spell over metropolitan insiders. It had always been 'smart'. It was scarcely likely, therefore, to compete in ratings terms with the big light entertainment programmes. It is not clear whether Adam knew that Cook and Bird had already put up an idea for a satirical television series that had been turned down, but Adam himself was directly drawn into discussions about *TW3* before the first edition of it was seen on the screen. After there had been complaints about the idea of the programme from a group of Conservative women,<sup>25</sup> Adam himself saw the first *TW3* pilot, and liked it. Greene did not see it, but he gave it his blessing. Baverstock did not like the participation of the 'Establishment crowd' straight from Cook's club, but most of them dropped out after the pilots had been completed.<sup>26</sup>

More than one 'inside story' of the making of *TW3* has claimed that there was also an American influence both on the inception of

<sup>23</sup> The book included seven pictures of Frost, six of Millicent Martin, and two pages of blurred pictures of an incident in which Levin was involved in a violent studio fracas. 'We're very proud of each other's success,' Millicent Martin is reported as saying in a caption, of herself and her husband, the singer Ronnie Carroll, 'and that makes for happiness and content in any household.'

<sup>24</sup> He had become Director of Television Broadcasting in June 1961 in succession to Beadle, and was given the new title of Director of Television in March 1962. See below, pp. 384–6.

<sup>25</sup> \*Alasdair Milne to Goldie, 'Conservative Women and the New Show', 19 July 1962 (T32/1649/1).

<sup>26</sup> \*Baverstock to Goldie and Milne, 'That Was The Week That Was', 23 July 1962 (T32/1649/1).

the programme and on its later development. In 1961 the fashionable American stand-up comedian Mort Sahl, who was anything but smooth, had appeared on BBC television in a production seen by Greene, which had been arranged by Light Entertainment. It had not seemed to work in the same way as it had worked across the Atlantic, and Greene blamed the relative failure on the fact that Light Entertainment had produced it, and that it had been 'coily' introduced by Frank Muir and Denis Norden.<sup>27</sup> He and Adam handed over the programme, therefore—music and all—to Television Talks, which in turn—quite inevitably—handed it over to the *Tonight* team.<sup>28</sup>

One of the members of that team, Tony Jay, talked of a 'bi-sociation of light entertainment and politics', a term that would certainly not have been used by Light Entertainment,<sup>29</sup> and Adam was to refer ponderously in his book on the programme to its 'basic educational intention'. Yet *TW3* overspilt all such cramping definitions, and retained to the end an often disconcerting unpredictability. Within the old *Tonight* team it was to be directed not by Baverstock, who by then had been promoted,<sup>30</sup> but by his friend Milne, who was himself to be promoted within the BBC hierarchy before the last programme went off the air.<sup>31</sup>

One point about the history of the programme is certain. From the start, Greene set out to involve the Governors in the new enterprise. At a Board meeting held two days before the first edition—with Sir James Duff, the Vice-Chairman, presiding—he warned that the project was a difficult one to realize successfully, and that the programme would take time to find its feet.<sup>32</sup> The young would be poking fun at the old and at all that was shoddy in contemporary Britain.<sup>33</sup> In fact, *TW3* started well, and very soon found its feet. It was what happened later that proved difficult.

After the first edition there had been 200 letters of appreciation and only twenty of criticism, seven on grounds of bad taste, the remain-

<sup>27</sup> \*Greene interviewed by Gillard, March 1977. When the American 'sick' comedian Lenny Bruce visited Britain in 1962, George Melly called him 'the evangelist of the New Morality' (quoted in Booker, op. cit., pp. 173–4).

<sup>28</sup> See M. Richardson, 'TW3, Inside Story', *Observer*, 29 Sept. 1963.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in Frischauer, op. cit., p. 45.

<sup>30</sup> See below, p. 385.

<sup>31</sup> See below, p. 390.

<sup>32</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 22 Nov. 1962.

<sup>33</sup> There was even a suggestion that a 'cleansing draught of satire' would be in the 'true Reith tradition' (*Sunday Telegraph*, 17 Nov. 1963, recalling the mood at the introduction of the programme).

der from viewers who were bored, while the *Birmingham Mail* praised the BBC for daring to be 'anti-Establishment' and for being unafraid of looking and laughing at itself.<sup>34</sup> After the second edition the *Brighton Evening Argus* called it a 'magnificent joyful success'. 'I only hope the BBC doesn't get cold feet and have second thoughts about it,' their critic wrote, while the *Yorkshire Evening News* was afraid only that 'it might not be able to keep pace with this high standard in the future'.<sup>35</sup> After the third edition, however, there were 750 letters of appreciation and 370 letters of criticism. Several of the latter, but not most of them, complained of a sketch about the Prime Minister. The BBC's telephone system had been jammed with hundreds of incoming telephone calls.<sup>36</sup>

The political angle was the most awkward. To be 'anti-Establishment' in the early 1960s, which is what the team wished above all else to be, tended at the same time to be anti-Government, whatever the Government might be. In 1962 and 1963 this meant being anti-Conservative, at a time when the Government was racked by scandals, culminating in the Profumo affair, which hit the headlines in March 1963. Scandals were made for satire. So, too, were political manifestos. It was fortunate for the BBC—and for the viewing audience—that the Prime Minister took the programme in his stride. He is said to have liked the way Rushton impersonated him. In Sherrin's well-chosen phrase, Macmillan was 'the man who seemed to be most out of touch with the age and best able to manipulate it'.<sup>37</sup> Some of his back-benchers were far less understanding and far less tolerant.

Macmillan had a fascinating exchange of letters on this point with his Postmaster-General, Bevins. 'I hope you will not, repeat not, take any action about *That was the week that was*,' he told him in December 1962. 'It is a good thing to be laughed over. It is better than to be ignored.' His letter was written on a day when Greene had apologized to Macmillan's office about an item in the previous week's programme. 'Thank you for your personal minute,' Bevins replied; 'it turns out that the BBC have neither a script nor a recording of the

<sup>34</sup> *Birmingham Mail*, 26 Nov. 1962.

<sup>35</sup> *Brighton Evening Argus*, *Yorkshire Evening News*, 3 Dec. 1962.

<sup>36</sup> \*L. G. Thirkell, Head of Secretariat, to M. Farquharson, The Secretary, 'That Was The Week That Was', 19 Dec. 1962. Robert Silvey, Head of Audience Research, is quoted as saying that most of the criticisms seemed to have come from those who 'have wandered into the programme by mistake', and that appreciations 'have been very enthusiastic' (T32/1649/1).

<sup>37</sup> Sherrin, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

programme. So far there is no indication that it has been raised in the House. The reaction of our backbenchers has been mixed, with a majority hostile to the thought of any interference. I am told that next Saturday's programme will be different.' 'Many thanks HM', Macmillan wrote in ink at the bottom.<sup>38</sup>

There was a religious angle to some *TW3* programmes that mattered almost as much as the political angle, both to some of the presenters and to a large section of the audience. Politics, after all, were changing: religion, at least until the 1960s, seemed to be anchored to the eternal. There was no Macmillan in the Church of England. Instead, there were reformist voices within the Church, one of them the voice of a bishop, John Robinson, Bishop of Woolwich since 1959, that were easy to satirize; his book *Honest to God* appeared in 1963.<sup>39</sup> The *TW3* team was iconoclastic, although it always claimed that it was satirizing not religion, but its current representations on earth. Such an approach was taken less coolly by the leaders—and followers—not only of the Church of England but of the whole spectrum of various denominations than Macmillan took of the *TW3* approach to politics. A 'Consumer's Guide to Religions', a spoof on *Which?*, the consumer magazine that had been founded in 1957,<sup>40</sup> seemed deliberately designed to offend them all.<sup>41</sup> So, too, did jokes about the Bible.

Finally, royalty was spared no more than religion: what Muggeridge had said so recently about the royal soap opera—which had then

<sup>38</sup> PRO PREM 11/3668, Macmillan to Bevins, 10 Dec. 1962; Greene to Harold Evans (in Macmillan's office), 10 Dec. 1962; Bevins to Macmillan, 12 Dec. 1962.

<sup>39</sup> There was a touch of *TW3* in an article that Robinson wrote in the *Observer*, 17 March 1963, 'Our Images of God Must Go'. 'Few people realise', he wrote breathlessly, 'that we are in the middle of one of the most exciting theological ferments of the century . . . suddenly . . . new ideas about God and religion, many of them with disturbing revolutionary implications, are breaking surface.' Robinson incorporated manners and morals in his theological vista. Giving evidence in the *Lady Chatterley* case in 1960, a symbolic landmark, he had stated that it was 'clear' that Lawrence was portraying the sex relationship as 'something essentially sacred . . . as in a real sense an act of holy communion'. Later in the decade, 1965, he attended a much publicized Frost breakfast, which included among other guests Adam, Baverstock, Lord Longford, Robert Maxwell, Sir Joseph Lockwood, Chairman of EMI, and A. J. Ayer, Professor of Philosophy at Oxford.

<sup>40</sup> The success of *Which?*—and with it that of the consumer movement—was itself an expression of the spirit of the times. In the *TW3* spoof the Church of England emerged as 'the best buy'. ITV refused to put on a *Which?*-type consumer programme (see Henry, *op. cit.*, p. 89), and from 31 March 1963 all existing ITV admags ceased (see above, p. 305). In 1962 the BBC had launched its own consumer-service programme *Choice*, presented by Richard Dimbleby.

<sup>41</sup> This item was in the programme broadcast on 12 Jan. 1963. It was read by Frost. Consumers' guides were a feature of the period. See Wilmot, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

been attacked so sharply—now seemed commonplace. The tone of *TW3*'s approach, however, was in sharp contrast to the tone of what was currently being said about royalty in other BBC programmes by its own commentators on grand royal events, like Richard Dimbleby and Audrey Russell. One chapter in Audrey Russell's autobiography, *A Certain Voice*, covers her visits overseas with various members of the travelling House of Windsor. It was the domestic events, however, which interested her most. 'I am certain', she observed, 'that no country carries out a ceremonial function better and with greater style and discipline than we do.'<sup>42</sup>

Because the *TW3* team was comprehensive in its attack on authority, viewers who chafed at any kind of authority were in immediate sympathy with its approach. 'The audience know the actors are with them against authority, the people who push them around or try to stop them enjoying themselves', the novelist Angus Wilson wrote.<sup>43</sup> Nor was it only those who chafed at authority who viewed avidly. 'To laugh with' the programme, it was plausibly claimed, gave you the certainty that you were laughing at the bullies, the fakes, and the killjoys.<sup>44</sup> Wilson was wrong, however, to use the word 'certainty', a word that the Bishop of Woolwich would have used more cautiously. There was no certainty in the process, particularly when sex got mixed up with either politics or religion or both, as it often did, for example in the Vassall and Profumo political scandals, or whenever contraception, hitherto almost a taboo subject, was introduced on the air.<sup>45</sup>

In the last week of January 1963, a month when *TW3* was under attack at Conservative Party headquarters,<sup>46</sup> the Board of Governors noted the 'mainly appreciative comments' on the programme made at a meeting of the General Advisory Council the day before—there had, in fact, been several hostile comments—and Greene told them, as he had told the Council, that problems of timing and of over-long items, not the features most under attack, were being watched

<sup>42</sup> A. Russell, *A Certain Voice* (1984), p. 147. Russell had joined the BBC in wartime in 1942.

<sup>43</sup> Wilson was interested in arts programmes, and in particular in *Tempo*, an ITV programme about which he wrote a book with the same title in 1964.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted by Adam in *The BBC Book of That Was The Week That Was*.

<sup>45</sup> The 'pill' was brought into Britain from the USA in 1960, and was made commercially available in 1961. The first Abortion Act was passed in 1967.

<sup>46</sup> Goldie, *op. cit.*, p. 225. She quotes a Conservative Party official who said that while 'being anti-Establishment was one thing . . . it was hard to swallow a programme whose general bias was so extremely left wing, socialist and pacifist'.



carefully.<sup>47</sup> Lord Strang had said that his impression, 'after seeing one edition', was that there was 'too much fooling around and not enough bite', while Arthur Watkins, a Welsh Professor of Child Health, had urged that the programme targets should 'be worthwhile'. From the West Region, Sir Philip Morris, a former Vice-Chairman of the Governors, was reported as saying that the programme should not include items 'which hurt people too much'.<sup>48</sup>

There had, indeed, been an equally candid domestic discussion in Television Centre at a BBC Television Script Department meeting held earlier in the month, at which several people had complained not only about the length of the programme but about its content. One critic claimed that it seemed to be based 'on a sort of generalised nihilistic malice'. Another asked Sherrin how fair he felt it was to be unfair. 'No particular answer seemed to be forthcoming to this question', a Minute of the meeting noted, but the Minute concluded, as did the Minutes both of the Advisory Council and of the Board of Governors, with praise not blame. One person present 'hoped that the tendency towards freedom of expression would develop internally within the Corporation and affect other departments'.<sup>49</sup>

Audience Research figures in early February, prepared after ten programmes, highlighted both the size of the audience—8½ million—and its social spread. This showed that 'upper middle class adults' constituted the biggest social segment of the audience as a proportion (25.4 per cent) of the total numbers of that social group in the country. Their numbers had doubled between the first and the tenth programme. Working-class adults constituted 63 per cent of the total audience both for the first and the tenth programme, but such viewers were a smaller segment (17.9 per cent) of their own social group. The first broadcast had been watched by far more men than women. By the time of the tenth the gap had closed.<sup>50</sup> The

<sup>47</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 24 Jan. 1963. Ten days before, Baverstock had sent a memorandum to Milne asking him to make it clear to Sherrin that he had to consult him (Milne) about all matters of programme content 'in detail and with complete candour'. 'You must make it clear to Sherrin that your responsibility for the programme extends over all its aspects and is not limited to what is commonly thought of as "policy". Such a programme as this puts a great strain on the judgement of any one person. He must now be told that it is your judgement finally which the Corporation is having to trust' (\*Baverstock to Milne, 'That Was The Week That Was', 14 Jan. 1963 (T16/589)).

<sup>48</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 23 Jan. 1963.

<sup>49</sup> \*Extract from Survey (Television) Report, BBC Television Script Department Meeting, held on 23rd January 1963 (T32/1649/2).

<sup>50</sup> \*BBC Audience Research Report VR/63/47, 'That Was The Week That Was: Who Views?', 7 Feb. 1963.

audience was continuing to grow, and was to reach a peak of 12 million on 2 March.

Numbers remained around the 10 million mark until the first series ended on 27 April 1963. Audience Research then produced a complete report which showed that 45 per cent of its regular viewers rated the programme as A+, as against only 10 per cent of those who viewed it occasionally. As many as 78 per cent of regular viewers praised the programme for its 'informality', and 67 per cent for the fact that it did not pull its punches. Only 3 per cent thought that it was too 'highbrow', 11 per cent that it was too 'amateurish', and 13 per cent that it was too 'sexy'. Relatively high proportions—though still minority proportions—felt that it was 'too coarse', and 33 per cent that it joked too much about 'religion and sacred things'. As many as 16 per cent found the 'music' too jazzy.

Frost's manner of presenting was liked very much by most regular viewers (68 per cent) and not liked by very few (7 per cent), but Levin divided the regular audience as much as the programme as a whole divided the country. Over a third said that they did not like Levin's contributions at all.<sup>51</sup> Before then, at the beginning of April, the Board had heard from Greene himself that there were suggestions in 'Westminster circles' that the programme was wearing 'somewhat thin', and that there had been more complaints than ever before from on high about 'lapses of taste'; but it was decided to leave the public 'in no doubt that the BBC would bring the programme back in the autumn after its summer resting'.<sup>52</sup>

Towards the end of the month, Sir Ashley Clarke, a retired diplomat who had become a Governor in 1962, warned the Board that although Reginald Maudling, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had been in the studio audience on the previous Saturday and had been favourably impressed, some Government Ministers were inclined to be sensitive. But once again the Board concluded by congratulating the Television Service on 'the introduction of an important programme in which the Board had taken a continuing interest and which had had their support throughout'. It was at the next meeting that there were signs of restiveness, when Duff told Governors that he proposed to invite Greene and Adam to discuss with them a

<sup>51</sup> \*BBC Audience Research Report VR/63/274, 'That Was The Week That Was: An Enquiry about the Winter 1962–63 Series', 30 May 1963.

<sup>52</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 4 April 1963. At the same meeting the Board congratulated Tom Sloan on the successful handling of an Eric Sykes comedy series which had followed *Steptoe and Son*. (See below, p. 434–6.)

careful review of the programme that would now be initiated.<sup>53</sup> There had been yet another discussion of the programme on 3 April at the General Advisory Council, when one member, Sir Harold Grime, describing himself as 'an old newspaperman', 'expressed the greatest admiration for the judgement of the Director-General but less for that displayed at certain lower levels'.<sup>54</sup>

The matter had been raised by Donald McLachlan, Editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*, a frequent radio broadcaster, who accused the BBC of introducing 'sensationalism' into its programmes after the publication of the Pilkington Report. While *TW3* was 'a worthwhile experiment', it 'frequently became offensive and gave great offence to some people'.<sup>55</sup> *TW3*, however, was not the most important example that McLachlan had given of what he called sensationalism. He had focused mainly on interviews, among them interviews with a member of the staff on conditions at Durham Prison and with Christine Keeler, the central woman in the Profumo affair. The most important of his targets was a *Panorama* interview with Georges Bidault, a former French resistance leader and now an opposition politician, which he regarded as entirely unnecessary and superfluous, and explicable only in terms of a desire to get ahead of the Press and cause a bit of a stir.<sup>56</sup>

A number of other speakers at the Council meeting had taken the same line, but in reply to such complaints Duff had been at pains to insist that, having sat on the Board for a long time, he had developed an increasingly high regard for the judgement of the Director-General, and had been 'continually surprised at how personal his decisions were'. Greene himself had made no apologies. 'It was the business of journalism,' he argued, 'to reveal and not to close

<sup>53</sup> \*Ibid., 25 April, 9 May 1963. He was aware, as was Greene, that the BBC's Charter was due to expire in 1964, and that a new Charter would probably be in draft by June 1963.

<sup>54</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 3 April 1963.

<sup>55</sup> \*Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Greene gave a detailed account of why he permitted the Bidault interview to be broadcast after it had not been broadcast on two previous occasions, and defended the BBC's attitude on all five examples cited by McLachlan, who was none the less not convinced. There were at least four standards of journalism in Fleet Street, he maintained, and while he trusted Greene's own judgement, 'the wish to compete with the Press resulted in a trend towards sensationalism lower down' (\*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 3 April 1963). Greene's reaction was 'that it was difficult to see how any critic without knowledge of the detailed exercise of internal control in the Corporation could make comments, such as those proffered by Mr. McLachlan', and suggested that Donald Edwards, Editor, News and Current Affairs, should be present to give an explanation at the next GAC meeting (\*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 4 July 1963).

up.<sup>57</sup> He looked forward to bringing back the programme in the autumn.

There had been one earlier discussion of considerable interest at a Board of Governors meeting which, like much of the discussion at the General Advisory Council meeting, had not been directly inspired by *TW3*. In March 1963 they had discussed 'moral standards in television programmes' on the basis of an introduction by Andrew Stewart, then Controller, Scotland, who had been invited to join them, and who, the next day, was to face a Broadcasting Council for Scotland meeting at which complaints were to be raised about the broadcasting of the film *Hiroshima Mon Amour*. Stewart had told the Governors that in his view 'a particular sequence' made it unsuitable for broadcasting, but fforde had replied that the Director-General, who was not present, had argued that the inclusion of the film at 9.25 p.m. was justified 'by its acknowledged artistic value', a reiteration of the *Lady Chatterley's Lover* argument.

That was that; but when the meeting had gone on to discuss 'moral standards in general' both the National Governors for Northern Ireland and Wales, Sir Richard Pim and Mrs Rachel Jones, expressed disquiet at BBC policies, the latter warning that 'people working against a relatively sophisticated background in London were not always aware of the possibility that they might be scattering alien corn in other parts of the country'. After Duff had suggested that 'younger people looked at these matters somewhat differently' from their elders, and after the trade unionist Dame Anne Godwin, a strong Greene supporter, had advised against doing anything to discourage 'an honest approach to the side of life that was in question', fforde had summed up by saying that 'the problems could not be solved by any form of exclusion by rule'.<sup>58</sup>

The promised review of *TW3* took place at Television Centre on 4 July 1963, when Adam summarized for the Board the strengths and weaknesses of the programme as he himself saw them—on the one hand, proven audience appeal, the attraction of new writers to television, and the creation of a new image of Britain overseas, offering evidence of 'political and social maturity'; on the other hand, the excessive length of some items, the inclusion of too many personal attacks not always well directed, too much smut, and too much of Bernard Levin.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>57</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 3 April 1963.

<sup>58</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 7 March 1963.

<sup>59</sup> \**Ibid.*, 4 July 1963.

An unusually lengthy Minute recorded the Board's conclusions after it had heard both Adam and Hood confirm that measures would be taken to prevent 'the return to smut', that ad lib comments would be barred, and that the programme would in future be held to fifty minutes.<sup>60</sup>

The members of the Board recalled the pleasure they had found in the programme and the support they had given to it. They had appreciated its exploitation of the 'amateur' enthusiasm of its performers [what would Goldie have thought of the use of the word 'amateur'?<sup>61</sup>]; of technical improvisation in the studio, and of the element of unpredictability. Their admiration had been tempered towards the end by the introduction of adolescent smut; by the items offensive to sincere religious feeling... by the unrelieved iconoclasm of its constituent elements; and by the snide sneer and the personal attack which turned the subject into a monster not credible in terms of the original or to which the subject could not reply. The mummery surrounding the Crown, for example, was fair game, but not the Queen or the Royal family as persons.

The Board went on to express 'some uncertainty' as to the rightness of the weekly frequency of the series and the occasionally excessive length of past editions.

'Events', they recognized, 'were bound to dictate a large measure of the content, and if the events of the week were distasteful the programme would have to apply itself to the problem of balance.' None the less, there had to be 'control both as to content and performance'. In addition, lessons ought to be learnt from mistakes. The Board's conclusion was positive. Its members attached 'great importance to the prospect of new programmes opened up by the emergence of *TWTWTW*, and hoped that the *élan* and catalytic effect produced by the series would be maintained. They were much reassured by what they had heard.'

In his reply Adam expressed his appreciation of the 'Board's understanding of the serious intent of the programme and of the potential for development which had been revealed by it, especially in constructive directions', and Greene expressed his own gratitude for the Board's confidence and constructive interest.<sup>62</sup> Both Board and Management were now prepared for tougher 'editorial control'.

<sup>60</sup> Hood also stated that 'misconceived reference to the Deity would be excluded as bad manners'. Milne also spoke, stressing the importance of an effort to secure 'earlier compilation, despite the problem of topicality'.

<sup>61</sup> She had originally called the pilot of the programme 'amateurish in its effort to seem casual', as well as 'politically both tendentious and dangerous' (Goldie, *op. cit.*, p. 222).

<sup>62</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 4 July 1963.

Yet Goldie was more aware than either of them were of the difficulties of 'controlling' the TW3 team. There were too many would-be controllers, she felt, and they included Greene himself.

Goldie was aware, too, after lunches with Sherrin and Milne, who always attended TW3 rehearsals, that there were often substantial differences between a programme as envisaged and the programme as it was actually put out. This was not only because in the heat (and light) of the programme itself changes were made in the script—and there *was* a script—but also because the sense of the shape of each week changed between the preparation of the script and the transmission of the programme. 'The week that was' had to be a week, and not five or six days, and the crunch always came on the Saturday afternoon before the programme went out. If the team, a highly exuberant team, had been writing history, not combining topicalities and entertainment, it would have had to confront the same problem.

That there were other problems too was not candidly admitted at the meeting on 4 July. Two weeks later, however, the kind of problems TW3 raised—the Governors called them 'cognate problems'—were discussed candidly and at some length in relation not to TW3 but to a television programme broadcast on 14 July, *This Nation Tomorrow: Sex and the Family*. What were called the 'un-orthodox views' that once again had been expressed by Dr Alex Comfort had not been properly answered, the Board felt; nor had Kenneth Allsop, in the Chair, behaved like a neutral Chairman. He had left a partisan impression not only on Mrs Whitehouse.<sup>63</sup>

Once again there had been some discussion at the General Advisory Council the day before, although the item did not appear in its Minutes.<sup>64</sup> Greene's view that pre-recording (had it been used) would not have provided an acceptable basis for cancellation of the programme on grounds of imbalance was merely noted, not approved, by the Board. It went on to ask its Chairman, who had produced for them a personal statement, privately circulated, on 'the proper values for a broadcasting service', to table it in final form for discussion at a future meeting. Fearing a 'leak', fforde did not do so, although he circulated his personal statement, privately published in

<sup>63</sup> See above, p. 332.

<sup>64</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 17 July 1963; Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 18 July 1963. The Governors at their Sept. meeting were told that the flow of correspondence on the Comfort discussion and on the reporting of the Ward case (an aspect of the Profumo affair) now appeared to have 'died down' (*ibid.*, 26 Sept. 1963). When things died down, they were usually dropped.



a booklet called 'What is Broadcasting About?', to more than seventy people, including Pilkington, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and 'three surviving Directors-General'.<sup>65</sup>

By then, *TW3* was about to return to the screens on 28 September 1963, when it received a mixed reception from the Board, the Press, and the public. There were no fewer than fifty-nine critical telephone calls after the first programme of the series and none in praise, and forty-one critical letters and only five in praise.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, the Labour Party's *Daily Herald* was as uneasy as most Conservative newspapers. While praising what it called the programme's 'awesome impregnable vitality', its television critic went on to condemn its 'outrageous mixture of wit, rudeness, cruelty, smut and sheer exuberance'.<sup>67</sup>

The Governors, who had been at pains to emphasize that the suggestions that they had made concerning the programme were not simply 'suggestions for improving it . . . [but rather] instructions that had to be obeyed',<sup>68</sup> regretted that the programme had contained items which offended against the canons laid down in their discussion on 4 July. They found it difficult, they added, to understand how Sherrin could have failed to appreciate the significance of the Board's views after they had been so fully communicated to him. Yet, as in the past, they did not talk of getting rid of the programme, and they listened respectfully to Greene's view that 'in order to compensate for the drop in morale of the programme's personnel, which was the predictable result of the imposition from without of a sterner discipline', he would like to see it restored to the position of last programme of the week.<sup>69</sup>

The conclusion, far from a blank cheque, was that the programme should survive under constant review. The Chairman seemed to have expressed the sense of the meeting. After stating that he personally did not feel that what he described as 'blue jokes' were essential to the success of the programme, he hoped that it would 'survive at the level of its best achievements'. What would be deplorable would be the withdrawal of the programme in 'circumstances which might

<sup>65</sup> \*Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Goldie, *op. cit.*, p. 229. A larger number of protesters came from Wales and Scotland. There was never a 'united body of critics' (*Sunday Telegraph*, 17 Nov. 1963).

<sup>67</sup> *Daily Herald*, 30 Sept. 1963.

<sup>68</sup> Quoted in Goldie, *op. cit.*, p. 228.

<sup>69</sup> It was so restored as from 26 Oct. 1963 (\*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 24 Oct. 1963).

look like a surrender to public pressure'.<sup>70</sup> 'It's a pity', fforde had said earlier, 'to spoil a ship for a ha'porth of dirt.'<sup>71</sup>

Several of the later programmes in the second series, each of which now lasted for a strict fifty minutes, were thought by a muzzled Sherrin to be 'dull'<sup>72</sup> and by critics to be exceptionally offensive; and there were also more criticisms than before at the meeting of the General Advisory Council held on 23 October, a few days after what the Press described as an attack on the new Conservative Prime Minister, Lord Home. The item on Home, who abandoned his peerage and became Sir Alec Douglas-Home, was cut by Greene himself before it went on the air, but even so it provoked more telephone calls of protest than any previous item had done.

The attack, written by Booker and spoken by Frost, borrowed words from a letter written more than a century before by Disraeli.<sup>73</sup> Home was called 'a pleasant man who had foreseen nothing and was qualified for nothing'. Later, Frost used his own quip 'Dull Alec versus Smart Alec' to describe the choice between Home and Wilson, who had become Labour Party leader after Gaitskell's death in January 1963. Politics was obviously entering a new phase, and there had been a touch of nostalgia in the previous *TW3* programme when Rushton, cast as Macmillan, came in from the wings and sang in a broken voice 'The Party's Over'.<sup>74</sup>

Another item in the programme was attacked even more strongly than the Home item at the General Advisory Council meeting—an item concerning the marriage of the public hangman—and when Greene attempted to defend its inclusion, Arthur Marsh, who raised

<sup>70</sup> \*Ibid., 10 Oct. 1963.

<sup>71</sup> \*Quoted in a memorandum from Adam to Hood, 'A Phrase from fforde', 30 April 1963 (T16/589).

<sup>72</sup> In the first programme of the new series Lance Percival sang in the opening number which showed that the BBC itself was in the dock:

Happy days are here my dears,  
Old Aunty's put the clock back years.

<sup>73</sup> \*Unsigned memorandum to Goldie, 'Disraeli on Lord Home's Appointment', 25 Oct. 1963 (T32/1649/2). 'We waited until Lord Home had gone to the Palace . . . before deciding how to treat it on "That Was The Week That Was". It seemed to me [Sherrin?] that to treat his appointment to the highest office in the land flippantly on "TW3" would have been contrary to the serious intention of the programme and so I looked around for a literary form which would contain suitably the observations that we wanted to make on the appointment.'

<sup>74</sup> Macmillan had formally resigned as Prime Minister on 18 Oct. 1963. He had announced from hospital on 10 Oct. during the Conservative Party Conference that he would resign. Home was chosen as his successor after a secret process of consultation in what was called a 'magic circle'.

the subject, replied firmly that 'the meeting will not be content with the Director-General's personal views. The BBC must have a view of its own about the item and he would like to know what it was.' fforde did not oblige him. Indeed, he ruled that further discussion of the matter would have to wait for the next meeting of the Council in three months' time. Earlier in the year the Governors had tried to make it plain that they, not the Advisory Councils, were responsible for policy. For example, when McLachlan had not let his criticisms drop, he had been told by a Governor, the businessman Gerald Coke, Chairman of Rio Tinto from 1956 to 1962, that his impression that the GAC had the function of representing the public was wrong. That was the role of the Governors.<sup>75</sup>

Greene must have chafed during this awkward Council meeting. The major item on the agenda was a paper called 'Questions for the General Advisory Council', which began with a subheading 'The Subject of Broadcast Discussion', which gave Marsh the opportunity to argue that after every *TW3* programme there should be a right of reply. The BBC had been asking for trouble when it had asked as a last question, 'Does the BBC do all that it should to help listeners/viewers to choose the programmes most satisfying to them?' One member of the Council, who described himself as generally favourable to *TW3*, claimed under what seemed to be a more appropriate agenda sub-heading that 'here and there it smelt'.<sup>76</sup>

Lying in bed with an attack of flu after the Council meeting, Greene had time to think about what had been said in answer to leading questions in a discussion that had ranged widely over *Panorama*, news bulletins, interviewing techniques, Robin Day, and in the words of Sir Mark Pizey, speaking on behalf of the West Regional Advisory Council, attitudes to 'sex, religion, work, leisure and the discoveries of science'. He came to the conclusion that it was 'in the general interest' and 'in the interests of the BBC' that *TW3* should 'not go on'.<sup>77</sup> When the Board met on 7 November, therefore,

<sup>75</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 4 July 1963. Coke was married to the daughter of Sir Alexander Cadogan.

<sup>76</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 23 Oct. 1963, Annexe. Another of the questions posed was 'What did the Council think were the growing points of experience which the Pilkington Committee had mentioned when it said that television had to pay particular attention to those parts of the range of worthwhile experience which lie beyond the most common?' Any hope of a further discussion at the subsequent meeting of the GAC was ruled out in a letter from fforde to Lord Strang (\*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 21 Nov. 1963).

<sup>77</sup> \*Interview with Frank Gillard, March 1977.

he told the Governors that he proposed to take the programme off the air at the end of the year. It had now become, he complained, 'a gigantic red herring, diverting attention from the real achievements of the BBC and prejudicing judgement of broadcasts on important but difficult social themes'.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, senior staff, including himself, had been involved in weekly consideration of the script in detail. He concluded that while he realized that there would be protests over what would be seen as BBC cowardice, there were 'political considerations' that most people would find convincing. A general election could not be far away.<sup>79</sup>

What the Governors would have done had Greene not recommended the termination of *TW3* is not completely clear. At least one of them, Duff, who often found himself acting as Chairman since fforde was frequently ill around this time, was by then thoroughly tired of what he was seeing on the screen and reading in the newspapers. Both Greene and another recently appointed Governor, the publisher Robert (later Sir Robert) Lusty, were subsequently to disclose that if a decision had not been taken to end the programme, Duff would probably have resigned. In reaching his decision, therefore, Greene had appreciated that 'any sort of resignation from the Board of Governors on an issue like that would have done immense damage to the BBC', and he was to recall later that, while he had been sad to kill 'the programme of his own choice', there had been 'a deep sigh of relief round the table' when he told the Governors what he proposed to do.<sup>80</sup>

One week after Greene made his announcement to the Board, a BBC Press Release announced that the programme would end on 28 December, and not continue until the spring of '1964, as had previously been stated.<sup>81</sup> The BBC Press Release stressed the fact that

<sup>78</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 7 Nov. 1963.

<sup>79</sup> *TW3* had not been allowed to make any comments on the Kinross by-election held in Oct. 1963, when Rushton was a candidate, standing against Home. Hood told Sherrin that the Legal Department had ruled that it would be an infringement of the Representation of the People Act. 'This is harsh,' he added, 'but it is the Law.' Sherrin deferred to the advice, but replied that 'throughout the last session of *That Was The Week That Was* we made constant, long and specific references to many bye-elections and staged comprehensive, detailed and in some cases extremely funny sketches about them' ('Hood to Sherrin, 'Kinross Bye-Election', 24 Oct. 1963; Sherrin to Hood, 'Kinross Bye-Election', 25 Oct. 1963 (T32/1649/2)).

<sup>80</sup> \*Interview with Gillard, March 1977; information from Lusty to Miall and myself, 15 Nov. 1977. \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 7 Nov. 1963. The *Sunday Times* (17 Nov. 1963) very quickly told the story of Greene's flu in an article headed 'Aunty's Schizophrenia'.

<sup>81</sup> \*Margaret Bayley, Day Press Officer, ' "That Was The Week That Was" to end in December', 14 Nov. 1963 (T32/1649/2). Given that there would be controversy, the

a general election was imminent, although most newspapers thought that at best the general election was an excuse.<sup>82</sup> There were now more protests than acclamations. Seven hundred letters protested, and only 200 were in favour of the programme being discontinued. Yet the letters in protest against the ending of the programme included some that were frankly political—'all the world will claim that the Tories have got the show banned.'<sup>83</sup> The letters in favour of ending it included one which read 'Why wait until 28 December?'<sup>84</sup>

One letter in favour of the programme came from Max (later Lord) Beloff. 'Prudes and politicians we always have with us,' he wrote to Goldie, 'and the measure of our civilisation is the degree to which their combined efforts can be defeated.'<sup>85</sup> Beloff's letter was passed on to Adam, Greene, and Forde, who noted: 'My Greats tutor would not have passed Beloff's final sentence. An epigram which would not stand up to serious analysis. Speaking as a prude, I personally support your political decision.'

When some commentators suggested that the members of the team were 'tired', Frost made the memorable retort that it was delightful for people to be so solicitous about their health. 'I would think we are remarkably fresh. We owe it all to Horlicks malted milk. We wake up refreshed after seven or eight minutes' sleep.'<sup>86</sup> Meanwhile, Adam was at pains, above all else, to explain that the decision to end the

statement read, it would be better to terminate the programme than to 'dilute' its content 'and so alter the nature of the programme'.

<sup>82</sup> For scepticism about the reason given, see, e.g., *Daily Mirror*, 14 Nov. 1963, which quoted Wilson's guarded statement, more guarded than its own: 'We would very much deplore it if a popular programme were taken off as a result of political pressures', and the *Daily Mail*, 14 Nov. 1963; 'Its premature death next month comes about because it made too much noise.'

<sup>83</sup> Some back-bencher Conservatives, like Sir Cyril Osborne, were strongly opposed to the programme, and collected letters from viewers opposed to it. Osborne's strongest criticism was that 'it wasn't English at all'. Yet by no means all committed Conservatives wanted the programme to go. Like *Private Eye*, it shared the capacity to appeal to many of them. William Deedes, then Minister without Portfolio and a future Editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, called it 'one of the safest of programmes'. 'There are many subtle techniques which can be used—and sometimes are used—to influence electors one way or the other. TW3 is innocent of them' (*Daily Express*, 16 Nov. 1963). There were protests too, then and later, from some members of the General Advisory Council.

<sup>84</sup> Goldie, *op. cit.*, p. 230. After the BBC decided to drop the programme, Peter Cadbury, Chairman of Westward, denied indignantly that Westward might take the programme over (*Daily Express*, 16 Nov. 1963). An early edition (22 Dec. 1962) had included an item about him. Seven photographs of him had been used, a record number at that time ('Jean Hart, Assistant to Ned Sherrin, to Hazel Gill, 'Photographs Used in "That Was The Week That Was"', 15 Jan. 1963 (T32/1649/2)).

<sup>85</sup> \*Beloff to Goldie, 14 Nov. 1963 (Goldie Papers at BBC Written Archives Centre).

<sup>86</sup> Quoted in Frischauer, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

programme had not been taken because its audience had fallen. It was 'laughable' to suggest that it had been 'killed' by competition from ITV's *On the Braden Beat* or from *The Avengers*. 'This silly boast by a commercial television official makes me despair of the friendly coexistence between BBC and commercial television which I had hoped might come about.'

Adam's own comment about *The Avengers* was scarcely, however, a contribution to peaceful coexistence. 'So long as a young cock can crow from the malodorous farmyard of a series known as *The Avengers*,' he wrote, 'so long will civilised relations be difficult.'<sup>87</sup> Ironically, Sydney Newman, who had been concerned with *The Avengers* while working with ABC, had just joined the BBC.<sup>88</sup>

Between the Press Release and 28 December *TW3* achieved perhaps its finest hour on 23 November, when it scrapped all existing plans, rewrote a whole programme overnight, and broadcast a moving tribute to President Kennedy, who had been assassinated the day before. The elderly actress Sybil Thorndike read a poem 'To Jackie', and Levin delivered a memorable eulogy, eloquent and restrained. The programme was subsequently shown twice to wide acclaim in the United States, and the cast was flown across the Atlantic to stage a version of it in New York's Madison Square Gardens. A further tribute was paid to it of a more permanent kind. Senator Hubert Humphrey asked that the entire script be printed in the *Congressional Record*.

Yet another tribute was paid, the highest tribute that American television, still very different in structure and content from British television, could ever pay.<sup>89</sup> After *TW3* ceased to be shown in Britain, Frost, now one of the world's first regular transatlantic commuters, went on to host an American programme with the same name. Now dubbed *St Batman* by Muggeridge,<sup>90</sup> his career on both sides of the Atlantic was just beginning to unfold.<sup>91</sup> While,

<sup>87</sup> *Daily Express*, 16 Nov. 1963. Lew Grade and John McMillan wrote to Greene saying that the claim ought not to have been made and that Brian Tesler, whom Adam thought had made it, had not done so. *The Avengers* has proved to be a programme that has survived through more than one repeat. At a Press Conference earlier in the year, Adam, when asked whether *TW3* had a point of view, had replied that it had 'a very definite and positive point of view—to make people think about institutions and persons and the state of things in this country'.

<sup>88</sup> See below, p. 396.

<sup>89</sup> Earlier in the year there had been talk of an American special 'for America, in America' called 'That Was The Year That Was' ('Sherrin to Milne, ' "That Was the Week That Was" in America', 19 Sept. 1963 (T32/1649/2) ).

<sup>90</sup> Frischauer, op. cit., p. 79.

<sup>91</sup> For a brief summary of Frost's career to that date, see J. Thynne, *Daily Telegraph*, 29 June 1992: 'Seriously, though, he's done a grand job.' She quotes another Muggeridge



therefore, *TW3* and its successor, *Not So Much a Programme, More a Way of Life*, passed into history, Frost continued to exploit the changing present. The American tributes to *TW3* proved qualified, however, for transported to the United States, the programme was never allowed the freedom, whatever the limits, that it had enjoyed in Britain.

Various 'lessons' were drawn from the demise of *TW3*, with Goldie drawing quite different lessons from Sherrin. She talked of 'confusion of purpose' among its makers. He complained, as Greene complained in his last message on the subject to the Board, of the 'undue attention' that had been paid to it by its audience and by the Press. 'It was as though we had set out to build an aeroplane and come up with a rocket. When the rocket had run its course it fizzled out.'<sup>92</sup>

For a time the American version of the programme, which never gave any signs of rocketing, ran in parallel with a later BBC show *Not So Much a Programme, More a Way of Life*, a programme that mixed interviews, chat, and sketches. It first went on the air on 13 November 1964, after the general election was well over, and it continued for as many as three nights a week, Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays, until 11 April 1965.<sup>93</sup> It, too, ran into trouble with the Governors—for example, after showing a sketch concerning birth control in February 1965.<sup>94</sup> It was for this programme, not for *TW3*, that Anthony Sampson wrote a striking article, 'Not So Much an Obituary', which seemed to cover both it and *TW3*, complaining that, for all its daring, the programme had reduced everyone who took part in it to 'the same slick level'—bishops, dons, politicians, novelists.<sup>95</sup> And Sampson did not hesitate to use the seven-letter

judgement, this time of his wife Kitty: 'He had risen without trace.' Frost was a key figure in the successful bid from London Weekend Television in 1968, and in 1978 helped to found TV-am.

<sup>92</sup> *Observer*, 16 Jan. 1983. It was not only the USA that was interested in the programme. The Secretary-General of *Culture et Télévision* asked for a copy ('Hood to Ronald Waldman, General Manager, Television Enterprises, 'Film of "That Was The Week That Was" ', 4 July 1963 (T32/1649/2)).

<sup>93</sup> Its finest hour may have been the programme which it presented after Churchill's death. Like the *TW3* Kennedy programme, it turned news into history.

<sup>94</sup> The Governors were divided after they received protests from a group of Liverpool MPs (*Minutes*, 4 March 1965). None the less, the majority agreed with Greene that the subject was one of 'public interest'.

<sup>95</sup> *Observer*, 11 April 1965. The only people whom he knew had refused tempting invitations to take part in the programme, Sampson noted, were Hugh Trevor Roper (later Lord Dacre), Francis Hope of the *New Statesman*, and Maureen Cleave of the *Evening Standard*.

word Reith used to Greene—'dignity'—in making his complaint. 'After the show, they all seemed somehow deprived of their dignity.' Professor Ayer talking to Eartha Kitt had been made to seem ridiculous. So, too, had the Bishop of Woolwich laughing loudly at the jokes of Harvey Orkin, a regular member of the team. Whatever Adam might say about educational intention, for Sampson *TW3* marked the end of 'Reith's platonic purpose'.

Other satirical programmes followed during the Greene years. Indeed, while *TW3* was on the air, *Dig This Rhubarb*, broadcast from October 1963 to April 1964, had claimed a special identity of its own,<sup>96</sup> and after *Not So Much a Programme* Sherrin produced BBC-3 which saw the rise of John Bird and Eleanor Bron. This was followed in October 1966 by *The Late Show*; but when this was dropped in April 1967 critics claimed that 'television satire had [at last] run its course'.<sup>97</sup>

## 5. Top and Bottom

If there were some television careers, like that of Frost, that were made under Greene, there were some that came to an end under him. There were a few also that took new and often surprising twists and turns. As Goldie noted, the history of *TW3* was itself influenced by changes in BBC management structures and responsibilities. Who would—and could—handle it? Greene, who deliberately moved slowly with BBC changes at the top after Hole's departure,<sup>1</sup> believed in delegating—in television he was granted little choice to do otherwise—but in the case of *TW3*, with the Governors breathing down his neck, he had found it difficult to delegate with complete confidence. So, too, did the people in television itself, including Goldie and Baverstock.

The searching interview of Greene by Kenneth Harris in 1964 covered many points about Greene's own approach to being Direc-

<sup>96</sup> 'Do we have to swallow this?', John Sandilands asked in the *Daily Sketch*, 1 Oct. 1963. The producer of the programme, Tony Jay, explained that it would draw its material not from the present but from the past. It was a special kind of past, however. 'When there's something about public men and morality in the past we may draw attention to it to see how it applies to the present day.'

<sup>97</sup> See *Guardian*, 31 Oct. 1967. The name *The Late Show* was used for a quite different programme to be broadcast from 1989.

<sup>1</sup> \*Interview with Gillard, March 1977.

tor-General which were relevant before the coming of BBC-2.<sup>2</sup> The Director-General's main job Greene said, was 'running things', 'running them *with* people and *through* people', and that was the aspect of the job he liked most. The Director-General had to be an administrator—the word 'manager' was used less often than—as well as Editor-in-Chief. He had, of course, to get on with the Governors too, and above all, with the Chairman, who had an office in Broadcasting House next to his own. Their co-operation was crucial. 'However able and well-intentioned a Director-General was, or a Chairman, if they couldn't work together the BBC would be in trouble.'

Governors as a whole were taking more interest in programmes than they had done before, partly because more programmes—not just *TW3*—were controversial.<sup>3</sup> They could learn very quickly, however, how the machinery worked and what strains it would stand. It was fortunate in these circumstances that the Board was renewed in instalments: a new Governor could 'learn the ropes' from those who had more experience.<sup>4</sup> Duff joined the Board in 1959; the Earl of Halsbury, a former President of the Institution of Production Engineers, Sir David Milne, a former Permanent Under-Secretary of State at the Scottish Office (aged 64), Scottish Governor,<sup>5</sup> Mrs Rachel Jones, Welsh Governor, and Robert Lusty in 1960; Coke in 1961; and Sir Ashley Clarke in 1962. Dame Anne Godwin, then Chairman of the TUC, replaced Dame Florence Hancock as a trade unionist also in 1962, and Sir Richard Pim became National Governor for Northern Ireland.<sup>6</sup>

The *Daily Express* found them 'a refreshingly mixed bag',<sup>7</sup> and between them they had many relevant outside interests. Coke, for example, was Chairman of the Glyndebourne Arts Trust, and Clarke was on the Board of the National Theatre. Greene, however, judged that some Governors were far more helpful than others. He was

<sup>2</sup> Harris was flattered when reprints of parts of his interview were distributed to BBC staff (*Conversations*, p. 97).

<sup>3</sup> Already in 1960, Greene's first year, they had raised questions *inter alia* about the second instalment of *The Range Rider*, 'almost as objectionable as the preceding one' (\*Board of Governors, Minutes, 28 Jan. 1960); *Panorama* (*ibid.*); the Welsh programme (*ibid.*, 7 April); a Robin Day interview of Ernest Marples, Minister of Transport (*ibid.*, 5 May); and *Face to Face* (*ibid.*, 22 Sept.).

<sup>4</sup> Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

<sup>5</sup> Milne took the place of the Earl of Balfour, who retired eight months before his period of office was due to end.

<sup>6</sup> Pim was an ex-civil servant, and during the War had been in charge of Churchill's map room.

<sup>7</sup> *Daily Express*, 7 June 1962.

relieved when Lord Normanbrook, an archetypal civil servant, who had been Secretary of the Cabinet from 1947 to 1962 and Joint Secretary of the Treasury and Head of the Home Civil Service from 1956 to 1962, took over as Chairman in 1964.<sup>8</sup> He was relieved not least because rumours had been circulating that there were members of the Government anxious to 'curb Greene' by choosing a Chairman who would lessen his powers.<sup>9</sup> The choice was Douglas-Home's, but he consulted Wilson before appointing him. Several newspapers described Normanbrook as 'the ideal choice for the job of Chairman of the Governors'. He was said to be more 'unflappable than Macmillan', and it was recalled that Churchill had made him a Privy Councillor while he was still Secretary to the Cabinet.<sup>10</sup> He certainly carried great authority, and Greene recognized it. He looked up to him. This was rare.

In what has been called a 'classic' statement on the role of the Governors in 1965 Normanbrook emphasized that the Board was concerned with 'values' as well as efficiency, and that in consequence the Governors were appointed quite differently from members of the boards of nationalized industries. While it was easy and simple to say that the Board was concerned with policy and the staff with execution, he went on, it was impossible 'to say clearly where policy stops and execution begins'. The Board was 'an integral part of the BBC . . . the final source of decision, not only on general policy, but on specific issues which were of sufficient importance to call for decisions at the highest level within the Corporation'. Decisions taken by the Board were in no sense 'intervention from outside'.<sup>11</sup> Greene approved not only of such statements of principle, but of the way that Normanbrook dealt with him and with his colleagues; and when he died in office, Greene wrote of him, as he wrote of no one else, that it had been 'a wonderful experience and an education to have worked with Lord Normanbrook . . . We shall all miss him in the BBC, and I shall miss him most.'<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> For Normanbrook's earlier BBC associations, see above, p. 86. See also Briggs, *Governing the BBC* (1979), for a fuller account of his BBC role.

<sup>9</sup> For the 'curb Greene' rumours, which Greene associated with the Assistant Postmaster-General, Ray Mawby, and believed were started in the *Birmingham Post*, see his 'Interview with Gillard, March 1977.

<sup>10</sup> Obituary notice in *The Times*, 16 June 1967; Briggs, *Governing the BBC*, pp. 162-3.

<sup>11</sup> 'The Functions of the BBC's Governors', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 4th ser., 15 Dec. 1965.

<sup>12</sup> *Ariel*, July 1967. The number also included a tribute by Lord Bridges.

Whatever relations were 'at the top', inside the BBC itself there was no alternative to delegation, and delegation had to be operative at all levels of the organization. Greene doubtless had the specific experience of *TW3* in mind—indeed, he referred to it later—when he told Harris in his interview that 'through training and experience' producers should 'get an instinctive feeling of the limits of their freedom and of the occasions when they should go to the next chap up and say "Is this really all right?" and that the chap they go to should know whether it is right or not, and whether he is qualified to say so, or whether he in turn should consult'.<sup>13</sup> Yet Greene knew too that outside critics of BBC news and interviews always wanted to be reassured about internal editorial control.<sup>14</sup>

There had to be 'a feeling about this', Greene himself maintained. 'Written directives', which he personally did not like, would not do. He put his faith, therefore, in informal understanding within a 'framework of general guidance which arises from the continuing discussion of programmes' by all concerned—with provision for 'quick short circuiting' direct from producers or departmental heads to himself or to his Chief Assistant. In addition, producers or departmental heads had to know what was in the minds of their Editor-in-Chief, 'me', and of the Board of Governors, and they had to know 'the standards at which they should aim'.

As far as the formal structure of the BBC was concerned, Greene put great trust in his own appointee, J. H. Arkell, Hole's successor as Director of Administration, whom he asked to combine his present duties as Director of Staff Administration with his new and broader duties which included finance as well as personnel.<sup>15</sup> Arkell was the right choice. Consistent and systematic in his dealings in what was obviously an important and sensitive post, he applied himself diligently to handling the problems of an organization which was now too big to be treated as a collection of individuals. Staff numbers were growing too—less than 17,000 in March 1959, over 18,000 in March 1960, over 20,000 in March 1963, and over 23,000 in March 1964.

In describing in a lecture how he approached questions of staff management, Arkell began, as Normanbrook was to do, by compar-

<sup>13</sup> Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

<sup>14</sup> See above, pp. 327–8.

<sup>15</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report by Director of Administration', Jan.–June 1960. Arkell also had oversight of the Legal Adviser's Division, headed by Edgar Robbins, the Central Services Group, and the Buying Department. He reported to the Board on the acquisition and release of properties.

ing management in broadcasting with management in organizations like the Coal Board and Imperial Chemicals, and pointed to one essential difference. 'There was no standardized, tangible product' in broadcasting. The main product was the programme, and every programme was 'hand-made'. Management itself had to be 'resourceful and creative', and was, in fact, 'an art as well as in some respects a science'. And the BBC itself was able to run its affairs in this way only because it had the freedom of an independent organization.<sup>16</sup> There was, of course, hierarchy, but like Greene, Arkell was not a bureaucrat. Management, like 'production', was in his considered view concerned above all else with the interests of viewers and listeners, the people who paid for their licences.

There were, none the less, other approaches to an understanding of BBC organization. Like all concerns, the BBC possessed an informal as well as a formal staff organization, and changes in that informal organization, more difficult to trace than changes in the hierarchy, were also taking place during the Greene years. Attitudes to and within the hierarchy were bound to change as the BBC grew so quickly in size. Moreover, in most departments there was an increasing emphasis on professionalization, so strong an emphasis indeed that one of Normanbrook's successors as Chairman of the Governors, Sir Michael (later Lord) Swann, was to describe the Governors as amateurs and the Board of Management as professionals.<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, the language of professionalism had provided a more forceful language than the language of public service that Greene himself—and Curran—always spoke. Professionals made much of 'the mandate of autonomous judgement' and of 'professional integrity', and they expected from the Director-General, in particular, 'a complete understanding of the way we, as professionals, function'.<sup>18</sup>

The shift to professionalism, which many people in the BBC took for granted, was the main theme of the fascinating study of the BBC by the sociologist Professor Tom Burns, *The BBC: Public Institution and Private World*, which was published in 1977 but which was based on two sets of interviews that Burns had carried out in 1963 and 1973 with members of BBC staff operating at different levels. Like the Tavistock Institute, Burns drew a sharp distinction between formal and informal institutional structures. He had first encountered the

<sup>16</sup> J. H. Arkell, 'The Role of Management in Broadcasting', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 4th ser., 17 Nov. 1965.

<sup>17</sup> *The Listener*, 17 Jan. 1974.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in T. Burns, *The BBC: Public Institution and Private World* (1977), p. 75.



BBC at a staff training course at Uplands in 1960, when he had been an invited outside speaker, and he later spent a period inside the BBC in 1963 carrying out about 200 interviews and seeking to identify the 'cultural ambience' of a private world within a public institution.

Not surprisingly, there were critics inside the BBC of Burns's unpublished report to which he gave the provocative title 'Cultural Bureaucracy'. They also objected to inaccuracies of detail.<sup>19</sup> His quotations from interviews, however, are illuminating to a historian, even if he did not always ask all the right questions. It was not until the 1970s that he was allowed to publish his findings, and by then Greene was no longer Director-General and the BBC's entire Board of Management had changed.<sup>20</sup> Attitudes at the top had changed too. Burns's book appeared after he had been allowed by Curran to carry out a further sixty interviews almost exactly ten years after his first study. In his book Burns dealt briefly with unionization as well as with professionalization yet by the time that it was published in 1977 the organization and role of the trade unions inside the BBC were quite different from what they had been in the Greene years, and it is not always easy to date those quotation references in the book that relate to trade unionism or, for that matter, points made about unionization by Burns himself.

During the early Greene years, the Association of Broadcasting Staff, founded in 1956 after the advent of competition, was the main BBC trade union,<sup>21</sup> a BBC-orientated union with Littlewood as its first General Secretary, to which 52 per cent of the total staff of the BBC belonged in 1961. Only 8.3 per cent of the BBC's staff belonged to other unions.<sup>22</sup> Paid-up membership was smaller, but the propor-

<sup>19</sup> One critic, after spending a 'rambling two hours with Tom Burns—a mixture of haggles over small points of wording and exchanges of views' on hares started off by the Report, called it 'a rather meaningless document' (\*K. Fawdry, Head of School Broadcasting, Television, to J. Scupham, Controller, Educational Broadcasting, 'Tom Burns Report and Correspondence', 19 Sept. 1963 (Man. Reg. file N694) ).

<sup>20</sup> Burns tells the story from his own angle in Burns, *op. cit.*, pp. i–xvii. His book combines, often perceptively albeit unsystematically, history, sociology, psychology, and anthropology, and is spiced by a large number of quotations from interviews.

<sup>21</sup> The ABS was the descendant of the BBC Staff Association, formed from a merger of the BBC wartime Staff Association and the Association of BBC Engineers. In 1949 46% of the BBC's staff belonged to it. See the account of the merger by Littlewood in *Television Today*, June 1978, and Briggs, *War of Words*, pp. 497–8, and *idem*, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 124–5. Despite considerable efforts, the Staff Association failed to secure a hold in any of the independent companies. See also P. Seglow, *Trade Unionism in Television* (1978), p. 101.

<sup>22</sup> The BBC was in a demarcational industrial dispute with the ETU in 1956/7. It was the BBC's view that new lighting consoles at the Riverside Studios should be operated by

tion of ABS members increased to 56 per cent in 1963. The other unions had been recognized for negotiating purposes at different times—the first, significantly, the National Union of Journalists, recognized in 1954; the Electrical Trades Union in 1955; the National Union of Print, Bookbinding, and Allied Trades (later to be merged into SOGAT) in 1957; and the National Association of Theatrical and Kine Employees (later NATTKE) in 1958.<sup>23</sup>

Greene, who had encountered trade unions for the first time in his brief spell as Director of Administration, had felt then that the ABS was at a low ebb; 'while pursuing the will o' the wisp of commercial television' (seeking to gain members), it had been 'neglecting its task in the BBC'.<sup>24</sup> None the less, the union was pursuing a long-term strategy of its own which was to lead to its recognition by the TUC in 1963. Tony Hearn, who had joined the ABS as Assistant to the General Secretary, Leslie Littlewood, had become Assistant General Secretary on the same day as Greene became Director-General, and Tom Rhys, previously Assistant General Secretary, had become Deputy General Secretary.

The emphasis was changing here, too, for the *ABS Bulletin*, which in 1963 still included in-house items like published versions of two BBC Lunch-Time Lectures (by Robert Silvey and Tangye Lean), now began to include criticism of management. Thus, in 1964, an article on Greene by Tom Rhys was headed 'Sir Hugh Van Tromp'. While Rhys noted—as he had noted in the previous number—that Greene was a 'new broom', he was, he said, proving a reluctant one, 'at least in the corridors of Staff Administration'.<sup>25</sup>

the Technical Operations Group. The ETU claimed that they should be operated by electricians. The dispute was referred to a Board of Assessors, which decided as a compromise that the Television Operations crews should operate them, provided that a scheme was established that would allow certain electricians to be promoted to monthly graded categories within the Engineering Directorate.

<sup>23</sup> *ABS Bulletin*, Dec. 1961. From 1932 to 1972 the General Secretary of NATKE was Tom (later Sir Tom) O'Brien, a former stage-hand. According to Littlewood (Interview with Miall, 1 March 1973), ITV quickly recognized the Association of Cinematograph and Television Technicians, which the BBC did not recognize, because some of the company heads were showmen who had grown up with the film industry.

<sup>24</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report by Director of Administration, 2 Sept. 1957 to 7 Nov. 1957'. The first move by the ABS to secure members outside the BBC had been in the spring of 1955, six months before the start of ITV, when discussions took place with AR (Seglow, op. cit., p. 96).

<sup>25</sup> *ABS Bulletin*, June, July 1964. When in 1965 the ABS distributed 16,000 questionnaires to BBC staff canvassing their opinion of the BBC as an employer, only 1,605 of them were returned. Of these, three-quarters of the respondents replied 'No' to the question of whether they would like to leave the BBC (ibid., June 1966). There had been Press reports in 1965 of complaints from BBC staff declared redundant after the demise

There was no reluctance, however, on the part of Greene and Arkell to develop staff training, which seemed to be the key to the BBC's future. In particular, great importance was attached to the well-organized General Trainee Scheme, introduced on Arkell's initiative in 1954 and designed to attract a small number of highly promising university graduates to the BBC.<sup>26</sup> Milne was one of the first two university graduates to be trained through the scheme in 1954; and others who followed were John Drummond (1958), future Controller, Radio 3; John Tusa (1959), future Managing Director, World Service; Melvyn Bragg (1960), who was to have many futures as a writer and broadcaster; Phillip Whitehead (1961), future Labour MP and member of the Annan Committee; and David Elstein (1964), who was to produce *The Money Programme* and *Panorama* before leaving the BBC for independent television.

There was, indeed, an extremely active Staff Training and Appointments Department, dealing with staff at all levels, under a Controller, Oliver Whitley, who was to become Chief Assistant to the Director-General after Grisewood.<sup>27</sup> The Head of Staff Training, C. J. Penne-thorne Hughes, had been in his post since 1949, and was to stay there until the end of 1963, with Roger Cary, who was to become a symbol of BBC continuity, serving after 1962 as his Management Training Organizer. Specific BBC occupations, among them studio technicians, announcers, and make-up specialists, all had their own training programmes. So, too, did secretaries, the large and influential BBC group who played the major part in linking the formal and informal structures of the BBC.<sup>28</sup>

It was Whitley who invited Burns to Uplands for a residential training conference for assistant heads of department. One of the purposes of these conferences, the first of them held in October 1959 at Dunford, near Midhurst, was to harness professional drive while

of *Tonight* (see *Sunday Times*, 27 June 1965, 'Tonight of the Long Knives'). After the poll had been taken, the *Guardian* (24 Dec. 1965) reported that 'in the past [the ABS] was widely regarded by broadcasting staff as representing the outlook of the management, but its reputation for independent, even militant action, has been growing lately'.

<sup>26</sup> Questions of recruitment and training policy had been raised by Sir John Masterman, Provost of Worcester College, in 1953, and were discussed at a General Advisory Council Meeting on 10 June 1953. The new scheme was set out in a paper, BM (54) 37, considered by the Board of Management the following year (\*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 8 March 1954).

<sup>27</sup> See below, p. 388.

<sup>28</sup> There was also an attachment scheme, whereby BBC employees could be seconded to work in departments outside their previous experience.

at the same time placing BBC activities in wider perspective.<sup>29</sup> Other outside speakers in 1960 besides Burns included Richard Hoggart and Mark Abrams.<sup>30</sup> Uplands, near High Wycombe, subsequently became more than a conference centre where course members broke up into syndicates to thrash out topical issues. It proved a valuable venue for senior BBC staff, including the Director-General, to meet people from outside the BBC who for various reasons they wished to see. Reith was among them.<sup>31</sup> The chairmen appointed to introduce the 'outsiders' were themselves involved in the process. Thus, Adam found himself taking the chair for Hoggart, Beadle for the business tycoon Sir Miles Thomas, and Arkell for George Woodcock, the General Secretary of the TUC.<sup>32</sup>

One of the changes of a structural kind that Greene made at the top soon after taking over—and such changes were strictly limited—had been the replacement of Beadle by Adam as Director of Television Broadcasting. Most of Greene's moves of staff took place like this, largely through retirements, not through transfers, although it was by choice that Grisewood, the Chief Assistant whom Greene inherited, was at once given a wider range of responsibilities for the BBC's public relations activities, which were now concentrated in one office.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report of the Director of Staff Administration, Feb.–June 1959', 16 July 1959.

<sup>30</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report by Director of Staff Administration, July–December 1959, Appendix A'. In 1960 the courses were transferred to Uplands, near High Wycombe (\*Ibid., 'Report by the Director of Administration, Oct.–Dec. 1960'). The designer of the courses was Whitley, and the first Organiser was Ian McIntyre, who had joined the BBC in 1951 as a producer in the Talks Division, and from 1959 to 1961 was editor of *At Home and Abroad*. He was succeeded by Roger Cary, who had joined the BBC in 1950, was a producer in Overseas Talks from 1951 to 1956, and Deputy Editor of *The Listener* from 1958 to 1961. From 1976 to 1978 McIntyre was to be Controller, Radio 4, and from 1978 to 1987 Controller, Radio 3. Cary was in the BBC Secretariat from 1966 to 1974, and in Public Affairs from 1974 to 1977.

<sup>31</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 23 March 1961. Both Greene and fforde said that they had been greatly impressed by their visit to Uplands and by the presence there of Reith.

<sup>32</sup> Among other outside speakers invited to the 1960 conferences were Lord Denning and Sir Peter Medawar.

<sup>33</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 24 March 1960; Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 97. In 1964 Greene described this as 'the only major alteration in the organisation which seemed immediately required at that time'. When Greene visited India in 1960, he told the Board of Management and reported to the Board of Governors that Grisewood would act for him 'in all capacities' in his absence (\*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 28 Jan. 1960). Grisewood had also been given responsibility for Publications Management and the Secretary's Division.

Before Beadle left Television Centre at the end of May 1961, two years after the normal age of retirement, Adam, who had been pre-appointed, issued a Press Statement describing the likely shape of things to come, in which he forecast that the next four years might see two 'separate and divergent developments' in BBC Television. On the one hand, there might be a 'breaking down of barriers between departments so that, for instance, News, Outside Broadcasts and Talks might combine to give the conveying of information and the coverage of public events greater depth and greater urgency'. On the other hand, there might be 'the breaking up of some departments such as Drama and Light Entertainment into smaller specialist units, dealing with a limited type of output in order to satisfy the viewer'.<sup>34</sup>

The most interesting changes that ensued after these departures—and the changes were Greene's direct responsibility—were three-fold: Hood's appointment as Controller, Programmes, Television, in place of Adam; Baverstock's appointment as Hood's Assistant Controller; and his friend Milne's promotion to the editorship of *Tonight*. Surprisingly, these were switches that do not seem to have been discussed by the Board of Governors, which did not even, according to usual practice, note them in their Minutes. They were, however, picked up in the Press.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, for one journalist, Peter Forster, writing in the *Spectator* in September 1961, 'the practical future of BBC-TV' now depended on 'the axis of power recently formed between Stuart Hood and Donald Baverstock'. He was right, although it was an axis of power that was not to last for long.<sup>36</sup>

When Adam had taken over from Beadle in 1961—with an overlap period between—the move had largely been taken for granted, and with the move Adam had gladly assumed Beadle's social activities along with his administrative responsibilities. Both men liked entertaining. Both men, unlike McGivern, liked showing visitors around Television Centre. In that sense little changed. There was a real change in style, however, when Hood took Adam's place as Controller, Programmes. With only a short, if illuminating, experience of television behind him when he had been

<sup>34</sup> \*Press Statement, 6 Dec. 1960. When Adam took over, McGivern, who had played little part in the development of television during his last years with the BBC, left for Granada. See above, p. 25.

<sup>35</sup> \*Pamela Mumford, Evening Press Officer, 'Announcement to Press Agencies: New Appointments in the Television Service', 25 Jan. 1961.

<sup>36</sup> *Spectator*, 15 Sept. 1961.

placed in charge of Television News—on Greene's personal invitation—Hood had never before been deeply involved in television programming as a whole, and he did not find it easy to communicate with departmental heads.<sup>37</sup>

To replace Hood as Editor, Television News, Beadle put forward the name of Miall, suggesting to Greene that it should become a bigger job and combine news and talks. Instead, Miall was made Assistant Controller, Current Affairs, Television, and Head of Television Talks. Greene wished to maintain the unity of the News Division, and gave the post of Editor, Television News, to Michael Peacock, then editing *Panorama*. In turn, Miall appointed Fox to take Peacock's place.

Adam was still not content to leave Hood alone to deal with all the complex problems of television programming, and concluded that it would be essential to fill the defunct post of Assistant Controller of Programmes. And that was where Baverstock got his chance. He was not, however, Adam's first choice to fill it. Adam had had in mind the experienced and energetic Peter Dimmock, but he had not consulted him, and Dimmock refused, preferring to stay as Head of Outside Broadcasts, a challenging post which brought him into regular contact with more people outside the BBC than inside it. Another possible name was that of Hywel Davies, then Head of Programmes in Wales, but he was expected in time to become Controller, Wales.

With Greene's backing, Baverstock, therefore, got the post, in a leap-frogging appointment that was at least as controversial as that of Hood. The appointment was to have continuing repercussions into the mid-1960s, not least because in the telling phrase of a later writer on the BBC, Baverstock's practice was 'leadership by irritation'.<sup>38</sup> Meanwhile, Miall was asked to serve as Executive Secretary of

<sup>37</sup> See above, p. 346. None the less, he was to write about television programming in 1967 in an acute and lively way in his book *A Survey of Television* (1967) which he insisted was 'not a collection of personal reminiscences'. He praised several programmes, including *Blue Peter* and *Ballet Class*, and described some of the reactions to *TW3* as 'belonging to the area of psycho-pathology' (p. 155). See also his article 'Speaker, Subject, Audience', *Ariel* supplement, Oct. 1961: 'The idea of the audience as critical and selective . . . is the hypothesis which is likely to lead to the liveliest television.' The alternative view that the audience was 'a great inert mass' was 'deeply pessimistic and probably heretical, postulating as it does a deep-seated and almost universal *accidia*'. 'Kings of the knob' would one day be given 'an even wider choice of programme.' In the long run, too, small minorities could be converted into majorities. 'In a competitive world public service television need not rush into Gadarene competition; it can, by improving, strengthening, and expanding the whole range of its programmes, win for them the large audiences they deserve.'

<sup>38</sup> M. Leapman, *The Last Days of the Beeb* (1986), p. 37.



a new Television Extension Committee created in May 1962 to plan the second television channel, with Adam himself as Chairman.

Both Hood and Baverstock seemed to be Greene's men, but both were, in fact, very much men on their own. Baverstock, ebullient, pugnacious, and unpredictable, was impatient with other people. Hood was highly intelligent, but self-contained and at times taciturn. Baverstock has written little about his BBC career. Hood, who was a skilled writer, has had much to say in print. Greene, he claimed, was 'the most effective, most liberating figure in the history of the BBC', adding that 'to work with him was to know that possibilities existed which had not been thinkable before'. Hood also added, however, in Marxist fashion, that the most interesting question about 'the Greene revolution' (his term) was not what Greene believed or did, but what were the circumstances that for several years made it possible for him to carry the revolution through.

The remark showed that while Hood could be just as impatient with some of his colleagues as Baverstock was, he was more able to generalize about the circumstances in which they were operating than any of his colleagues were. 'The economic buoyancy of the times', he judged, 'was matched by a relaxed political atmosphere; the public mood was expansive in an era of social change.'<sup>39</sup> Greene could feel free. Hood was the only one of Greene's close colleagues to write in this way.

It was, of course, important that before and after these changes, Greene's Board of Management still consisted mainly of an 'old guard'. Lindsay Wellington, Director of Sound Broadcasting; Sir Harold Bishop, Director of Engineering; and Sir Beresford Clark, Director of External Broadcasting, were all, like Grisewood, survivors from the old regime. The last three had been in their posts since 1952. All were soon to go. Arkell was to remain in his post until June 1970. Farquharson stayed on as Secretary, to be replaced in May 1963 by Curran, who was to succeed Greene as Director-General;<sup>40</sup> and the major change in Sound was also not to come until August 1963, when Wellington retired and was replaced by Gillard. In the same year Lean, not a 'Greene man', succeeded Clark at Bush House,<sup>41</sup> and

<sup>39</sup> *Guardian*, 22 Sept. 1983.

<sup>40</sup> For the Board of Governors' meetings on 4 and 25 April Curran sat alongside Farquharson as Secretary Designate.

<sup>41</sup> Other people interviewed for the Bush House post were Curran and James Monahan, Controller, European Services. Lean held the post for only a brief spell from 1964 to 1966, and retired early at the age of 55, when he was succeeded by Curran. See below, p. 704.

in the Engineering Division F. C. (later Sir Francis) McLean succeeded Bishop. In the last two cases a deputy succeeded his superior in the hierarchy. The 'system' worked without Greene's intervention. When Grisewood retired as Chief Assistant to the Director-General in 1964,<sup>42</sup> he was replaced by Whitley, son of a former Chairman of the Reithian BBC, who became a key figure in the new set-up and who, while temperamentally quite different from Greene, was to act in a sense as Greene's conscience. It was he who was called upon most frequently to mediate between Greene and the public.<sup>43</sup>

In Television there were many changes, not all of them planned, during the Greene years; but one person, extremely important in the BBC system, Joanna Spicer, remained in post—with different titles—until 1972.<sup>44</sup> In charge of planning—why did her name never enter the pages of *Who's Who?*—she was a main figure in the working lives both of the Director-General and of broadcasters and managers at every level. Her role was to gain even more in importance after the introduction of a second BBC television channel,<sup>45</sup> but it was already important enough before Greene became Director-General. In January 1961 she had also been designated the BBC's main representative on the Programme Committee of the EBU, which meant that she was drawn into European as well as British programme planning.

Radio planning was never as sophisticated as the planning of television.<sup>46</sup> Individual channels continued to compile their own

Lean believed that he had a satisfactory financial arrangement for the period after his retirement, but when this failed, tried to return to the BBC. Greene refused.

<sup>42</sup> *Ariel*, June 1966, in its retirement tribute to Grisewood, written by Whitley, called him 'one of the BBC's best privy Councillors'. In the Middle Ages, he said, he would have been a Dominican.

<sup>43</sup> See above, p. 332. In his interview with Gillard, Greene pointed to the number of people who had been close to him who were religious: Grisewood, Whitley, and Lamb. 'I found that was a useful corrective', he stated, 'to my own lack of feeling for religion, although religious broadcasting was very much a responsibility of the Director-General.' He also said that he 'rather liked bishops'.

<sup>44</sup> First called Programme Organiser and after 1955 Head of Programme Planning, she became Assistant Controller (Planning), Television, in 1963, and Assistant Controller, Television Development, from 1969 to 1972.

<sup>45</sup> See 'Spicer to Hood, 'Reorganisation for Two Channels', 29 March 1963, which gives details of a departmental reorganization; Spicer to Hood, 'Planning Department Reorganisation', 3 Apr. 1963; 'Problems of Two Channel Working', 16 Apr. 1964 (T20/4/44). See also Staff Announcement 'Television Service', 26 Apr. 1968, announcing Spicer's appointment as Assistant Controller, Television Development. The same announcement referred to Colin Shaw's appointment as Head of Programme Planning Group.

<sup>46</sup> For the evolution of the planning system, a subject for a monograph, see 'Barnes to McGivern, 'Programme Planning', 22 June 1951 (T16/149/1); Spicer to McGivern,

schedules, and Controllers held 'offers meetings', as in television, at which Heads of Department and Editors put up proposals. At a weekly meeting, R. D'A. Marriott, Assistant Director of Radio, using guide-lines, dealt with 'cross-channel' problems.

The biggest structural changes in BBC television took place early in 1963, after Adam had announced in January 1963 a reorganization of the television service that would take effect on 4 February. This was before the BBC's second channel, BBC-2, came into operation, but after it had been decided that the channel should be headed by Peacock. The post of Assistant Controller, Programmes, held by Baverstock, was now abolished, although it was stated that Baverstock would continue to be Hood's deputy, and two new posts were now created under Hood. Baverstock now became Chief of Programmes, BBC-1, in parallel with Peacock, who moved from the post of Editor of Television News at Alexandra Palace, where he had succeeded Hood, to the new post of Chief of Programmes, BBC-2.

For a time, therefore, there was a troika rather than an axis, and this was not a set-up that promised either harmony or efficiency. There were too many unknowns in the relationships. Peacock and Baverstock had established their reputations through *Panorama* and *Tonight*, programmes with very different histories.<sup>47</sup> Baverstock was an Oxford graduate; Peacock was a graduate of the London School of Economics. Baverstock was boisterous, Peacock quietly spoken. Peacock, five years younger than Baverstock, was to be given charge of BBC's newest venture, reaching out into the unknown; Baverstock, then aged 38, was placed in charge of what was a going concern. Hood was expected under Adam to hold everything together. He could not do so.

Adam's notice announcing the changes stated that both men would have 'the maximum autonomy possible to plan their own programmes', but the essential words were added—'under the central guidance of C. P. Tel., who remains ultimately responsible for content, balance, and the disposition of resources'. 'Ultimately' was, of course, vague. 'Balance', a favourite word of Goldie, could mean different things. 'Guidance' demanded tact based on experience.

'Planning Method', 26 July 1954 (T16/149/1); Spicer to McGivern and Adam, 'Programme Planning Methods', 27 Oct. 1958 (T16/149/2); Beadle to Adam, 'Planning the BBC Television Service', 9 Dec. 1958 (T16/149/2); Central Establishment Office Report, 'Planning and Control of Television Resources', June 1963 (T16/149/4); General Advisory Council, *Papers*, 'Television Programme Planning', 13 Dec. 1971.

<sup>47</sup> See above, p. 164.

'Resources' sounded firm enough, but one of the most interesting remarks in Greene's interview with Harris was his statement that the attraction of the BBC was that people working in it 'did not feel that there were accountants breathing down their necks'.<sup>48</sup>

Perhaps the most significant point in this connection was left for the second main paragraph, and it took the form of the re-titling of Joanna Spicer's duties. Henceforth, she would be called Assistant Controller (Planning), Television. She would work in future, however, in a new Central Programme Board, which the Press called an 'inner cabinet', with Hood as Chairman and Miall as Executive Secretary. There were six other members: Baverstock, Peacock, Dimmock, Goldie, Newman, and Tom Sloan. The last three of these were now to be called Heads of Groups, a new and interesting departure in the long and chequered history of BBC nomenclatures. It placed the emphasis on production, but the inner cabinet was too big.

Goldie was now Head of Talks and Current Affairs Group (H.T.G.Tel.), with four Group Heads responsible to her: Wheldon, on his way up, as Head of Documentary Programmes (H.Doc.P.Tel.); Milne as Head of *Tonight* productions (H.T.P.Tel.); Fox as Head of Public Affairs Programmes (H.P.A.P.Tel.); and a Head of Science Talks and Travel Programmes (H.S.T.T.Tel.)—a curious combination—still to be appointed.<sup>49</sup> The Second group, Outside Broadcasts, was headed by Dimmock, who retained his title as General Manager (G.M.O.B.Tel.), because he was involved in 'business arrangements'. He now had three Group Heads responsible to him: his deputy, Harry Middleton, Head of Events Programmes, Outside Broadcasts (H.E.P.Tel.); Singer, Head of Outside Broadcasts Features and Science Programmes (H.O.B.F.S.Tel.); and a Head of Sport Programmes (H.S.P.Tel.), still to be appointed.

The structures for which the other two Heads of Groups were to be responsible—Newman (H.D.G.Tel.), appointed on the day that the notice went up, and Sloan, Head of Light Entertainment (H.L.E.G.Tel.)—were not outlined at this stage. One general point was made, however, a point on which Greene had insisted.

It has become apparent that these major output departments are in danger of being too large, both in regard to the number of posts which each contains,

<sup>48</sup> Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 98. He made this comment immediately after describing Sydney Newman's move to the BBC from ITV.

<sup>49</sup> The new Head of Television News, Waldo Maguire, previously Deputy Editor, was not mentioned in the Notice. He worked not to Adam but to Edwards, Editor of News and Current Affairs.

and also in regard to the number of different creative programme strands represented in each. The contact between those responsible for final editorial control and planning on the one hand, and those responsible for formulating and presenting programmes on the other hand, will, therefore, be strengthened by increasing the devolution of authority to specific units.<sup>50</sup>

The Groups survived, but individuals moved in and out. Eventually both Hood and Baverstock were to leave the BBC prematurely, with neither outcome anticipated. Hood went first in June 1964 in dramatic fashion. No one at all expected his move to AR, announced to Adam in a hand-written letter.<sup>51</sup> Baverstock went less dramatically after Wheldon, in another exercise of leap-frogging, had taken Hood's place.<sup>52</sup> Wheldon, producer and performer, whose BBC career had begun in 1952 when he was appointed Television Publicity Officer, had made his name with *Monitor*,<sup>53</sup> and had held three jobs in just over a year in 1962-3; Assistant Head of Talks (General), Television; Head of Documentary Programmes, Television; and Head of Documentary and Music Programmes, Television. He was setting his own terms, with serious repercussions in each case. Baverstock, still Chief of Programmes BBC-1, was unwilling either to take up a new senior post or to move to the Controllorship of BBC-2 which Wheldon wished him to take over. Peacock, as part of the plan, was to move from BBC-2 to BBC-1. There were people inside and outside the BBC who felt that that had always been the right place for him. One was Wheldon. 'BBC-2', he argued, 'was a place for initiative and adventure. BBC-1 was a much more big organizational game, and that was Mike's game.'<sup>54</sup>

Unlike Hood, Baverstock was to create no surprise when he left the BBC in June 1965, although there was more than a touch of drama when he took with him two of his closest former colleagues from *Tonight* days, Milne and Jay. Together they set up a new independent production company, a portent of things to come.<sup>55</sup> All of them,

<sup>50</sup> \*A Notice from the Director of Television, copy to all notice-boards, 'Television Service Reorganisation', 14 Jan. 1963. The implications of the change for children's programmes have been noted above, p. 341.

<sup>51</sup> For gossip about the reasons for his departure, which included his attitudes towards the ultimate responsibility for educational television, see *Sunday Times*, 7 June 1964, 'Why Hood Hit the Roof'. See also below, p. 493. Hood was not happy at AR, and soon made an attempt to return to the BBC in a different capacity.

<sup>52</sup> See above, p. 385.

<sup>53</sup> See above, pp. 167-9.

<sup>54</sup> \*Huw Wheldon interviewed by Frank Gillard for the Oral History Project, Nov. 1978.

<sup>55</sup> Tony Jay, who had gone independent a few months earlier, transformed Jay, Baverstock, Milne, Ltd. into a hugely successful company, Video Arts.

including Hood, had owed their rise to Greene, and Greene, who hoped to 'retain his talents', was sad to see Baverstock go. He put to him various offers, including that of Head of Documentary Programmes. He was annoyed that Bernard Levin suggested in the *Daily Mail* that the basis for all the changes was a desire to get rid of Baverstock, calling Levin's story, which was headed 'Top BBC Man Out', 'a mixture of fiction, minor inaccuracy and disturbingly exact inside information'.<sup>56</sup> Greene was relieved too when Levin's article was complemented by an article by Peter Black, who refused to accept that Baverstock's leaving the BBC was the climax of a plot to oust him on the part of the Establishment, and noted that 'a lot of voices inside the BBC' greeted the news with 'relief and thanksgiving', a point which Greene would have corroborated. Black concluded that 'the BBC badly needs its Baverstocks. His resignation will convert a setback into a disaster.'<sup>57</sup>

Normanbrook apologized for not keeping members of the Board more fully informed of 'the various stages in the evolution of these staff changes'. 'This was due', he said, 'to the fact that the situation had developed so rapidly.'<sup>58</sup> It was not until the next meeting of the Board, however, that Greene announced that Baverstock had finally decided to leave.<sup>59</sup> He told the Board that his parting with both Baverstock and Milne had been amicable, and he hoped that after obtaining wider experience outside the BBC they might both return.<sup>60</sup> The Governors for once were not entirely satisfied—and rightly so—and the Chairman 'took note of the regret' expressed by members of the Board that decisions about the senior management structure of the Television Service had been taken without their being consulted. He agreed with Coke that the Board should have an opportunity to discuss the management structure again if the occasion arose for new appointments. The omission had been serious.

<sup>56</sup> *Daily Mail*, 25 Feb. 1965; \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 4 March 1965. Levin described Baverstock as a victim of Governors' dislike of his 'threat to the safe, tidy Establishment image of the BBC'. The following day he wrote a piece headed 'Baverstock Speaks', which describes an interview he had had with Baverstock in France. He had flown there to see him. Despite the title, Baverstock would not discuss his dismissal in detail: he had, he said, 'no harsh words for his enemies'. Baverstock became Director of Programmes, Yorkshire Television, in 1967, and after six years in the post joined Granada in 1974 as Managing Director, Granada Video Ltd. He returned briefly to the BBC from 1975 to 1977 as Executive Producer, English Regions, based in Manchester.

<sup>57</sup> *Daily Mail*, 26 Feb. 1965.

<sup>58</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 4 March 1965.

<sup>59</sup> \*Ibid., 18 March 1965.

<sup>60</sup> \*Ibid.



The last person to go was to be Adam himself—at the end of 1968. This was before he wished to leave, although he was nine months past the formal retiring age of sixty. He was to seek his revenge by writing in BBC time a series of four articles for the *Sunday Times*, to be published after his retirement. They appeared in the weeks just before Greene himself left the Director-Generalship. ‘I have seldom in my life read so much poisonous nonsense’, Greene told Quentin Crewe of the *Sunday Mirror* after they had appeared. He also told the *Daily Telegraph* that there had been twenty-seven errors of fact in the first article alone.<sup>61</sup>

Whatever debt they owed to Greene, Baverstock and Milne, along with some of the others who left the BBC, were, above all else, not Greene’s children but ‘Children of Grace’.<sup>62</sup> They owed much to her, not least her ways of behaving, deciding, and judging. And they always made the most of their inheritance, as she did of their presence. ‘Her own talents were not creative,’ the *New Statesman* judged a little harshly, ‘but lay in the application of her acute intelligence to ideas produced around her.’<sup>63</sup> Significantly, there were no girls among the Children of Grace. She is reported to have said: ‘I don’t want too many women on my staff—they burst into tears. It is a tiresome thing that women do.’<sup>64</sup> Joanna Spicer proved what a foolish comment that was. Goldie herself left the BBC in 1965, her appointment having been extended five years beyond the normal retirement age.

The Child of Grace who went furthest in the BBC, Milne, like her a Scot, returned quickly to the BBC as Greene had hoped that he would. Via the Controllorship, Scotland (1967–73), the Directorship of Programmes (1973–7), and the Managing Directorship of Television (1977–82), he went on to become Director-General in 1982. He had made an unsuccessful attempt to move to Scotland whilst Head

<sup>61</sup> *Sunday Mirror*, 30 March 1969; *Daily Telegraph*, 31 March 1969. Lord Hill referred to the articles in *Behind the Screen* (1974), p. 143.

<sup>62</sup> The term was used as the title of an article in the *New Statesman*, 25 May 1973, which noted how many of them had by then left the BBC for ITV. It also noted Goldie’s Oxford and Cambridge bias. ‘It was easier for the camel to go through the eye of a needle than for an ex-President of the Oxford Union to fail to get a job in the BBC.’ The article increased the size of the extended Goldie family more than Grace would have recognized. It suggested that they had all picked up from her the phrase ‘Do you see what I mean?’ A later article in the *Evening Standard* (17 March 1977) referred to television’s ‘Goldie Boys’. Wheldon was not one of them.

<sup>63</sup> *New Statesman*, 25 May 1973.

<sup>64</sup> *Evening Standard*, 17 March 1977.

of Tonight Productions.<sup>65</sup> Whilst outside the BBC, he had joined up with a group of other broadcasters, including Ludovic Kennedy and Alastair (later Sir Alastair) Burnet, who was then Editor of *The Economist*, in a bid to win the Scottish commercial franchise in 1966, when he was interviewed by Lord Hill.<sup>66</sup>

One man who was not a Child of Grace, but who had all the necessary qualities for a Director-General, except the desire to become one, had already emerged out of the Baverstock crisis as Controller of BBC-2. David (later Sir David) Attenborough had joined BBC Television as a trainee producer in 1952, and had demonstrated his creative ability in pioneering wildlife television programmes. He arrived in his new post as Controller, BBC-2, via expeditions to Sierra Leone, British Guiana, Indonesia, New Guinea, Paraguay, Argentina, and many other places, the latest of them the Zambezi. In 1962 he had left the BBC's staff, and was employed on contract as a producer and presenter. It was under his skilful guidance that BBC-2 established itself, and from 1969 to 1972 he was to be Director of Programmes, Television.<sup>67</sup> If he had risen to the very top, he would have made an extremely well-balanced Director-General.

The complex history of the various BBC 'reorganizations' is less interesting to most students of broadcasting than the history of programmes, what rightly interested Attenborough most.<sup>68</sup> None the less, 'the power game' fascinated the Press, which circulated most of the gossip, some of it close to the facts, much of it unconfirmed, much of it unconfirmable. For the historian, it is essential to examine the validity of official reasons given for changes before turning to the Press, which had its own reasons for highlighting particular people or issues. For people working inside the BBC, however, including the Director-General, there was more to reorganizations than programme making. What initials followed the names of people always mattered to programme makers, sometimes as much as the personal qualities of the men and women who, fortunately not always, hid behind them. At the end of every *BBC Handbook* there are charts

<sup>65</sup> See below, p. 675.

<sup>66</sup> See A. Milne, *DG: The Memoirs of a British Broadcaster* (1988), pp. 46–7. In 1966, Milne writes, 'there was hardly a senior member of the BBC whose name was not being written down covertly on applications to the IBA'.

<sup>67</sup> See below, p. 727.

<sup>68</sup> The Fowler Committee on Canadian Broadcasting, published in 1965, claimed that 'the only thing that really matters in broadcasting is programme content; all the rest is housekeeping'.

which provide the details of all the BBC hierarchies, far more complex charts than any to be found in the brochures of the commercial companies which provided the BBC with its competition. The Pilkington Committee spent little time on the study of such structures. Likewise the Press. They can be forgiven, but perhaps the Pilkington Committee at least should have spent more time on them just as the ITA should have spent more time on finance.

## 6. Words and Music

One change within the BBC's hierarchy that had been made before January 1963 had already had considerable importance in defining new tastes. As has been noted, the appointment of Glock as Controller, Music, had preceded Greene's own Director-Generalship. It was just as significant as the appointment of Newman to replace Barry (after an interval) as Head of Television Drama, by which time the Greene regime was fully established.<sup>1</sup> Neither of the new recruits to the BBC was young. Newman was 45 years old when he arrived in the BBC, Glock 53. Yet both knew how to deal with young writers, composers, and artists. Greene was directly involved in Newman's appointment, and was delighted when Newman, in Greene's words, quickly caught the sense of the institution.<sup>2</sup> Greene had nothing to do, however, with the changes in music policy and presentation, or with the appointment of Glock.

Newman, with his great experience and with all the best instincts of a showman, had no doubt himself about the significance of his appointment, which was carefully planned. Born in Toronto in 1917, he had joined the National Film Board of Canada as a splicer-boy at the age of 24, when John Grierson was in charge. In 1953 he had become Television Director of Features and Outside Broadcasts at the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and by the time he left to join ABC in Britain, he had made more than 300 documentaries. While at ABC he made his British mark as Supervisor and Producer of

<sup>1</sup> Barry resigned in Sept. 1961.

<sup>2</sup> Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 98. Newman himself described Greene later as 'our wily, wise giant (physical and mental)' (*Variety*, 29 Oct. 1986). He also described his first BBC meeting with the Programme Review Committee, where he found the heads 'the most stimulating, intellectually alive bunch I would ever be with'. 'No quarter was given on a lousy show. Praise was lavished on a good one. The public's needs and reactions—with an eye cocked at the opposition—were paramount.'

*Armchair Theatre* between 1958 and 1962. He was already in the news. In concentrating on contemporary drama, he had made use at first of a number of American and Canadian scripts, but he had increasingly drawn in English writers, most of them, in the language of the time, more interested in the kitchen sink than in 'tea and crumpets'.<sup>3</sup> When Newman left ABC for the BBC, the *Daily Mail* dealt with his move as if it were a football transfer: 'BBC signs ITV "dustbin" man.'<sup>4</sup>

Before joining the BBC Newman was told by Greene to find all the new writers that he could.<sup>5</sup> Yet he had bigger ambitions than that, and he deserves a different accolade from that given him by the *Daily Mail*. He wanted to widen his repertoire and to include 'old plays', provided that 'they should be seen through twentieth-century eyes'. He realized too that he was dealing with more than one potential audience. He sent to his producers a printed card to hang in their offices, bearing the words 'Look back not in anger, nor forward in fear, but around with awareness'.

With an eye on competition both between ITV and BBC, the kind of competition that he already knew,<sup>6</sup> and inside the BBC, the kind of competition that he had to discover for himself, Newman was keen to produce single plays as well as serials, and under his direction *The Wednesday Play*, which often shocked viewers, built up a regular audience of 10 to 12 million. For *The Times*, looking back on his career after he had left the BBC in 1967, his greatest achievement had been the invention of the Wednesday Play. 'Five years ago the single play was a sickly child, a pallid brother to the stage production. Today it has become [in his words] anti-theatre.'<sup>7</sup> Newman's influence was broader, however, than that. He gave the young members of his staff 'a chance to flex directional muscles',<sup>8</sup> and split the drama group into three—single plays, series, and serials—each with its own head and small staff. At the same time,

<sup>3</sup> 'I came to Britain at a crucial time in 1958,' he told a reporter in 1963, 'when the seeds of *Look Back in Anger* were beginning to flower. I am proud that I played some part in the recognition that the working man was a fit subject for drama, and not just a comic foil in middle-class manners' (*Daily Express*, 5 Jan. 1963).

<sup>4</sup> *Daily Mail*, 19 April 1962.

<sup>5</sup> *Daily Sketch*, 5 May 1969.

<sup>6</sup> He saw no point in putting on a 'hospital play' if the audience were already watching *Emergency Ward 10*.

<sup>7</sup> *The Times*, 11 Oct. 1967. See also below, pp. 519–25.

<sup>8</sup> *Ariel*, Jan. 1963, reported him as saying that he did not intend to use any free-lance directors. His future directors would all be either staff men or under exclusive contract.

he disbanded the script department, and redistributed its editors and staff.

Newman's achievement was well described and analysed in Irene Shubik's *Play for Today: The Evolution of Television Drama*, which appeared in 1975. She had moved to the BBC from ABC, where she had been appointed by Newman, after BBC-2 started in 1964. Like him, she found the new channel opened up exciting new possibilities for television drama. It was not only that there was an immediate increase in staff of 40 per cent—with the same proportionate increase of above-the-line money—but that there was encouragement for the making of quite new kinds of programme.

BBC-2 offered fewer new opportunities for music, except for opera and ballet, and televised studio opera was in the hands of Newman—much to his own surprise, he was the first drama head to be given this responsibility.<sup>9</sup> Eight operas were scheduled for BBC television in 1966 and four in 1967, among the 1966 selection Benjamin Britten's opera *Billy Budd*, secured by Newman through an intermediary. It was directed by Basil Coleman, produced by Cedric Messina, and conducted by Charles (later Sir Charles) Mackerras, won considerable acclaim. Peter Black found it deeply impressive, and the production 'a feat in itself'. It never lost the intimacy by which television 'could make stirring human characters out of the star-crossed personages'.<sup>10</sup> The following year Britten's *Curlew River* was broadcast also, although in this case it was an English Opera Group production, recorded initially for Belgian Television.

Radio opera remained the province of the Music Division, which in 1963–4 broadcast no fewer than forty operas, among them the Royal Festival Hall performance of Britten's *Gloriana* in honour of Britten's fiftieth birthday. Four operas were BBC studio productions: they included Handel's *Orlando* and Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine*. There was perhaps a rare touch of open jealousy or at least rivalry in a *BBC Handbook* comment in 1966, 'Opera is a field in which television might be expected to compete successfully with sound radio . . . [but] nearly seventy complete operas were broadcast on radio during 1964/5 as compared with five on television, to say nothing of whole scenes and other forms of excerpt.'<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> The arrangement was not without its organizational difficulties. See, for example, \*Lionel Salter, Head of Opera (Sound) to Newman, 23 Nov. 1965 (T13/286/1). But it produced results which could not have been achieved by the Opera Committee. See \*Burton to Wheldon, 10 March 1966 (same file).

<sup>10</sup> *Daily Mail*, 12 Dec. 1966.

<sup>11</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1966, p. 67.

Newman was not involved in any way in radio drama either, which was producing 500 and 600 plays a year. On Val Gielgud's retirement in April 1963, Martin Esslin took over as Head.<sup>12</sup> *Saturday Night Theatre* was still the main event of the week, but the Light Programme presented its own *Mid-Week Theatre* on Wednesday nights, occasionally extending the length of its plays from sixty to seventy-five minutes. It also introduced early in 1964 a series of short 15-minute plays late at night, many of them written by new writers. To cater for the musical interests of Light Programme listeners, a separate 'Pop' music department was created in July 1963.<sup>13</sup>

Glock as Controller, Music, did not speak Newman's language, but much that he said about BBC music policy was similar to Greene's language. Without any prompting, he always spoke of the paramount need for 'liveliness', of the need to turn away from 'conventional patterns', of 'trying to open up frontiers that would otherwise remain closed', and, above all, of the importance of taking risks. 'If you are prepared to put a foot anywhere, then you must be prepared to put it wrong.'<sup>14</sup>

Like Greene, Glock had worked on the *Daily Telegraph*—in his case as a music critic—and, like Greene, he had spent a formative period in Berlin.<sup>15</sup> Like Greene, too, he was interested after 1945 in what was happening on the Continent.<sup>16</sup> There was a personal link also between him and the Greene world. His younger sister Marjorie was Head of the French section in Bush House, and it was she and Michael Tippett who persuaded Glock to accept his new BBC position rather than become Principal of the Guildhall, a post to which he would probably have been appointed in 1959 had he not withdrawn his application on being offered the BBC post.

Glock, who was to remain the BBC's Controller, Music, until 1972, three years after Greene left the BBC, had a programme of his own to carry through when he arrived there. He wanted the Proms to enter a new era—he had found them 'spiritless'—but had to argue

<sup>12</sup> On the occasion of his retirement Gielgud produced Ibsen's *Brandt*.

<sup>13</sup> Cmnd. 2503 (1964), *Annual Report and Accounts of the British Broadcasting Corporation 1963-64*, p. 32. For the role of 'pop' music during the 1960s and the BBC's changing approach to it, see below, pp. 508-15.

<sup>14</sup> W. Glock, 'The BBC's Music Policy', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 1st ser., 10 April 1963.

<sup>15</sup> A student of Schnabel, he had seen and listened to about 150 operas while living in Berlin, and had also attended Hindemith's classes.

<sup>16</sup> In 1947 he had been sent round Europe by the Third Programme to explore what was happening in music; and on his visits he met, among others, Georg (later Sir Georg) Solti and Elisabeth (later Dame Elisabeth) Schwarzkopf.



his case with Lindsay Wellington, the kind of task Newman did not have to face, and Wellington did not always agree with him. Glock himself, while unwilling to have the planning left to a committee,<sup>17</sup> did not wish to dictate. He was accused by his critics of concerning himself too much with new or recent music, but he denied that he had introduced a 'single extra note' of contemporary music into his programmes.<sup>18</sup> What he had done, however, was to alter the mix both of contemporary music and of the BBC's 'total output'. For the first time Schoenberg was taken as seriously as Shostakovich. For the first time since the early years of the BBC Bach came into his own. Yet more Haydn was also heard than ever before.

In this connection, Glock's language was similar to that of Greene: 'it is better to include a small chamber of horrors than to cry halt and treat contemporary music of any vitality as a disaster from which the listener must be carefully shielded.'<sup>19</sup> 'No matter how much I disliked a thing I didn't try to forbid it.'<sup>20</sup> It says much for Glock that he managed to remain on friendly terms with Sir Malcolm Sargent, who was still the great favourite of the Proms audience. The musical tastes of the two men were quite different—Sargent liked to play Vaughan Williams and Holst—and in no sense of the word was Sargent enterprising. Yet Glock knew that Sargent could establish a rapport with the crowds and that he had been—and was—a great success on the Symphony Orchestra's visits abroad.

'Highlights' seemed to Glock to be particularly important in the Proms programmes, some of which were planned more than two years ahead. They should always include, he thought, twelve musical events. The ones he chose included complete concert performances of Glyndebourne opera—*Don Giovanni* (1961), *Così Fan Tutti* (1962), and Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione de Poppea* (1963), a Glyndebourne innovation, characteristic of the times. There were also new British works, commissioned from, among others, Peter (later Sir Peter) Maxwell Davies, Richard Rodney Bennett, and Lennox Berkeley. Glock also wanted more orchestras to be heard and more conductors to appear, among them Georg Solti and Carlo Mario Giulini. There was a degree of reciprocity in this. The BBC's own Symphony

<sup>17</sup> W. Glock, *Notes in Advance* (1991), p. 101.

<sup>18</sup> \*Glock interviewed by Frank Gillard for the Oral History Project March 1983; and Glock, 'The BBC's Music Policy'.

<sup>19</sup> Glock, 'BBC's Music Policy'.

<sup>20</sup> \*Interview with Gillard, March 1983.

Orchestra had a highly successful Swiss tour in 1964, when it won glowing tributes from the Swiss Press.

Glock had already decided that in the short term it would be wisest to end Rudolf Schwarz's five-year contract and to allow the BBC Symphony Orchestra to be directed by a sequence of guest conductors, each of them, including Schwarz, devoting thirteen weeks to the task: they were to include Rudolf Kempe and Colin (later Sir Colin) Davis. This was a dangerous decision, criticized in the Press as strongly as Schwarz's conducting had been. Yet Glock had already made up his mind about which Chief Conductor he really wanted—Antal Dorati, a pupil of Bartók and Kodály, who before joining the London Symphony Orchestra had made his reputation across the Atlantic, first with the Dallas and later with the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra.

From 1962 to 1964 Dorati had been employed as the 'conductor chiefly responsible for training the Symphony Orchestra', and having already come to feel that he was the *de facto* permanent conductor, he was given the formal title of Chief Conductor at the beginning of the 1963–4 season. He remained in the post until the middle of 1966. When he formally took over, he described it in vivid language of his own as being 'like a marriage with the bride seven months pregnant'. Glock had introduced change earlier, first in the strings, then in the woodwind, so that new players were immediately at Dorati's disposal, and Hugh Maguire had replaced Paul Beard as Leader before Dorati arrived. Yet one great admirer of Schwarz, the oboist Janet Craxton, had left. For Dorati, the strength of Glock, with whom his relationship was close, was that while he had a great executive talent, his passion was music. 'He had an incredible load on his shoulders, some of it of his own making.'<sup>21</sup>

Glock failed in ambitious plans to change drastically the economics of the Orchestra. From its beginnings, much had been made of the security available to its members through their membership of BBC staff and their participation in the BBC's pension scheme; but during the 1960s such security had come to seem far less attractive. Younger players now wished to enjoy the freedom that players in other London orchestras seemed to enjoy. They also wished to be treated as self-employed and to be able to claim tax allowances they could not claim under pay-as-you-earn. Such changes, Glock believed, would enhance quality and restore the Symphony Orchestra to the

<sup>21</sup> A. Dorati, *Notes of Seven Decades* (1979), p. 260.

'pre-eminent position' it had held before the War.<sup>22</sup> The cost of the changes, £23,000, was more, however, than the BBC was prepared to pay, and an unsatisfactory compromise was eventually reached.

It was a consolation that the Corporation agreed to offer more music than ever before in the wake of the Pilkington Committee Report. A new 'needletime' agreement concluded with Phonographic Performance Ltd. in June 1964 made possible an increase in the quantity of music broadcast<sup>23</sup> and the development after 1964 of a new music programme on hitherto unused hours on Network Three.<sup>24</sup> It was 'controlled' not by the Third Programme but by the Home Service—first under Ronald Lewin, who was rightly proud of it, and later under John (later Sir John) Manduell, who was brought to London from the Midland Region.

To the delight of lovers of classical music, there was now to be weekday music from 7 a.m. to 6.30 p.m., Saturday music from 8 a.m. to 12.30 p.m., and Sunday music from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., except during Test Matches.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, more than recorded music was on offer. For example, the cellist Rostropovich was heard at a concert from Aldeburgh. There were series too—of Haydn symphonies, for example, and of Bach cantatas.<sup>26</sup> Several favourite programmes about music, the kind of programmes in which the BBC specialized, were transferred from the Home Service, among them *Music Magazine* and *Talking about Music*.

Glock, who had been disappointed that the new music programme could not 'begin with a bang'—it had to develop gradually—loved working out the shape of daily and weekly schedules, including highly patterned schedules, planned as unities. Not everyone, however, approved. Benjamin Britten thought that the St Matthew Passion should be heard only at Easter, and W. H. Auden complained that music had been turned into a consumer good. Glock himself was aware of the dangers of offering 'musical wallpaper'.<sup>27</sup> He faced little competition, however, from ITV—there are very few references to music in Sendall's *History*—and in sound the BBC's mono-

<sup>22</sup> See \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report by the Director of Sound Broadcasting, July–Sept. 1964', 29 Sept. 1964; 'Conditions of Service for Orchestral Staff: Contracts and Pensions', 29 Sept. 1964.

<sup>23</sup> For needletime and PPL, see below, pp. 509–11.

<sup>24</sup> See above, p. 229.

<sup>25</sup> See below, p. 580.

<sup>26</sup> Cmnd. 3122 (1966), *Annual Report and Accounts of the British Broadcasting Corporation 1965–66*, p. 31.

<sup>27</sup> \*Interview with Gillard, March 1983.

poly held. The BBC was both taste-maker and patron. This carried with it financial burdens, and the main problems that lay ahead in the mid-1960s concerned finance, not music making.

In other fields competition did matter. Yet, when towards the end of Harris's interview with Greene in 1964, Harris asked him explicitly whether he had been in favour of the end of its monopoly, the Director-General chose to say nothing in reply about competitive organization. He devoted all his attention to programmes. He replied to the question somewhat differently, none the less, from the way that he would have replied to the Pilkington Committee. It had been 'probably . . . good for the BBC', he told Harris, that the monopoly had gone: it had 'opened a lot of windows'. Whether it had been good for the country, he went on, was a different matter. What was certain was that BBC standards had not declined. When people grumbled about standards, as they often did, they were usually, in Greene's view, not thinking about the quality of the programmes but about a widening of the range of subjects which the BBC was now dealing with, 'subjects which, though vitally important, were once taboo—and in their view ought to remain taboo'.<sup>28</sup>

## 7. The Second Channel

It is somewhat surprising that in this revealing interview Greene said little about BBC-2, for much of the discussion about broadcasting before 1964 had centred on the new opportunities for the right kind of competition that a second BBC television channel could provide.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, by the time Greene gave his interview, much imaginative energy had already been applied to the inauguration of the eagerly awaited new channel (on 625 lines in the UHF bands). Programme makers were excited too, as Newman was. In his words, 'the arrival of BBC-2, with its demand for new programs, was a godsend'.<sup>2</sup>

There had been ample evidence of imaginative energy in September 1960, the month when the Pilkington Committee was appointed. 'We are anxious to have an additional programme,' Greene had told the Conservative Bow Group, 'because we don't think we are doing

<sup>28</sup> Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 285–6.

<sup>2</sup> *Variety*, 29 Oct. 1986.

our job properly without it.' 'We should not have anything in the nature of a Home and a Light. The programmes would be planned together to provide reasonable alternatives. There would be much more space for regional contributions and for educational material in the widest sense of the word.'

The worst solution of all, Greene had added, would be 'a specifically educational programme'. This was an idea that had 'found support among a few Labour MPs', as well as among some of the existing programme companies, who felt, according to Greene—and here he was attributing motives—that it 'would relieve them of some of their more unwelcome responsibilities'. From the BBC's point of view, such a programme, he warned, would be 'unnecessary, wasteful in staff and overheads, and bound to shake the BBC's position as the main instrument of broadcasting'.<sup>3</sup>

The BBC's evidence to the Pilkington Committee had been along these lines, with one addition—the intention of providing 'more opportunity for programmes of an experimental nature'.<sup>4</sup> Adam expanded the idea. 'We do not want a second channel,' he added, very much in his own language, 'because we want to encourage people to go on watching hour after hour. We do not necessarily expect the public will do more viewing in total than before. We do not want television to become a mother substitute to which people of all ages turn increasingly for solace and nourishment.'<sup>5</sup>

What a second channel would do, Adam argued, would be to remove in the public interest the strait-jacket from the people inside the BBC who were responsible for what came to be called BBC-1. The 'tyranny of timing and planning' would disappear. 'In the circumstances of a single channel we cannot fulfil what the Charter lays upon us to do. We do not inform enough; we do not educate enough; the chance of experiment so that we may entertain better is very limited.' A second channel would for the first time offer

<sup>3</sup> \*Address to the Bow Group, 29 Sept. 1960 (R44/548). A handwritten version survives. See also his *Future Prospects in Broadcasting*, Sixth Bishop Bell Memorial Lecture, 30 April, 1963. Greene's hosts, the Workers' Educational Association, were told not only that the idea of a separate educational authority was wrong, but that 'as the national instrument of broadcasting' the BBC could not operate on the lines of 'what the Americans would call an egghead channel'. For the idea of a separate educational programme, see also below, pp. 485–6.

<sup>4</sup> BBC Memorandum No. 1, presented to the Pilkington Committee, Aug. 1960, printed in Cmnd. 1819 (1962), *Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960, Appendix E*, p. 89.

<sup>5</sup> K. Adam, 'The Planning of Two-Channel Television', *Ariel Supplement*, 'Television Jubilee 1936–61', Oct. 1961.

televised entertainment for minorities, for 'those people who are interested in the uncommon denominators—not the common ones like Dixon or Bootsie and Snudge'.<sup>6</sup>

The Pilkington Committee was easily convinced by this line of argument,<sup>7</sup> and in June 1962 the Government gave the BBC the green light. There were some initial doubts on the part of the engineers as to whether it would be possible to go ahead more quickly than had originally been intended, but all such doubts were cast aside as the target date was moved forward first from April 1965 to January 1965, and later from January 1965 to April 1964. 'Timetables were torn up, and the impossible had to be possible.'<sup>8</sup> In fact, less than two years were to elapse between the Pilkington Committee's approval of the go-ahead, ratified by the Government, and the launching of BBC-2 for the London area.<sup>9</sup>

These were years of hard work inside the Television Extension Committee, years that have been most memorably described by its Executive Secretary, Miall, who rightly emphasized the forbidding technical complexities.<sup>10</sup> The technical difficulties were formidable, for the opening of the channel involved the building of a new transmitter at Crystal Palace, along with a chain of no fewer than twelve main broadcasting stations and thirty or forty low-powered booster transmitters. The full co-operation of the Post Office was essential for the success of this ambitious programme.<sup>11</sup> So, too, was the support of industry.<sup>12</sup> There were only two firms in the country who manufactured masts of the type required—some, it was pointed out, might have to be one and a half times the height of the Eiffel Tower<sup>13</sup>—and there were only four construction groups capable of putting them up.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> See above, p. 295.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Peacock, 'BBC-2', *Ariel*, April 1963.

<sup>9</sup> The Midlands would follow, and it was hoped that 70% of the population would be covered by the end of 1966 (Address to the Parliamentary Press Gallery Luncheon Club, 6 Feb. 1963, part printed in *BBC Record*, 17 (Feb. 1963)).

<sup>10</sup> An undated, unpublished article written in Spring 1963 was called 'Towards a New Television Channel'. See also his *BBC Lunch-Time Lecture 'The Future of BBC Television'*, 14 Nov. 1962, the first of the BBC's Lunch-Time Lectures. He is described on the title-page as 'organizing the planning of the BBC's second television channel'.

<sup>11</sup> The Post Office would provide microwave links between studios and the main transmitting stations. It would also have to provide new circuits everywhere with wider bandwidth vision.

<sup>12</sup> For the engineering side of the story, see F. C. McLean, 'Speech to the Radio and Television Retailers' Association', 22 May 1963, repr. in *BBC Record*, 19 (May 1963), and T. H. Bridgewater, 'Putting BBC-2 on the Air', *Ariel*, March 1964.

<sup>13</sup> For this and other technical details, see below, pp. 813 ff.



The development also involved a major campaign to inform viewers of the need to convert their existing sets or to buy new ones, for the new channel would be using a 625-line UHF transmission system, which would not allow reception on existing sets. 'It is rather like being asked to build a second network of railways in this country,' Miall said of the task, 'which will gradually reach all the existing railway stations, but the track must be of different gauge. And, moreover, we must continue running the old system, on the old gauge, for a number of years to come, though some of the engines and carriages will have to be capable of travelling along either gauge of track.'<sup>14</sup> With an existing investment in over 12 million sets working on 405 lines, there would be 'no question of abandoning the existing standards for several years', but the new system would be used also for colour transmission, and would facilitate the taking of television programmes in colour from Europe. Eventually colour would be one of the attractions of the new service.<sup>15</sup>

Because of the cost of conversion or of new purchase, the programme content of the new channel could not be restricted either to education or to 'minority entertainment'. Viewers who already had a choice of two programmes, as most of the country then did, were 'not going to invest in special new tuners and new aerials only to receive programmes for specialised minorities, or repeats' or 'adult education programmes'. There were no 'woulds' in Miall's picture, only 'wills'. 'BBC 2 will be of mixed popular appeal, not what Americans sometimes call an intellectual ghetto.'<sup>16</sup> Moreover, the new service was to present at least twenty-five hours of fresh material a week, rising in 1965 to thirty hours, 'almost half as much again as we are broadcasting today from the total of our thirteen large production studios in London and the regional centres, our ten outside broadcasting units, . . . Alexandra Palace, and our Film Department at the old Ealing Film Studios, . . . the largest television film unit in the world'.<sup>17</sup>

Given Miall's line of argument, BBC Audience Research was asked in the first instance not to deal with attitudes towards alternative programming, but to discover just how aware existing viewers were of the impending arrival of the new service and just how willing they

<sup>14</sup> Miall, 'The Future of BBC Television', p. 5.

<sup>15</sup> See below, pp. 857-60.

<sup>16</sup> Miall, 'Towards a New Television Channel'.

<sup>17</sup> Miall, 'The Future of BBC Television', p. 10.

would be to take the necessary steps to receive it. Six monthly surveys were carried out, therefore, within the Crystal Palace transmission area, the first of them in October 1963. The early conclusions reached were that, despite publicity from the BBC and the radio manufacturers, one viewer in three did not know that a new aerial would be necessary. None the less, knowledgeable or ignorant, by April 1964 four out of ten of them would be suitably equipped to receive BBC-2.<sup>18</sup>

In programming terms the new development, it was stressed, would not mean further competition with ITV; nor would it mean that there would be new competition inside the BBC. Everything would be planned. If, as a result, 'still larger audiences' were attracted to view BBC television, that would be a bonus. In Greene's words, 'we shall not be sorry'. He did not believe, he reiterated, that the increase in the size of audience for BBC programmes indicated that those programmes were getting worse. 'I have more confidence in the good people of this country than to believe that.'<sup>19</sup>

Adam, who referred to the new channel as 'king sized television', expanded on the point in a debate at Durham University Union Society in February 1963 on the motion 'that this House welcomes the Pilkington Report'. It was a debate that was considered important enough to be summarized in *BBC Record*. This was not simply because Adam was taking part in it or because the motion was said to have been carried by a large majority—these were doubtless two reasons—but because Adam, in the course of the debate, took the opportunity, almost in the language of an American Presidential candidate, to concentrate on relations between the BBC and ITV:

It has been suggested, and the sectional lobbies inside and outside Parliament will press this falsehood, for that is what it is, that we are out, or shall be when we have a second channel, to annihilate the commercial channel, that we shall so mount programmes as to present the viewer with an inevitable desire to watch the BBC only. This is nonsense, utter, stupid nonsense. Speaking as Director of BBC Television, I can tell you that we are less and less concerned with commercial competition. We are even paying less attention to the counting of heads . . . I declare here and now that we shall seek the

<sup>18</sup> The BBC set up a special BBC-2 Information Service in the early Summer of 1963. It worked closely with the Radio Equipment Manufacturing Association and the BBC's Engineering Information Department. (See G. Howard, who headed it, 'A Study in Persuasion', *Ariel*, March 1964.) Howard quoted the words of D. Seward, Managing Director of Rank-Bush-Murphy: 'The BBC, having shed for ever the mantle of Auntie and behaving now with all the enthusiasm, drive and unbounded energy of a youngster on the threshold of a new career, has done a wonderful job, along with the industry.'

<sup>19</sup> *Future Prospects in Broadcasting*, 30 April 1963.

ratings, in the sense of running after them, less and less. And I mean from now on; I do not mean from April 1964. So that I can say without any qualifications, that we have no desire to attempt to destroy by our programme planning the legitimate audience that commercial television can hope to achieve . . . There is not, and never will be, any deliberate effort or intention . . . to destroy ITV.<sup>20</sup>

Unfortunately, the *BBC Record* gives no details of what any other speaker in the debate said.<sup>21</sup>

By the time that the debate took place and Miall had written his paper, the Television Extension Committee, described by Tom Sloan as 'the BBC's largest sitting appointments board', knew that Greene had chosen Peacock as Programme Chief of the new channel. Ten years older than William Pitt when he became Prime Minister—as Miall pointed out,<sup>22</sup> Peacock was an interesting choice. 'New top man' was one newspaper headline when his appointment was announced, 'and he is only 33.'<sup>23</sup> He had been creating or managing programmes for about two-thirds of British television's effective life. He was producing *Panorama*, for instance, before commercial television started.

Peacock stated his first views on his new mission in an article in *Ariel* in April 1963, where he revealed all the difficulties that confronted him, not least dual 405/625 line standards. 'Assuming that the television industry provides us with our equipment on time; assuming that Planning and Installation Department and everyone else gets it installed and working by April 1964; assuming that we can find all the staff we need; assuming that Controller, Finance, can balance the books; assuming all this perhaps the hardest task will be to create a completely new range of programmes for BBC-2.' He also noted that the impact of BBC-2 would be 'even stronger if its launching were to coincide roughly with the long-awaited start of colour television'.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *BBC Record*, 17 (Feb. 1963). Debating points were made years later by Milton Shulman in the *Evening Standard*, 19 April 1984, 'The Battles of Baby Brother', who claimed that before the channel opened there was not much emphasis in the publicity that the channel 'was going to take on the role of the Corporation's electronic conscience'.

<sup>21</sup> Both the proposer and the seconder of the motion came from inside the BBC; the opposer and his seconder were members of Durham University. Adam's seconder was Edward Wilkinson, North-East England BBC Representative.

<sup>22</sup> Miall, 'Towards a New Television Channel'.

<sup>23</sup> *Daily Mail*, 15 Jan. 1963.

<sup>24</sup> Peacock, 'BBC-2', *Ariel*, April 1963. Special crash courses were put on for trainees, and no fewer than 8,000 people applied for the production training scheme alone. All in all, 900 additional staff were taken on.

A later paper by Peacock, dated 11 December 1963 and presented both to the Board of Governors and to the BBC's General Advisory Council, showed how much original thinking had gone into dealing with the last of these tasks between the spring and the winter of 1963. It set out clearly details of the new 'master pattern' of BBC-2 as Peacock then saw it.<sup>25</sup> The programme would be radically new in its layout when compared with BBC-1: it would offer something quite different from the same mix of programmes in a different order. Above all else, it would find a balance between 'majority' and 'minority' programmes, and in the process it would broaden their range. The paper also recognized 'the need to develop the use of television in the field of higher and adult education'.

Given these objectives, the solution that Peacock had was highly ingenious. Instead of devising a programme schedule in which a typical evening contained a mixture of educational, informational, and entertainment programmes, there would now be seven evenings of separate and distinctive television each week, each evening's viewing having its own 'purpose and internal logic'. Peacock called this a 'seven faces pattern'. On Saturdays, the day with which Peacock began, there would be a 'positive alternative' to existing programmes, including three hours of non-sporting programmes on Saturday afternoon. On Sunday evening an effort would be made to 'create a sense of occasion' by alternating 'serious plays', 'serious music', and the best continental films. During the later part of the evening there would be a twist. A popular entertainment programme on BBC-2 would confront *Monitor* on BBC-1.

The intention on Monday would be to provide an evening of 'straight family entertainment' with a 'strong comedy backbone', and on Tuesday—in complete contrast—to tackle education in a

<sup>25</sup> In this paper BBC-2 was hyphenated. In Miall's paper it had not been. Adam did not use the term in his *Ariel* article, 'The Planning of Two-Channel Television'. Miall's account of likely programme content was necessarily relatively vague: Peacock's, written several months later, was relatively precise. For Miall, 'new kinds of entertainment are being planned, including those which exploit to the full the relationship between a public performance and its audience. . . . There is talk of a new breakthrough in variety and of experiments in the presentation of music . . . News programmes in depth towards the end of the evening will be included and a large increase in the resources for the coverage of actuality.' 'Mobile control rooms for Outside Broadcasts and film units, presages a tendency for the television of tomorrow to free itself from the studio walls.' For the situation in Dec. 1963 see also S. Hood, 'The Prospects Before Us', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 2nd ser., 11 Dec. 1963. Hood also noted staffing implications: 'We . . . had to recruit the staff required to run two programmes. We had to do so without triggering off a population explosion in the Shepherd's Bush area.'

venture called 'Tuesday Term'. Wednesday would be repeats night, with repeats of the best programmes from both BBC-2 and BBC-1. The intention on Thursday would be to present at least ninety minutes of peak-hour programmes to reflect 'minority interests, tastes and enthusiasms, including minority sports'. There would once again be 'straight family entertainment' on Fridays, but this time with an emphasis on narrative drama.

There would be news every day, with the main news at about 10.15 p.m. incorporated in a thirty-minute programme which would include not only news, but 'background information, illustration and analysis'. After the news was finished, there would be contrasts, for the programmes that followed each night would not necessarily reflect 'the character of the evening' as it had established itself earlier. Thus, on Wednesdays there would be a regular 'jazz programme', on Fridays a programme about parliamentary affairs, and on Sundays a special thirty-minute news review of the week especially for viewers who were deaf or hard of hearing.<sup>26</sup> On weekday mornings a thirty-minute 'Home School' programme would be broadcast for three- to four-year-olds. Other programme plans included a weekly serious music programme, monthly features on science, art, poetry, social affairs, and music. There would also be a weekly programme dealing with the criticism of television.<sup>27</sup>

Such a highly innovatory programme schedule, described by Adam as 'firmly individualistic in approach', was not to survive hostile criticism.<sup>28</sup> Peacock himself described it as a 'gamble'.<sup>29</sup> It was, however, the programme plan that BBC-2 offered—with further details of those participating—on the eve of opening night, Monday,

<sup>26</sup> Special permission was granted by the Post Office for this programme to be scheduled at 7 p.m., in the 'closed period' from 6.15 p.m. to 7.25 p.m. The Extension Committee had been determined that BBC-2 should not have to place a specifically religious programme in what was called the 'Godslot' period. Yet whatever was put in would have to be able to satisfy the Central Religious Advisory Committee.

<sup>27</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'The BBC-2 Master Pattern', 11 Dec. 1963.

<sup>28</sup> For Adam's views, see *Ariel*, March 1964, 'The Way Ahead'. Adam said in the article that his view had been confirmed that 'the difficulty of planning the channel would not be that there was not enough material to go round but rather a problem of selection'.

<sup>29</sup> *Daily Sketch*, 3 Feb. 1964. Hood, intellectualizing, said of it, 'To have taken BBC-1 as a master pattern and simply planned alternatives to it would have meant, first of all, that the resulting schedule bore the same relationship to BBC-1 as a negative print to a positive: black for white; light for serious. Any reshuffle in BBC-1 to meet a tactical move by the competitor would have dictated, by a chain reaction, the shape of the new programme. The BBC-2 schedule would have been without any internal logic of its own—an exercise in polymorphism achieved by the mere rearrangement of atoms. Michael Peacock has evaded these perils by giving over the main portion of each weekday evening to one area of programming.'

20 April 1964, a family night according to the schedule. The great attractions were to be a firework display and *Kiss Me Kate* (with Millicent Martin as Kate), although, as Peacock prudently explained, this was not to be standard fare. 'If we tried to produce a *Kiss Me Kate* every Monday we would go broke rapidly.'<sup>30</sup>

'Standard fare' on offer would itself be tempting enough. The first comedy series on Mondays would feature Danny Kaye; the first Monday 'pop concert' from the Albert Hall, *Top Beat*, would be a joint production with the Light Programme. For Tuesday evenings two shows with Duke Ellington had already been recorded. On Thursdays Humphrey Burton would be producing a 'serious music' programme. On Fridays the narrative drama series would begin with dramatizations of thirty novels, the first of them *The Elephant You Gave Me*. On Saturdays the alternative to sport would have as its compère Gay Byrne, straight from Granada, as Irish as Eamonn Andrews. At 10 p.m. there would be an international cabaret turn with Shirley Bassey as its first guest. On Sundays the first concert live from the Albert Hall would be Verdi's *Requiem*, and James Mossman would be the star reporter for the public affairs programmes.<sup>31</sup> There would also be a Francis Durbridge thriller, *Melissa*.<sup>32</sup>

Sadly, for reasons totally outside the BBC's control, BBC-2's long-awaited opening night was to stand out in BBC history not as a great landmark date but as 'the Night that Nearly Was'. Fifty journalists from many different countries had assembled for the opening transmissions, which were to include a new kind of informal news programme, *Line-Up*, from Alexandra Palace. The studio had been made to look like a working news-room, and reporters, not announcers, had been chosen for the programme, the first of them Gerald Priestland, who had served as a BBC Correspondent in many different parts of the world and who was to have an interesting BBC career ahead of him.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> *Evening News*, 20 April 1964.

<sup>31</sup> David Attenborough, who was to become Controller, BBC-2, in March 1965, was to interview a celebratory audience during the interval at the performance of the *Requiem*.

<sup>32</sup> M. Peacock, 'BBC-2 Plans and Programmes', *Ariel Supplement*, March 1964. See also Peacock, 'BBC-2 . . . My Master Plan', *Daily Sketch*, 3 Feb. 1964.

<sup>33</sup> Priestland, then 33 years old, had worked as a BBC Correspondent in several centres, including India, and from 1965 to 1969 was Chief Correspondent in Washington, with Charles Wheeler as assistant. Later, after serving on *Analysis*, he was to achieve celebrity as a Religious Correspondent. See G. Priestland, *Something Understood: An Autobiography* (1986).



An unusual guest had been invited to the planned opening night at Lime Grove—a kangaroo. During the test transmissions before the opening night,<sup>34</sup> the shape of the schedules—and many of the details—had been announced on the screens in a design which showed a kangaroo with an alert-looking baby kangaroo in its pouch. They were called Hullabaloo and Custard, and squeaky kangaroo toys had been on offer to attract young viewers. The kangaroo symbol had been much discussed in the Press, and for opening night, therefore, it had been arranged that a baby kangaroo should be borrowed from a circus, and ‘questioned on its reactions’ on the *Tonight* programme. In the first of the mishaps of the opening, death had intervened.<sup>35</sup> The baby kangaroo which had been requested had fallen ill, and had died a few days before 20 April. A full-sized kangaroo, George, had had to be substituted.

The serious mishap that made 20 April ‘the Night that Nearly Was’ was a power failure which started with an explosion at Battersea Power Station. The first warning at Lime Grove was a flicker of lights not in Studio B but in the bar: ‘too many people are switching on to watch’ was the immediate quip. Others, recalling the death of Grace Archer in 1955, whispered the word ‘sabotage’. Soon it became clear, however, that London was in the grip of its worst power failure. The underground stopped running, Buckingham Palace was in darkness, the microphones in the House of Commons went dead. At Television Centre battery supplies kept a few house lights running, but they too went dead. At Lime Grove George the kangaroo was stuck on the fourth floor. The lift had stopped.

It was obvious that the scheduled programme was off. Yet, since there was power at Alexandra Palace, Priestland was able to greet those viewers who had power in their own homes—only the central and western areas of London were affected—with the words ‘Well, welcome to BBC-2 from where it all began, Studio A, Alexandra Palace, now the newsroom for our new channel’. Meanwhile, Lime Grove remained in total darkness, with the engineers listening to radio news on their transistors and opening a book on the time when the lights would come back. They did not come back. ‘The night floated mysteriously, unbelievably on’<sup>36</sup> until 9.45 p.m., when all

<sup>34</sup> The Presentation Department had been projecting so many Cary Grant and Robert Mitchum films that, in Miall’s words, ‘one almost began to think they had joined the BBC staff’ (*EBU Review*, Summer 1964).

<sup>35</sup> As it had done in the case of the first Petra in *Blue Peter* (see above, p. 179).

<sup>36</sup> *Ariel*, May 1964.

hope was abandoned. Recalling the event in the *Evening Standard* twenty years later, Milton Shulman wrote that expectant viewers must have felt like guests at a wedding where both the bride and the bridegroom had failed to turn up.<sup>37</sup>

Those viewers who were blessed with power heard intermittent news announcements from Alexandra Palace, along with pieces of news, including a report of the Budget debate in the House of Commons, and stand-by records, the second of which was Cole Porter's 'It's All Right with Me'.<sup>38</sup> Another even more appropriate record was 'Till Tomorrow'. The scheduled programmes went out the following night. There was no need for a requiem, but, as Anthony Burgess, duly reverential, remarked in *The Listener*, before BBC-2 went on the air, a votive candle was placed in the *Line-Up* studio.<sup>39</sup> It was seen by viewers on the screen. Spirits rose. It now seemed something of a consolation that the black-out had added to the publicity.

There was, however, a need very soon afterwards for a total rethink about the programming schedule. The 'Seven Faces of the Week' pattern was abandoned in mid-July 1964, for four reasons which had not been adequately taken into account earlier. First, it proved difficult, if not impossible, to ensure that BBC-2 and BBC-1 would be 'complementary' services. The so-called 'planned alternative' was illusory. 'On some evenings BBC-2's "strength" was up against BBC-1's "strength"; on other evenings it was a case of "like" against "like".' Second, 'common junctions' were proving difficult to achieve. It was difficult for viewers to switch from one channel to another when a particular programme ended. Third, some BBC-2 programmes had little chance at all because of what was being offered on BBC-1 television. For example, a National Youth Theatre production of *Julius Caesar* was pitted against *Dr Kildare* and *This is Your Life*; and when Verdi's *Requiem* was broadcast, BBC-1 was offering *The Black and White Minstrel Show*. Fourth, on certain nights 'popular' programmes with the highest ratings were grouped together on BBC-2, and 'far too large a proportion of viewers' felt, therefore, that BBC-2 was only of interest on one or two nights a week. In consequence, fewer people were prepared to convert their

<sup>37</sup> *Evening Standard*, 19 April 1984.

<sup>38</sup> \*Official Programme as Broadcast for BBC-2, 20 April 1964.

<sup>39</sup> *The Listener*, 30 April 1964.

sets (new aerials alone cost £12) or to buy new ones than had been anticipated.<sup>40</sup>

The slow take-up of BBC-2 contrasted vividly with the speedy build-up before its opening, and it seemed ominous that no figures about audience size were announced until 10 November 1964, when a Press Release stated that 1,250,000 people were now equipped to receive BBC-2 in the South-East.<sup>41</sup> It was estimated at the same time that average UHF viewers were spreading their viewing in the ratio BBC-2: 12, BBC-1: 39, and ITV: 49.<sup>42</sup>

By then, only 'Tuesday Term' of the original schedule remained, although no minority programmes were totally dropped.<sup>43</sup> What was most impressive was that a genuine effort had been made to ensure complementarity. Thus, on Monday evenings, BBC-1's *Perry Mason* followed by the News, was now 'complemented' on BBC-2 by one of its four monthly features *Horizon*, *Workshop*, *Writer's World*, or the *Human Side*, and on Tuesdays *Arrest and Trial* on BBC-2 was complemented by a documentary followed by 'serious music' on BBC-1.

Changes came just in time as far as 'tired programme-makers' were concerned, for in Peacock's words, there had been some lowering of morale, and writers and entertainment artists, too, had begun to show 'some reluctance to work for BBC-2'. It did not help that sections of the Press talked of what had happened as a 'flop'. None the less, figures improved when additional sporting programmes, little featured in the initial publicity, were broadcast in the summer. Broadcasts of Test Matches were extended. So, too, were Test Match

<sup>40</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report by the Director of Television, July/Sept. 1964', 28 Oct. 1964. This section of the Report was submitted not by Adam but by Peacock.

<sup>41</sup> Greene apologized to the Governors for the lack of figures on 4 June 1964 (\*Board of Governors, *Minutes*), blaming it on a computer error. Some figures were, none the less, supplied to Adam by Silvey on 5 June 1964 (\*Silvey to Adam, 'Your Glasgow Speech', 5 June 1964 (Publicity file: Audience Research 1964-5)). By the time of the last Audience Research survey—in that month—it was clear just how slow take-up would be. The new service had already been in operation for two months, but only 12% of viewers were equipped to receive it, with another 6% waiting for aerials and a further 5% regarded as 'promising prospects' (\*Audience Research Report, 'Viewers' Preparations for BBC-2', No. 6, June 1964 (VR/64/354)).

<sup>42</sup> The estimate could not be used, however, as the basis of a national projection, since Silvey had privately concluded from a special audience survey—did it need a survey?—that UHF viewers were predominantly middle or upper class, and there was a higher proportion of these in the South-East than in the other parts of the country (\*Silvey to Peacock, 'BBC-2 Public', 13 Aug. 1964 (WAC T16/300)). When on 6 Dec. 1964 the Sutton Coldfield transmitter was opened and BBC-2 could now be seen in the Midlands, the audience divided as follows: BBC-2: 10, BBC-1: 43, and ITV: 47 (\*Silvey to Peacock, 'BBC-2 Audience Figures', 1 Jan. 1965 (T16/300)). The general ratio at that time was, however, BBC: 45, ITV: 55.

<sup>43</sup> For Tuesday Term in its educational context see below, pp. 488-9.

commentaries. The relay from Henley Regatta was the first in the history of BBC television.<sup>44</sup> Another non-sporting attraction was Malcolm Muggeridge in *Let Me Speak*: he questioned groups of young people 'holding unorthodox opinions—Moral Re-armers, Communists, Jesuits, Empire Loyalists etc.'—a fascinating list. The series was so successful that it was hoped to mount a further series later. Another interesting programme was *The Second Sex*, a discussion series about men, devised, produced, and contributed to entirely by women.

The most successful of all the new BBC-2 programmes was a documentary series, *The Great War*, imaginatively and meticulously planned to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the war of 1914 to 1918. The idea of such a series had been mooted as early as 1960 by Paul Johnson, then on the editorial staff of the *New Statesman*, but discussion on it had been suspended 'pending a reorganisation of the Talks Group'.<sup>45</sup> There had been sufficient progress by 1963, after twenty-six instalments had been agreed upon, for Peacock to express BBC-2 interest in the project, which was then the responsibility of Milne, the Head of *Tonight* Productions.<sup>46</sup> In view of its costs, however, Milne asked Adam for BBC-1 participation.<sup>47</sup> After a go-ahead had been given and considerable progress made,<sup>48</sup> it was decided that each episode would last forty minutes,<sup>49</sup> and the first of them went on the air on 30 May 1964.<sup>50</sup>

What viewers saw on their screens was televised history at its best, 'the television equivalent', Marsland Gander called it, 'of a classic work of literature'.<sup>51</sup> The series made the most of both visual and oral history. No fewer than 160 miles of film were collected, most of it never seen before in Britain, and no fewer than 35,000 eye-witness accounts were provided by respondents from many different coun-

<sup>44</sup> \*Report by the Director of Television, July–Sept. 1964'.

<sup>45</sup> \*Baverstock to Hood, 'Paul Johnson and the "Great War" Series', 25 May 1961 (T32/1158/1).

<sup>46</sup> Unfortunately there is a gap in the BBC files on the programme from May 1961 to May 1963.

<sup>47</sup> \*Peacock to Milne, 'BBC-2: Possible Film Series on World War I', 7 May 1973; Peacock to Adam, 'World War I Series', 10 May 1963 (T32/1158/1).

<sup>48</sup> \*Essex to Peacock, 'The Great War', 24 Oct. 1963 (T32/1158/1).

<sup>49</sup> This was a compromise between the twenty-five minutes originally planned and the forty-five minutes asked for by the producers and accepted reluctantly by Baverstock (\*Milne to Spicer, 'Great War Series', 30 Jan. 1964 (T32/1158/1)).

<sup>50</sup> It was followed by the second episode of the serialization of H. G. Wells's *Ann Veronica* (*Radio Times*, 28 May 1964).

<sup>51</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 30 Nov. 1964.

tries, who had been asked just what it was like to take part—at various levels—in a war to which the adjective ‘great’ was still being applied. The shortest comment came from a rifleman at Ypres, serving there from August 1915 to April 1916—‘Nothing vivid happened, it was just hold on to what you have got.’ The longest was a letter of 165 pages. There was, of course, enough other evidence from the diaries of war leaders and from official and unofficial reports about the struggle.

For the producers, Tony Essex, who was in charge of film, and Gordon Watkins, who supervised the script, *The Great War* was not primarily a story about fighting. It sought to ‘produce a developing philosophy on war and to give an account of the political, social and economic history of the early twentieth century’.<sup>52</sup> In fact, it was brilliantly depicted military history too. Captain Basil Liddell Hart was chief military adviser to the series, and the writers included John Terraine, Correlli Barnett, Barrie Pitt, and Alistair Horne.<sup>53</sup> There was a huge production team, brilliantly led by Essex, then aged 38, and Watkins, then aged 43, and the programme narrator was Sir Michael Redgrave.

Watkins, a journalist who had learnt his journalism in the provinces, had worked on *Picture Post*, and made his television mark with the *Tonight* team.<sup>54</sup> Essex, whose career had been quite different before he, too, joined the *Tonight* team in 1957,<sup>55</sup> had worked for thirty shillings a week as a tea boy in Wardour Street after the end of the Second World War. After his own spell of military service, he had later been a film editor in Canada, sometimes employed by Sydney Newman. It was an added qualification in 1963 that he had a German wife.

There were many technical difficulties that Essex, in particular, had to surmount. Early motion pictures had been projected at 16 frames per second, whereas television projected films at 25 frames per

<sup>52</sup> *Ariel*, Feb. 1964. Essex wanted to follow up the series with a sequel ‘The Quest for Peace’ (*Daily Telegraph*, 30 Nov. 1964), and in the form *The Lost Peace* this was televised in 1966. In Aug. 1967 he joined Baverstock in Yorkshire Television.

<sup>53</sup> Liddell Hart, who disapproved of the script of the Battle of the Somme programme, asked for his name to be removed from the screen credits (see letter to *The Times*, 19 Sept. 1964). He had protested first to the producers and then to Greene (31 Aug. 1964). Greene’s reply (3 Sept. 1964) seemed to him to show ‘palpable unawareness of the text of the commentary’ (T32/1148/1). See also *The Times*, 21 Sept. 1964. Liddell Hart and Terraine had clashed before on the role of Haig. See also J. Terraine and C. Barnett, ‘The Europe That Was’, *Radio Times*, 28 May 1964. The script-writers were assisted by a team of able and diligent researchers: one of them was Julia Gaitskell.

<sup>54</sup> See his obituary by Cynthia Kee in the *Independent*, 17 July 1992.

<sup>55</sup> See above, p. 162.

second. New prints had to be made, therefore, from the original negatives. Strong backgrounds were filtered down to make foreground details stand out more sharply on electronic equipment. One of the excitements of working in television during the 1960s was that new techniques demanded new arts. There was an immense sense of creative satisfaction when the completed work appeared on the screen.

## 8. New Programmes: *Dr. Who* and *Z Cars*

So there certainly was in two very different programmes from *The Great War*, *Dr. Who* and *Z Cars*. Both were presented under Newman's auspices, the latter starting before he arrived. Viewed in retrospect, in their own distinctive and very different ways, they revealed almost as much about the social and cultural change of the Sixties as *TW3* or Greene's speeches or topical leaders on radio and television in newspapers and periodicals.

*Dr. Who*, a programme with an exceptionally long life, was still running when the period covered in this volume ends. It raised only occasional controversy—and then for very different reasons from *TW3*. It first went on the air on 23 November 1963, the day that *TW3*, already scheduled to end, broadcast its moving tribute to Kennedy.<sup>1</sup> A Saturday programme from the start, twenty-five minutes in length, it was quite deliberately not topical. Indeed, it roamed as widely as possible over time and space. The earliest programme was 'First Stop—the Stone Age'. Yet, as *Dr. Who* developed under the influence of different script-writers, producers, and actors, it reflected at several different levels the changing preoccupations and values of the 1960s. In time, indeed, it was to acquire a history of its own, which seemed almost as long as the Doctor's own mythical existence as a Time Lord, and to provide the substance for a cult, even for an industry.

The merchandising of *Dr. Who* products, from toys to comic strips, was an unanticipated but lucrative by-product. For all his suspicion of broadcasting based on advertising, Greene approved of such merchandising. Indeed, before he became Director-General, he had

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 374.



visited the United States to look into the possibilities of selling BBC films.<sup>2</sup> Eventually the cult of *Dr. Who* was to spread there too. The American programme *Star Trek*, first screened in September 1966, had itself been slow to take off there. Surprisingly, it was not until 1969, when Americans first walked on the Moon, that it became popular there, the basis of another cult. In the same year it was first shown by the BBC in a brief period when *Dr. Who* was off the air.

The character of Dr. Who changed considerably as scripts changed and as successive actors took over the part, although as Zastor, the leader of a beleaguered planet in one of the series, well described 'the Doctor', he always remained 'a man who solved the insoluble by the strangest means. He seemed to see the threads that bind the universe together, and have the ability to mend them when they break.'<sup>3</sup> The first Dr. Who was played by William Hartnell, the second by Patrick Troughton (1966–9), the third by Jon Pertwee (1970–4), and the fourth by Tom Baker, who had just taken over in 1974. Each offered a distinctive, often idiosyncratic, characterization of the role. When Troughton succeeded Hartnell, who was ill, in 1966 after twenty-nine stories—to leave himself, at his own request, after another twenty—'considerable changes' were made in the character. Hartnell was well known on stage and screen before *Dr. Who* made him a household name.<sup>4</sup> Troughton was a character actor, and did not need any prompting to play the part in a quite different way from Hartnell. His doctor had to be genuinely 'off beat', prankish rather than quirky.<sup>5</sup>

Pertwee, an actor with a theatrical background, played *Dr. Who*, in his own words, 'as a kind of science fiction James Bond with a touch of the Renaissance man'.<sup>6</sup> The first Dr. Who to be seen in colour, he was supported, from the beginning, as befitted the times, by a variety of new technological gadgets, like a sonic screwdriver. He also had a new enemy, 'The Master', played superbly by Roger Delgado, who

<sup>2</sup> See Tracey, op. cit., pp. 139 ff. Beadle had pointed the way: it was he who first conceived of consortia.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in P. Haining, *Doctor Who: 25 Glorious Years* (1988), p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> He had been a juvenile actor with Sir Frank Benson, and was to appear on television both in *Softly, Softly* and in *Dr. Finlay's Casebook*—not to speak of *David Copperfield*. He had even played Hitler in a Gateway Theatre production of *Eva Braun* in 1950 (*Daily Telegraph*, 2 Sept. 1966). It was, however, his performance as an old Rugby League talent scout in *This Sporting Life* in 1963 that led him to being selected to play the Doctor. Cultures interconnect.

<sup>5</sup> Haining, op. cit., p. 90.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 92. He had worked both as a circus and as a cabaret performer. Most recently, he had starred in the comedy radio programme *The Navy Lark*.

was to be tragically killed while filming in Turkey in June 1973. The fourth Dr. Who, the unpredictable Tom Baker, had been spotted by the then producer, Barry Letts, in the film *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad*, and was handed over to a new producer, Philip Hinchcliffe, and a new script-writer, Robert Holmes.

Under Letts's direction, after ratings had improved, the tenth anniversary of *Dr. Who* had been celebrated by a remarkable episode in which the first three Doctor Whos had all appeared. 'One of Four', it combined history, psychology, and magic, and might well have been called the regeneration game. Letts, inevitably for financial reasons, had been required to set the actions of the Doctor on Earth. Now he was liberated again to move into space.

Whoever was script-writing or acting, a more or less constant blend of fear and hope persisted in the exploration of themes that often recurred in successive series. Dr. Who was a 'hero for all ages',<sup>7</sup> and the themes were universal. None the less, there was a strong sense of the 1960s in, for example, David Whitaker, the Story Editor's announcement of the proposed second serial, which was based on a story by Terry Nation:

The 23rd Century and a planet apparently destroyed by neutron bombs, a form of destruction which eliminates human or living tissue without attacking buildings or machinery. Yet, in an underground city exist people who are just preparing to emerge and re-populate the planet, since the radiation is dying away, once they have exterminated the mutants, human survivors of the neutron who roam about in the forests of petrified trees and carbonised flowers. Who began the war, which race must survive and the identity of the graceful, beautiful people who wish to befriend the travellers when they face extinction blend to make an exciting adventure.<sup>8</sup>

Later in the decade, in 1965, Greene was to support Lord Normanbrook, as Chairman of the Board of Governors, in the decision to ban Peter Watkins's documentary *The War Game*. But that was set in the twentieth century, not in the twenty-third.<sup>9</sup>

It had been hoped to transmit the first episode of *Dr. Who* earlier than November 1963. But behind the scenes there was what Newman called a 'Dr. Who Hassle', a hassle involving both resources and schedules which brought in Newman himself; Baverstock, then Chief of Programmes, BBC-1; and, inevitably, Joanna Spicer. Newman believed that *Dr Who* would be an 'outstanding winner' 'if

<sup>7</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, 14 July 1982.

<sup>8</sup> \*D. Whitaker to V. Lambert *et al.*, 'Doctor Who', 31 July 1963 (WAC file TS/647/1).

<sup>9</sup> See below, p. 534. See also Briggs, *Governing the BBC*, pp. 121–3.

things go reasonably well and the right facilities can be made to work',<sup>10</sup> but it had a painful birth.<sup>11</sup>

The details of the 'hassle', which make a good case study, provide an insight into BBC working procedures. On 26 April 1963, Ayton Whitaker, an organizer in the BBC's Drama Group, headed by Newman, wrote to John Mair in Television Planning Department, giving details of *Dr Who* which was then expected to start in July. The agreed expenditure figure for each episode was £2,300. On 20 May Newman wrote to Baverstock, talking of a 24 August opening date. On 4 June, however, when Donald Wilson, the Head of Serials, Drama, Television, produced an outline for the first story, he was told by Newman that it would cost too much, and that he had to 'keep the entire production within the realms of practical live television'.<sup>12</sup> A few days later, Richard Levin, Head of Television Design, asked for the series to be delayed for a different reason—on the grounds that 'no accepted scripts' were ready—but a copy of his Memo on the subject was not passed on to the Drama Group.<sup>13</sup> The warning was subsequently repeated by J. F. Mudie, Head of Scenic Servicing.<sup>14</sup>

From her vantage-point in planning, Spicer described the situation to Baverstock, and suggested that the series should be delayed until four acceptable scripts had been produced. She also pointed out that the Drama Group should be warned that because of space limitations it would have to make use of the cramped and awkward Studio D at Lime Grove that was not suitable for special effects. Baverstock, she noted also, would be 'prepared to drop the series after eight if things go badly'.<sup>15</sup> Three days later, Newman wrote to Spicer about the 'hassle', complaining that there would now be inevitable delays, and the first programme was consequently rescheduled for 9 November 1963.

The 'hassle', however, was still far from over. An exchange of memoranda on 12 and 13 August revealed that Newman had now become fully aware of the limitations of Studio D, and when on 10 October Wilson warned that the limitations would entail extra costs,

<sup>10</sup> \*Newman to Baverstock, 'Dr. Who', 20 May 1963 (TS/647/1).

<sup>11</sup> While working at ABC, Newman had produced a children's series *Pathfinders in Space*.

<sup>12</sup> \*Newman to Wilson, ' "Dr. Who": Synopsis of First Story: The Giants', 10 June 1963 (TS/647/1).

<sup>13</sup> \*Levin to Spicer, 'Science Fiction Series', 13 June 1963 (TS/647/1).

<sup>14</sup> \*Mudie to Mair, 'Science Fiction Series', 20 June 1963 (TS/647/1).

<sup>15</sup> \*Spicer to Baverstock, 'Science Fiction Series', 24 June 1963 (TS/647/1).

Baverstock replied that he could not afford 'such a costly serial . . . in this financial year' and that Wilson should work on the basis of four episodes only.<sup>16</sup> There had to be complicated further negotiations, therefore, before Spicer agreed that there should be thirteen episodes after all. Publicity was now being affected also, and on 5 November, an appropriate date, Wilson wrote to the editor of the *Radio Times*, distressed to hear that front-page billing of the programme had been cancelled because (in part) of 'lack of confidence in the programme at Controller level'.<sup>17</sup>

In fact, a note of the new programme did appear on the cover of the *Radio Times* of 21 November with a half-page article about it inside. Other publicity came soon afterwards, and naturally ignored all the difficulties that had been going on behind the scenes. 'Television history will be made on Saturday,' David Hunn wrote in 'Show Piece' in *Tit-bits* on 23 November, 'when the BBC launch the first programme of a year-long series, *Doctor Who*. Never before has a series been guaranteed such a long run. TV planners usually work in batches of 13 weeks or less. *Emergency Ward Ten* was first designed as a six-week show.'<sup>18</sup>

It was only the day before, 22 November, that Baverstock agreed to two series (and possibly three) of thirteen programmes, although Newman had written confidentially to Wilson telling him that Baverstock was 'now happy about *Dr. Who*', and that if he handled him right about money, everything would be alright.<sup>19</sup> The long run was guaranteed on 18 February 1964, when Baverstock approved the continuance of *Dr Who* until the end of that year.

Two people who made significant contributions to the early history of *Dr. Who* did not figure at all in this hassle. The first was the producer, Verity Lambert, who had all the right qualifications. Aged 27 in 1964, she had worked both for ITV and in the United States, and when brought in by Newman, she was the only woman drama producer in the BBC.<sup>20</sup> The second was the writer of the lead-in music, also electronic, Ron Grainer, who worked in close conjunction with the BBC's Radiophonic Workshop, opened in 1958. Appro-

<sup>16</sup> \*Wilson to Baverstock *et al.*, 'Dr. Who', 10 Oct. 1963; Baverstock to Wilson, 'Dr. Who', 18 Oct. 1963 (TS/647/1).

<sup>17</sup> \*Wilson to D. G. Williams, 5 Nov. 1963 (TS/647/1).

<sup>18</sup> *Tit-bits*, 23 Nov. 1963.

<sup>19</sup> \*Newman to Wilson, 'Dr. Who', 15 Nov. 1963 (TS/647/1).

<sup>20</sup> She was educated at Roedean, and in the USA had worked with David Susskind. From the start she insisted that *Dr. Who* was not for children only, although the programme went out at a time when there was a large child audience.

priately, sound engineers four years before that had incorporated into a programme called *Journey into Space* the recorded sounds of tones from oscillators passed through the reverberation chamber of the National Physical Laboratory. They were the first recordings to offer 'spacey' sounds.<sup>21</sup> Lambert obviously knew how to handle both a variety of script-writers—there were nine of them in the first twelve months<sup>22</sup>—and a lively production team and a very varied group of actors, young and old, human and superhuman, organic, mechanical, and electronic.

By the time Greene ceased to be Director-General, *Dr. Who* had attracted millions of viewers, who had followed the travels of the Doctor in his super-telephone box Tardis (Time and Relative Dimensions in Space) and encountered creatures of all conceivable kinds in his company, including the dreaded Daleks, electronic robots who had been killed off by the script-writers in 1966 but been brought back by public demand. In November 1964, when the tenth *Dr. Who* serial, 'The Dalek Invasion of Earth', was shown, *Dr. Who* was among the programmes with the highest audience ratings.

Such a massive audience had not been in mind early in 1962 when the BBC's Drama Group commissioned two script-writers, Alice Frick and Donald Bull, to 'survey the field of published science fiction in its relevance to BBC Television drama' with a view to creating a fifty-two-week serial mainly for older children to fill the gap on Saturdays between *Grandstand* and *Juke Box Jury*.<sup>23</sup> The Drama Group under Newman's leadership was anxious to show that it could produce programmes for children of a far higher quality than the Children's Department,<sup>24</sup> and on the very eve of production Baverstock was still calling it 'a new children's drama serial'.<sup>25</sup> With the rise in audience, it became far more than this, although even in 1974 it was still necessary to insist that *Dr. Who* was not a children's

<sup>21</sup> See D. Briscoe and R. Curtis-Bramwell, *The BBC Radiophonic Workshop: The First Twenty-Five Years* (1983).

<sup>22</sup> Some were said to specialize in the past, others in the future. Few could do both (*Daily Mail*, 28 Nov. 1964).

<sup>23</sup> \*Donald Bull and Alice Frick, 'Science Fiction', 25 April 1962 (T5/647/1). A further report was commissioned from Frick and John Braybon, and was completed on 25 July 1962.

<sup>24</sup> See above, p. 346.

<sup>25</sup> \*Baverstock to Wilson, 'Dr. Who', 18 Oct. 1963 (T5/647/1). Joanna Spicer thought that it needed a subtitle. When she saw its first billing in the *Radio Times*, she wrote; 'it could quite easily be another *Dr. Kildare* from this' (\*Note to Acting Senior Planning Assistant, 11 Nov. 1963 (T5/647/1)).

programme. Like *Star Wars*, an undated BBC hand-out explained, it was basically 'a story of good against evil'.<sup>26</sup>

When Frick and Bull produced their initial survey, they did not introduce the dreaded Daleks. They recommended—as did a later report by Frick and John Braybon—that the main characters in the series should be neither monsters nor robots, but either time-travelers or telepaths. By March 1963, a team headed by Donald Wilson, who later in the decade was to produce the *Forsyte Saga*, had at last decided on who the characters should be—Dr. Who himself, Susan his granddaughter, and Ian and Barbara, two teachers from a school Susan had been attending on Planet Earth.

The malevolent Daleks, always ready to exterminate—the sounds they made were to be imitated everywhere, not only by children—were the brain-child not of a BBC script-writer but of a BBC designer, Raymond Cusick, the third man in the success story. He got the idea of their appearance—if not of their role—when 'fiddling with a pepperpot', and he had them produced in fibreglass after a weekend's work on the model. The final products, which first appeared on the screen just before Christmas 1963, had to be cheap, costing no more than £250 each, and for this reason the first notion that the men inside them should be mounted on tricycles, to enable them to move more efficiently, had to be abandoned.<sup>27</sup>

Economy had to count as much as ingenuity in the very remarkable contribution made to *Dr. Who* by designers and producers of sound effects. The Tardis, for example, had originally been planned to cost no more than £500, and had had to be budgeted for separately.<sup>28</sup> Given the paraphernalia, it must have been a relief when in 1964 the programme was switched from cramped Lime Grove to the Television Centre and to the Riverside Studio at Hammersmith.

Once it had taken shape and proved highly successful, what controversy there was about *Dr. Who* centred largely on whether particular episodes were suitable for children. Would they not be terrified by what they saw?<sup>29</sup> Would they understand what was being said—or implied? Already, in 1964 itself the programme was very

<sup>26</sup> \*BBC Hand-out, n.d. 'Who is Doctor Who?'

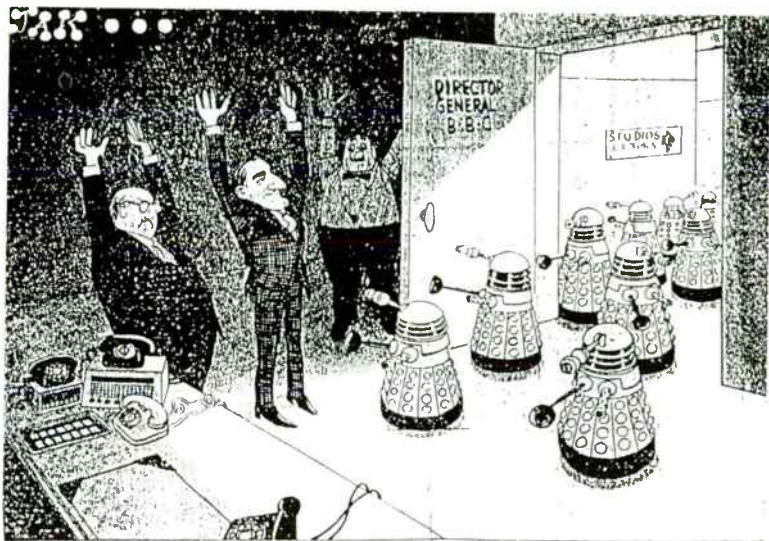
<sup>27</sup> *Swindon Evening Advertiser*, 19 Dec. 1964. Cusick, who told his story to the reporter Elsie Smith, had worked with the BBC for four years.

<sup>28</sup> \*Mair to Spicer, 22 Oct. 1963 (TS/647/1).

<sup>29</sup> On 28 April 1964 Adam, Director of Television, complained to Hood, Controller, Programmes, Television, about 'Creepiness' in the programmes. The complaint was passed on to Newman (\*Adam to Hood, 'Dr. Who: Future of', 28 April 1964 (TS/647/1)).



popular with children, and as the years went by, the children of 1964 grew up with it, and it with them. There was to be one particularly fierce controversy, however, in 1971, when Mrs Whitehouse attacked a recent series not for its horror but for its violence. The 'Terror of the Autons' had incorporated killer shop dummies and a lethal child's doll. As a result of her complaints—and, more effectively, those of others—*Dr Who* was moved from 5.15 p.m. to a spot closer to 6 o'clock.



"The one at the back looks like Donald Baverstock!"

9. 'The one at the back looks like Donald Baverstock!', *Jak* in *Evening Standard*, 2 March 1965.

Yet *Dr. Who* was not a children's programme. From the start it appealed to considerable sections of the substantial science fiction reading public. After Nigel Kneale's *Quatermass*, they had continued their education through *Quatermass II* and *Quatermass and the Pit*, and Kneale was invited—and refused—to write some of the first *Dr Who* scripts.<sup>30</sup> There had been serious elements in *Quatermass*—in the third series the Professor, operating in a Ministry of Science that

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Haining, *op. cit.*, p. 10. He thought it a 'rotten idea'.

was dominated by 'Zombies' (a key word of the period), discovered 'new depth in himself'—and so there were to be also in *Dr. Who* as the Doctor's companions and adversaries developed their personalities in a variety of unforeseen situations. The university lecturer Edward Blishen called *Dr. Who* 'compulsive nonsense',<sup>31</sup> but there was often shrewd sense there as well. At its best it was capable of fascinating highly intelligent adults.

For this reason *Dr. Who* needs to be related to serious science fiction programmes, among them *A for Andromeda*, a seven-part BBC serial which was transmitted on Tuesdays in October and November 1961, and which had the distinguished Cambridge astronomer Fred Hoyle as one of its script-writers. The other script-writer was John Elliot. Set in the Britain of the near future—1970—it drew on the growing interest in the shape of things to come that was to characterize the 1960s. It was a potentially sinister future, however, where, as in the later episodes of *Dr. Who*, computers figured prominently in the scenario, and where technology could be used not to improve but to manipulate. Even in the heart of the countryside there was always a military presence. There was often also an open or hidden psychological, social, and cultural conflict with internal as well as external foes. (American programmes would have been related more directly to the 'goodies' and 'baddies' of the Cold War.) Above all, there was a brooding sense that bureaucratic control carried with it both menace and muddle.

The darker side of the period was to become more prominent in *Dr. Who* after 1967, and—ironically—after it switched from black and white to colour in January 1970. It was a dark side which presented a social landscape in which there were often alarming contrasts of class and power. 'Gender', another theme of the 1960s, was brought into the landscape also, although there were significant changes in the approach to males and females as the series developed. The first girl to work with Dr. Who, Susan, played by Carole Ann Ford, was most often helpless in the face of adversity.<sup>32</sup> The later girls became more independent.<sup>33</sup> The biggest change occurred with

<sup>31</sup> *Daily Sketch*, 3 July 1964, quoting a Report published by the Advisory Centre for Education.

<sup>32</sup> She was eliminated in July 1964, the first of the cast changes in the girls. Before playing in *Dr. Who*, she had featured in several films, most recently as the girl-friend of Adam Faith, the pop singer, in *Mix Me a Person*.

<sup>33</sup> There is an interesting discussion of *A for Andromeda* which also deals briefly with *Quatermass* and the theme of gender in J. Leman, 'Wise Scientists and Female Androids', in J. Corner (ed.), *Popular Television in Britain* (1991), pp. 118–25. For a detailed discussion

the introduction in 1974 of Sarah Jane Smith, who had met the doctor in mysterious circumstances at a research establishment and had joined him of her own free will, stowing herself away on his Tardis.<sup>34</sup> There was also a sequence of 'boys' in the *Dr. Who* series, and how to relate the boys to the girls in the programme plots inspired the script-writers to suggest quite different 'solutions' at different times. During the regime of the first two Doctor Whos, Ian gave way to Steven, Steven to Ben, and Ben to Jamie. Jon Pertwee, however, had no 'male companions'.

The retirement of Verity Lambert from her job as producer of *Dr. Who* in 1966 was an important date, one of the break dates in the 1960s, for there were changes in tastes and styles around that time, of which she herself was fully aware. After *Dr. Who* she switched to *Adam Adamant Lives*, a programme which provided a different time framework. A period hero, Adamant, intrudes into the twentieth century to take on topical villains, male and female.<sup>35</sup> There was a more topical air to *Dr. Who* also after Innes Lloyd took over as third producer, to be succeeded in 1967 by Peter Bryant. The Doctor's companions were clearly moving with the times, and so, too, were the themes. Sorting out galactic problems was more complex even than sorting out the sociological problems of the late 1960s or the economic problems of the 1970s.<sup>36</sup> There were usually monsters to cope with too, far more of them. They included Yeti, Ice Warriors, and Cybermen, a more varied group than the monsters who appeared in highly popular Hammer films.

Single episodes of the different *Dr. Who* stories were usually conceived of in 'seasons' of twenty-six episodes, each lasting twenty-five minutes, and their titles reflect shifts of preoccupation. They included (prosaically) 'The French Revolution' (1963) and 'The Romans' (1964)<sup>37</sup> and (highly imaginatively) 'The Celestial Toyroom'

of both the themes and the production of *Dr. Who* see J. Tulloch and M. Alvarado, *Dr. Who, the Unfolding Text* (1983).

<sup>34</sup> Sarah Jane Smith was played by Elisabeth Sladen, who often played classical parts, like Desdemona, and who had performed in both *Coronation Street* and *Z Cars*. Like the Doctor of her day, Tom Baker, she was born in Liverpool.

<sup>35</sup> In 1970 Lambert joined London Weekend Television as a drama producer, returning briefly to the BBC in 1973, before joining Thames Television as Controller of Drama in 1974.

<sup>36</sup> Verity Lambert had been succeeded as producer by John Wiles, who strengthened the serious science fiction element, an element then prominent in a new BBC-2 series *Out of the Unknown*.

<sup>37</sup> The descriptive title 'The Abominable Snowman' (1968) was given to a memorable story that was far from prosaic in its treatment.

(1963) and 'The Mind Robber' (1969). Perhaps the most pertinent of the titles for the historian was 'The Myth Makers' (1965), for *Dr. Who* drew on many old myths and created an impressive number of new ones. Another title, more pertinent for the viewers, 'Carnival of Monsters' (1970), brought out the continuing element of fantasy in the series.

The content of the programmes in different 'seasons' involved a considerable amount of cross-reference. Thus, it was not until 1974 that six programmes called 'The Genesis of the Daleks' were presented.<sup>38</sup> Two years earlier, edited versions of older *Dr. Who* series were presented at Christmas as 'TV movies', the first of them 'The Daemons'.

Good and evil—and themes of conflict and regeneration—figured also, although not in mythic form or in exotic settings, in another programme of the 1960s which faithfully represented another aspect of the decade. The significance of the switch both in content and in approach from *Dixon of Dock Green*, first televised in July 1955 on the eve of competition, to *Z Cars*, which was first broadcast on 2 January 1962, was fully appreciated at the time. The fact that two programmes dealing with policemen coexisted—there was an overlap audience too—reflected another feature of the time. Viewers' choice was being enhanced. There were some people who preferred Ted Willis's London policemen to the Northern policemen in two police patrol cars and their superiors who struggled with 'real life' crime in 'Newtown' and 'Seaport'.<sup>39</sup> For this reason, the debate about the merits of the two programmes is itself culturally revealing.<sup>40</sup>

The Chief Constable of Lancashire, Colonel Eric St. Johnston, the most distinguished old boy of the pre-war Police College, had welcomed the idea of a new BBC series based on the North of England and focusing not on one sentimentalized individual police-

<sup>38</sup> Not all creatures were as acceptable as the Daleks. Some were debatable, like K9, a computerized dog with an IQ of over 300. The Cybermen, creatures that, unlike most actors, were allergic to gold dust, were, by contrast, popular.

<sup>39</sup> The *Liverpool Daily Post*, 17 Feb. 1962, referred to 'sensitive souls who began to oscillate with tremendous indignation after the first appearance of *Z Cars*'. The writer, John Chelsfield, the newspaper's television critic, called the series 'one of the best social studies television has yet offered us'. *Dixon* was 'gentle soft-soap'.

<sup>40</sup> More than cultural questions were involved. When a new *Dixon* series started in 1962, Adam wrote: 'I imagine due attention is being paid to the new *Dixon* series, so that odious comparisons are not made with *Z Cars*. I know it isn't meant to be the same thing, but it cannot afford to be noticeably less polished, for instance, or professional' ('Adam to Hood, 'The New "Dixon" Series', 3 Aug. 1962 (T12/779/1)).

man but on a group of working policemen tackling genuine, 'real life' crimes. The idea had been put to the Assistant Chief Constable by Elwyn Jones, Drama Documentary Supervisor, Television, who was to become Assistant Head of Drama when Barry retired. 'It seemed to me', Elwyn Jones explained, that 'your crime car operation, particularly against the varied backgrounds which divisions like your Q Division could provide, would be an ideal basis for such a run of programmes.'<sup>41</sup>

The Lancashire Police responded positively, and a BBC script-writer, Troy Kennedy Martin, visited Preston in April 1961 and talked to Detective Chief Superintendent Bill Roberts about the new series.<sup>42</sup> The format that Kennedy Martin went on to prepare was American, based on *Highway Patrol*, but the intention and the content were to be distinctively English. The aim was 'to use the cops as a key or way of getting into a whole society'.<sup>43</sup> In the process Jones, like Assistant Chief Constable Palfrey, was anxious that the police should be presented as 'tough but not yet yobbish': it should never be suggested that they were men with 'straw in their heads'.<sup>44</sup>

The members of the early script-writing team, who included Lancashire-born and bred Allan Prior, John Hopkins, who had worked with Granada, and Jones himself, were all aware of the co-operative relationship with the Lancashire Police Force. So, too, was John McGrath, the first director. On the night of the first showing of the programme, therefore, Palfrey and Roberts were invited to dinner by Hood, who watched with them 'Four of a Kind', the first episode of *Z Cars*.

All the care to keep the Police Force happy seemed to have been wasted, however, when St. Johnston himself saw this first broadcast. Irritated by its approach, he visited Hood in his office the following morning, and asked the BBC to take the new programme off.<sup>45</sup> He claimed that he was speaking for his Force, which according to the *Guardian*, still produced in Manchester, was expressing 'disgust',

<sup>41</sup> \*Jones to Assistant Chief Constable Palfrey, 22 March 1961 (T5/2506/1).

<sup>42</sup> Kennedy Martin ceased to be script-writer after a disagreement on story lines in June 1962, but he continued to be paid a format fee for every programme broadcast.

<sup>43</sup> J. McGrath, 'Better a bad sight in Bootle', *Theatre Quarterly*, vol. 5 (1975), pp. 42-3. *Highway Patrol* was broadcast regularly on ITV during the late 1950s. By 1962, however, the main competitive ITV programme was *No Hiding Place*, which was shown at the same time as *Z Cars*. It was set in London.

<sup>44</sup> \*Jones to Stuart Hood, 'Officers of Lancashire County Constabulary', 29 Dec. 1961 (T16/577).

<sup>45</sup> \*Hood to Adam, 'Z Cars', 4 Jan. 1962 (T16/577). See also S. Laing, 'Bringing in Some Reality', in Corner (ed.), op. cit., p. 125, where he reports on an interview with Hood.

'almost to a man'. 'It was awful,' one of the Chorley Crime Patrol complained. 'We all thought it made us look fools. And our wives thought it made them look fools too... Things aren't like that at all.'<sup>46</sup>

As a result, the BBC had to drop its screened acknowledgement of the Lancashire Police for what it called 'valuable assistance in the preparation of this programme'. It also had to face protests from the Clerk of the Kirkby Urban District Council, who had written to Hood before the series began that he was 'particularly anxious' that Kirkby not be identifiable. It would be 'unfair', he had maintained, if the urban district should be obviously 'linked with criminal activities'.<sup>47</sup> After seeing the first programmes in the series, he considered that all his worst fears had been realized.<sup>48</sup>

At least one Lancashire newspaper, the *Bolton Evening News*, refused to be disgusted. 'Was it a Crime?' it asked in a brief but pertinent leader. 'One wonders', the writer observed, 'if the county force is not making too heavy weather of it all. Admittedly the social and domestic background of the men seen in this programme is made up of somewhat rougher strands than is the domestic background of somebody like Dixon of Dock Green. But then social backgrounds in the North do tend to be robust.' The writer had not felt that the policemen on the screen had been made to look like 'so many scallywags'. 'For the most part they looked like a set of hearty North-country lads.'<sup>49</sup>

Interest in the North—and in the 'provinces'—was a feature of the late 1950s and the early 1960s. The film *Saturday Night, Sunday Morning*, released in October 1960, had been showing in cinemas throughout the country in 1961, the year when *A Taste of Honey* was released in September and when John Schlesinger, who produced

<sup>46</sup> *Guardian*, 5 Jan. 1962. Protests came from other Police Forces too. The Acting Chief Constable of the Durham County Force said that all the officers he had met were angry.

<sup>47</sup> \*W. Byron, Clerk to the Kirkby Council, to Hood, 5 Dec. 1961 (Man. Reg. file N2401).

<sup>48</sup> \*Byron to Hood, 3 Jan. 1962. From the time he first travelled north, Troy Kennedy Martin would have been in no position to console the Clerk. He described Kirkby as 'one of the black spots of England, an overspill New Town from the slums of Liverpool, where 50,000 displaced and truculent Merseysiders carry out a continuous war against authority and where crime and adolescent terror incubate in the kind of atmosphere of immorality one associates with Dickensian England'. The *Radio Times*, 28 Dec. 1961, was almost as explicit: 'Here [Newtown] a mixed community displaced from larger towns by slum clearance has been brought together and housed on an estate, without amenities and without community feeling.'

<sup>49</sup> *Bolton Evening News*, 5 Jan. 1962.



several films for Wheldon's *Monitor*, was shooting *A Kind of Loving*.<sup>50</sup> These films still figure prominently in the history of the cinema.<sup>51</sup> So does David Storey's *This Sporting Life*. Meanwhile, Granada's *Coronation Street*, first launched in December 1960, had become one of ITV's most popular programmes. *Z Cars*, therefore, was part of a bigger pattern, a pattern which in time came to include also new versions of London, not only 'swinging London', but the London of 'gangland'.<sup>52</sup>

Another main feature of the 1960s was also expressed in *Z Cars*: the desire to subject every kind of institution to fierce critical scrutiny. The Police Forces, which impinged on the life of everyone, could not be expected to be immune in a period when city crime seemed to be getting out of hand. 'Now the police are in the dock' was a Press headline of January 1962.<sup>53</sup> Fortunately, however, for BBC/Police co-operation, St. Johnston, who was keenly interested in the new social forces at work in Britain, soon got over his initial worries. Indeed, when he saw Hood, he ended his intervention amicably enough by telling him that he hoped that the programme, which he clearly assumed would go on despite his protests, would not lose its 'salty quality'.<sup>54</sup> Relations with the Lancashire Police Force improved greatly as the series continued, and in September 1963 Hood met St. Johnston on a visit to Lancashire. When Roberts retired from the Police Force, he was offered a BBC contract as an adviser.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>50</sup> His *Monitor* films included an interview with Georges Simenon, who acquired new fame in Britain through *Maigret*. The first item in the first *Monitor* was Schlesinger's *Circus* (see above, p. 167).

<sup>51</sup> See above, pp. 189-90.

<sup>52</sup> The phrase 'swinging London' is said to have been coined by Melvin Lasky, Editor of *Encounter*, and was used in *Time* magazine, 16 April 1966. The image was already common, however, in the pages of *London Life*, which had a short life after it was 'switched on' in Oct. 1965.

<sup>53</sup> There were as many differences in response as there were to the themes of *TW3*. Cf. *Topic*, 13 Jan. 1962: 'The Police, desperately worried by their relations with the public, are furious about the image . . . [in] *Z Cars*. In fact, relations between the police and the public have never been worse. Niggling traffic offences have angered most of the motoring community'; *Daily Sketch*, 15 Jan. 1962, 'Cops are Human', and *Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph*, 4 Jan. 1962: 'We suggest that each instalment is preceded by a solemn assurance that any resemblance to real human policemen is entirely fictitious.' It was during the later 1960s that crime rates went up, with the numbers of indictable offences rising for the first time to more than 1 m. in 1964.

<sup>54</sup> \*Hood to Adam, 'Z Cars', 4 Jan. 1962 (T16/S77).

<sup>55</sup> \*Hood to St. Johnston, 17 Sept. 1963 (T16/S77); Rose to Andrew Osborn, Head of Series, Drama Television, 'Police Consultation—W. A. Roberts', 23 March 1965 (T5/710/1).

As *Z Cars* developed through different phases—produced by David Rose, but written by different script-writers—it created in the words of Francis Hope, writing in the *New Statesman*, ‘such a superb picture of men at work’ that ‘one could switch on week after week merely for the pleasure of joining the gang’.<sup>56</sup> Just before the 100th episode was broadcast in March 1964, Elwyn Jones could write—in very different vein from McGrath—that *Z Cars* really was ‘a programme about the police. It is not about crime; it is not about criminals; . . . it is about the men, and women, who are paid by us to do on our behalf work we are too weak, or too frightened, or too fastidious to do ourselves.’<sup>57</sup>

That was not entirely the heart of the matter, however, for from the start *Z Cars*, a live show, had raised questions about television programming that, when taken in conjunction with other questions, put television itself within the range of critical scrutiny then and after the 1960s were over. What was the relationship between fact and fiction? What were ‘facts’? Was ‘real life’ itself propped up by ‘fictions’? Was there a place for ‘faction’, the mixing of fact and imagination? Did television stir things up, as news bulletins were to be accused of stirring things up during the later 1960s? Was ‘documentary’ really an ‘eye’ on the world?

Hood himself, a radical in his thinking, like most of the intellectuals who asked such questions, gave a radical answer as far as *Z Cars* was concerned. After he left the BBC, he came to believe that, as it had developed, *Z Cars* had become ‘an instrument that could confirm police practices and was no longer critical’.<sup>58</sup>

In the case of *Z Cars* there was a specific comparison to be drawn. *Dixon of Dock Green*, the script of which was prepared by Ted Willis, who was to become one of Wilson’s Labour peers in 1966,<sup>59</sup> was obviously fiction. Although all the stories in it, according to Willis himself, were based on facts drawn from police files or newspaper clippings, the lovable Jack Warner, who played Dixon, was ‘too good to be true’.<sup>60</sup> No one could have said that of the *Z Cars* patrol. When

<sup>56</sup> *New Statesman*, 5 July 1963.

<sup>57</sup> *Radio Times*, 27 Feb. 1964.

<sup>58</sup> Quoted by Laing, in Corner (ed.), op. cit., p. 137. Laing himself, in dealing with programmes, uses the language of ‘empathy’ and ‘identification’. He also analyses in some detail particular episodes of *Z Cars*.

<sup>59</sup> Willis did not personally write every script, but hired a team. He vetted and altered scripts, however, before submitting them to the BBC.

<sup>60</sup> Derek Hill, writing in *The Listener*, 3 May 1962. The phrase had been used in the very first Audience Research Report on the programme, \*VR/55/334.

1. Sir Ian Jacob painted by Ruskin Spear



2. Behind the scenes of *Tonight*, 1957

Alasdair Milne (producer), George Inger (film editor), Cliff Michelmore (presenter), Donald Baverstock (editor), Antony Jay (producer)



3. *Six-Five Special*, November 1957

In studio including Jon Pertwee (three from left back row), Josephine Douglas (striped blouse, middle row), and Pete Murray (bottom row)



4. Behind the scenes of *Monitor*, February 1958

(?), Jack Ashley (associate producer), Grace Wyndham Goldie (Assistant Head of Talks, Television), Allan Tyrer (film editor), Huw Wheldon (editor and presenter), Peter Newington (producer), Natasha Kroll (designer), (?)



5. David Coleman introduces *Grandstand*, May 1959



6. Television Centre in April 1960





7. Hugh Greene greets Lord Reith at Grocers' Hall Dinner in November 1961 (Sir James Duff and Sir Arthur fforde in background)



8. David Jacobs presides over *Juke Box Jury*, January 1961



9. Tony Hancock in  
*The Radio Hum*,  
June 1961



10. *Dixon of Dock Green*, November 1959

Left to right, Arthur Rigby (Sergeant Flint), Moira Mannion (Sergeant Grace Millard), Geoffrey Adams (PC Lauderdale), David Webster (Cadet Jamie MacPherson), Graham Ashley (PC Hughes), Peter Byrne (Andy Crawford, CID), Jeannette Hutchinson (Mary), and Jack Warner (PC George Dixon)



11. *Z Cars*, July 1963

*Left to right*, Terence Edmond (PC Sweet), Brian Blessed (PC 'Fancy' Smith), James Ellis (PC Bert Lynch), Joseph Brady (PC Jock Weir), and Colin Welland (PC David Graham)



12. *TW3*, September 1963

*Left to right*, Irwin Watson, Willy Rushton, Robert Alda, Kenneth Cope, Millicent Martin, Al Mancini, David Kernan, Lance Percival, and David Frost



13. Monitoring Service Listening Room, July 1964



14. Relay Station on  
Ascension Island, 1966





15. Bush House

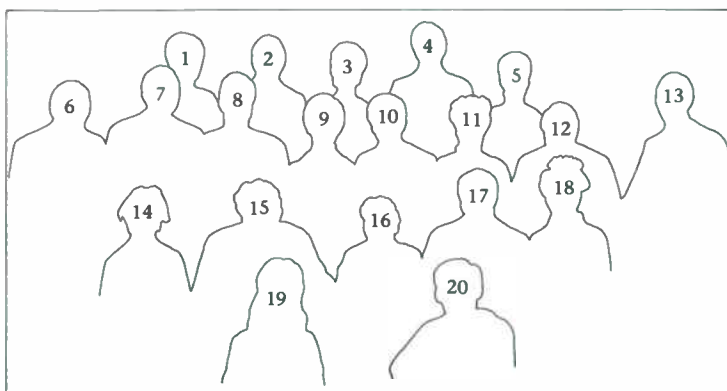


16. *Last Night of the Proms*, September 1967, Sir Malcolm Sargent greets the audience

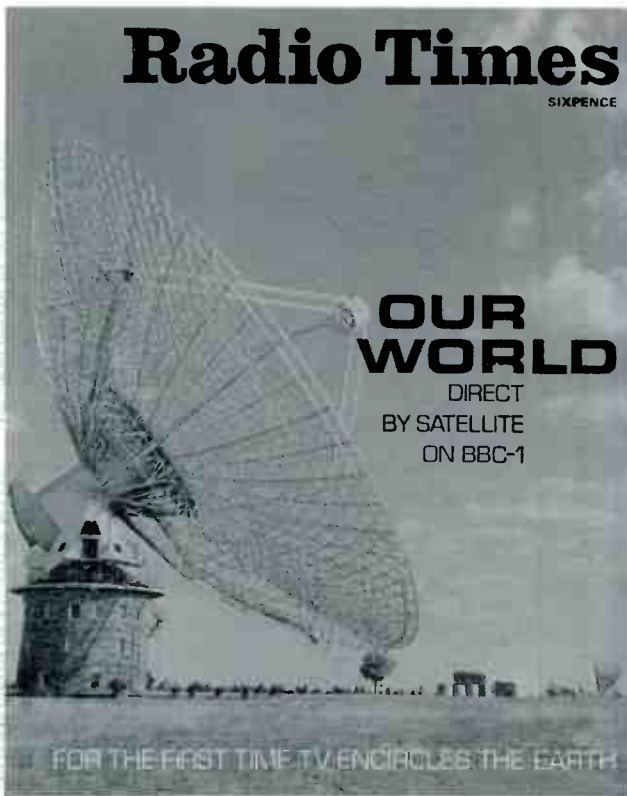




17. *The Forsyte Saga*, 1966: first and last meeting of the Forsytes



- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Frances played by <b>URSULA HOWELLS</b>   | 11. Emily played by <b>FANNY ROWE</b>          |
| 2. Georges played by <b>JOHN BARCROFT</b>    | 12. Timothy played by <b>JOHN BASKCOMB</b>     |
| 3. Helene played by <b>LANA MORRIS</b>       | 13. James played by <b>JOHN WELSH</b>          |
| 4. Monty played by <b>TERENCE ALEXANDER</b>  | 14. Juley played by <b>NORA NICHOLSON</b>      |
| 5. Winifred played by <b>MARGARET TYZACK</b> | 15. Swithin played by <b>GEORGE WOODBRIDGE</b> |
| 6. Nicholas played by <b>KYNASTON REEVES</b> | 16. Ann played by <b>FAY COMPTON</b>           |
| 7. Roger played by <b>A. J. BROWN</b>        | 17. Jolyon played by <b>JOSEPH O'CONNOR</b>    |
| 8. Soames played by <b>ERIC PORTER</b>       | 18. Hester played by <b>NORA SWINBURNE</b>     |
| 9. Irene played by <b>NYREE DAWN PORTER</b>  | 19. June played by <b>JUNE BARRY</b>           |
| 10. Jo played by <b>KENNETH MOORE</b>        | 20. Bosinney played by <b>JOHN BENNETT</b>     |



18. Cover of *Radio Times*, 24–30 June 1967 advertising *Our World*



19. *Civilisation*, 1969 Peter Montagnon, Kenneth Clark, and Michael Gill before Notre Dame in Paris





20. *Dad's Army*, 1970

*Left to right*, James Beck (Walker), Arnold Ridley (Godfrey), Clive Dunn (Jones), Arthur Lowe (Mainwaring), and John Laurie (Fraser)



21. Robin Day, 1970



22. *Doctor Who*, November 1972

The three doctors, *left to right*, Patrick Troughton, Jon Pertwee, and William Hartnell



23. Lord Hill and Charles Curran confer at a Press Conference for *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, July 1969



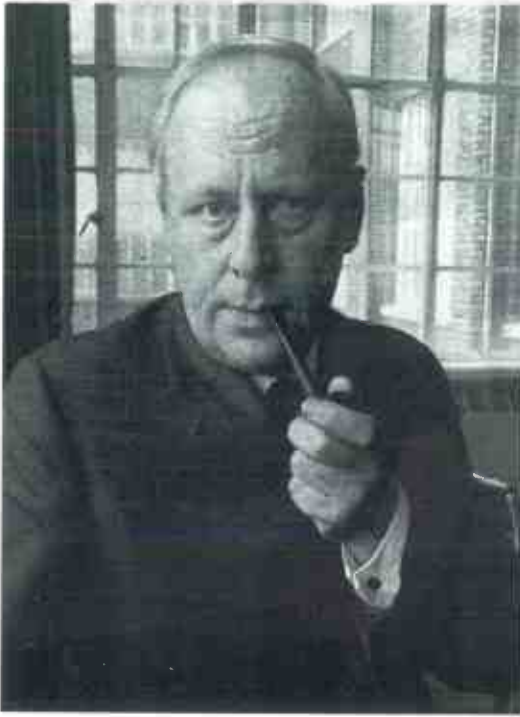
24. Dr Walter Perry (Vice-Chancellor) and Richmond Postgate (Controller, Educational Broadcasting) at opening of Open University production studios at Alexandra Palace, May 1970



25. *The Question of Ulster*, January 1972: Ludovic Kennedy in the chair



26. Fiftieth Anniversary Exhibition, November 1972. The Queen and Lord Hill enter the Langham to open the exhibition



27. Sir Michael Swann,  
January 1973



28. The Annan Committee, July 1974

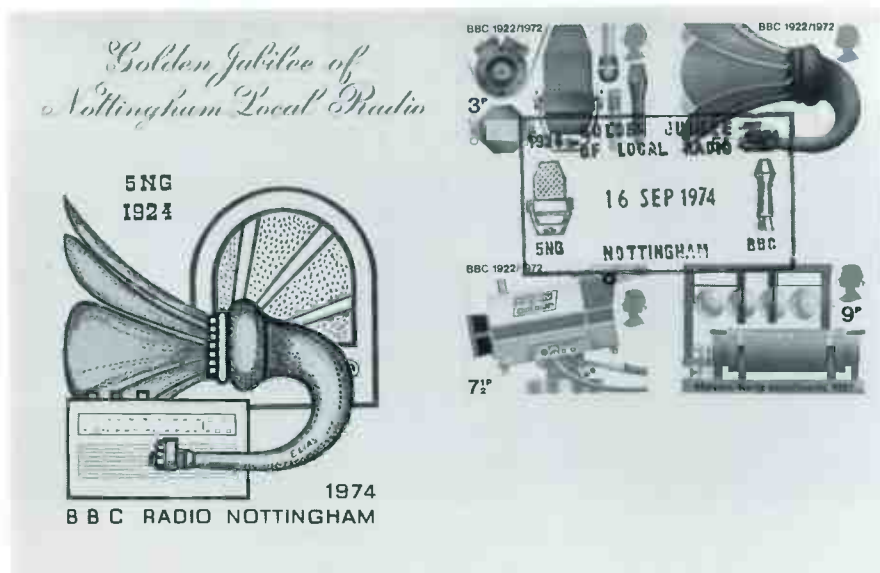
*Standing, left to right, Sir Marcus Worsley, Antony Jay, Tom Jackson, Peter Goldman, Professor Geoffrey Sims, and Phillip Whitehead; sitting, Marghanita Laski, Mrs Hilda Lawrence, Sir James Mackay, Lord Annan, Mrs Sara Morrison, Dipak Nandy, and John Poilock*





29. General election, October 1974

Left to right, David Butler, Robert McKenzie, Sue Lawley, and Alastair Burnet



30. Envelope with stamps originally issued for the fiftieth anniversary of the BBC in 1972, specially franked for local radio anniversary in 1974



*Z Cars* started, *Dixon of Dock Green* still had a viewing audience of over 14 million, a BBC audience exceeded only by that for *The Black and White Minstrel Show*.<sup>61</sup> Significantly, however, Greene had told Adam in his first year as Director-General that the BBC was 'in danger of overdoing the Dixon image': 'he disapproves of the length of the "message" at the end of each episode, and of his appearance in religious programmes,' Maschwitz was told.<sup>62</sup>

The presence of the 'message' was only one of many contrasts. The main characters in *Z Cars* were mobile policemen: Dixon stuck to his beat.<sup>63</sup> Kirkby was a mobile place: Dixon's East End was a cluster of traditional East End working-class communities.<sup>64</sup> The feel of *Z Cars* was rough: the feel of *Dixon of Dock Green* was bland. Every episode of *Dixon of Dock Green* was rounded off: the first *Z Cars* director hated 'slick tie ups' and 'reassuring endings where decency and family life triumphed'.<sup>65</sup> Even the music that was played at the beginning and at the end of *Dixon of Dock Green* and of *Z Cars*, music that became familiar to almost everyone in the country, was in sharp contrast.<sup>66</sup>

*Dixon of Dock Green* had always been produced by BBC Light Entertainment, although it had originated in an Ealing film, *The Blue Lamp*, in which Dixon was killed twenty-one minutes from the start. In 1958 Willis produced a publicity hand-out about Dixon, listing twenty 'facts' about him. He was a very British character, a gardener, a fisherman, a football fan, a darts player, and he preferred tea and beer to coffee and wine. *Z Cars* emerged from the BBC's Drama Group. It stemmed from a single play, *Jacks and Knaves*, produced by

<sup>61</sup> At the end of Jan. 1962 17m. watched the minstrels (\*VR/62/59).

<sup>62</sup> \*Adam reporting to Maschwitz, 'Dixon', 20 Dec. 1960 (T12/779/1).

<sup>63</sup> As Warner grew older, the problem of Dixon's age became a real one. In 1960 there were suggestions that Dixon should be persuaded to retire from the Police and take on a job as a security officer in a local factory (\*Maschwitz to Adam, 'Dixon of Dock Green', 24 Feb. 1960 (T12/75/61)). Warner did not like the idea. On 11 Sept. 1961 Willis himself expressed concern about Dixon's age: 'He did look rather old' (\*Willis to D. Moodie, 11 Sept. 1961 (T12/779/1)).

<sup>64</sup> One of these was described by Michael Young and Peter Wilmot in *Family and Kinship in East London* (1957).

<sup>65</sup> J. McGrath, 'TV Drama—The Case against Naturalism', in *Sight and Sound*, vol. 46 (1977), p. 103. In 1958 Warner had been sent a BEM by the Bristol widow of a policeman after Dixon had been awarded a BEM for gallantry in his previous series. 'My husband', the widow wrote, 'was similar to the character you portray, loved by everybody, tough when need be, but with not enough push to be made a sergeant' (*Reynolds News*, 27 Sept. 1958).

<sup>66</sup> The first theme music of *Dixon of Dock Green*, 'Maybe It's Because I'm a Londoner', had given way in 1957 to 'An Ordinary Copper'.

Colin Morris, who had forged earlier links with the Lancashire and Liverpool Police in producing it and *Who Me?* in 1961.

It was sometimes claimed that the different feel of *Dixon of Dock Green* could be accounted for by the fact that it was transmitted at 6.30 p.m. on Saturday evenings, when 'a large audience of children and young people was viewing', whereas *Z Cars* was shown on the screen from 8.30 p.m. to 9.15 p.m. on Tuesdays, when there was less likelihood that children would be in the audience. It was young people, however—and there were thousands of children among them—who were to appreciate *Z Cars* most. Some young viewers were very articulate. For example, a 14-year-old girl, Jane Hulton of Stockport, wrote to the *Radio Times* in April 1962 that she was impressed that there was 'nothing phoney about *Z Cars*. All the characters are solid and down to earth and typical of people in the North.'<sup>67</sup> Her teachers might well have agreed with her. Writing in *The Schoolmaster* in 1962, Albert Casey described *Z Cars* as being 'of quite remarkable quality, very far in advance of anything in this field'. By comparison, he thought, *Dixon of Dock Green* dealt in 'fantasies'.<sup>68</sup>

Whatever the initial reactions of the Lancashire Police or the Clerk to the Kirkby Corporation, audiences, old and young, took to *Z Cars* from the start. And so too did the Press, which gave the series exceptionally good reviews. As a result, *Z Cars* quickly established itself in the weekly programme schedules, attracting an audience that rose within weeks from 9 million to 14 million.<sup>69</sup> At first, it had been planned that the series would last for thirteen episodes, each of forty-five minutes, but the thirteen were soon extended to thirty-one, and the programme length was increased to fifty minutes. Other series followed, so that all in all no fewer than 170 epi-

<sup>67</sup> *Radio Times*, 12 April 1962. She stated that Dock Green reminded her of a social club. Willis himself was anxious to establish the 'social work' side of the Police Force. He also emphasized the limitations imposed by the BBC in relation to early evening viewing on a Saturday. 'We are bound by the BBC code on early evening programmes. At least 70 per cent of the material used on *Z Cars* could not be used in our programmes' (*The Listener*, 17 May 1962).

<sup>68</sup> A. Casey, 'Blood without Thunder', *The Schoolmaster*, 13 July 1962; repr. in *Screen Education*, Sept.–Oct. Media studies were beginning to be taken up in schools at this time. (See below, p. 461.) See also M. Marland, 'Z Cars and the Teacher', in *The Use of English* (1967), and M. Marland and K. Dewhurst (eds.), *Z Cars: Four Television Scripts* (1968), a book produced for use in schools.

<sup>69</sup> The audience for the show on 6 Feb. 1962 is estimated at 11m. and that for 27 Feb. at 15m. (\*VR/62/82, VR/62/124). See also P. Lewis, 'Z Cars', *Contrast*, no. 1.

sodes were broadcast between January 1962 and December 1965.<sup>70</sup> This was far more of a staple diet than *TW3*. It had more in common with the diet of *Dr. Who*.

The characters in *Z Cars* were, of course, far better known to the public than the script-writers, the producers, or the people behind the scenes, and there were many requests for the actors' photographs.<sup>71</sup> Inspector Barlow, Sergeant Watt, and the four patrol car constables, Lynch, Steele, Weir, and 'Fancy' Smith, soon became such household names<sup>72</sup> that when a new series of *Z Cars* was announced in August 1963, the *Radio Times* could proudly write that 'just as the start of a new series is a national event, so the main characters in this police epic have become national figures'.<sup>73</sup>

As the series evolved, however, there were significant changes in characterization, just as there were in *Dr. Who*. In particular, Barlow, played by Stratford Johns, lost some of his initial toughness. There were also enforced changes in the cast. One character, Bob Steele, had to be replaced early in 1963 when the actor Jeremy Kemp, afraid of becoming type-cast, left the series, and in consequence Colin Welland, who was already playing the part of a dog handler (Dave Graham) in the series, was promoted to a place in one of the cars. Later he was to be promoted still further, and to become a script-writer himself. Hopkins rightly claimed that 'the series was like a serial'. Each story was 'progressive'.<sup>74</sup>

In 1963 the *Z Cars* audience had risen to 16,650,000 viewers, 3 million more than that for *Dixon of Dock Green*, but still a million less than that for *The Black and White Minstrel Show* and a million less

<sup>70</sup> Neither Kennedy Martin nor McGrath liked the pressures on programming associated with a long run (see P. Lewis, op. cit., for their comments), and they left the production team at the end of the first series. Hopkins was the most active script-writer during the second series, but he too left in Dec. 1964 to work for a number of new projects for BBC-2 which had opened in April (see above, p. 410). Thereafter, the most active script-writer was Alan Plater, but, as in earlier series, a large number of script-writers was employed. After leaving the BBC, Kennedy Martin wrote a short paperback novel, *Z Cars* (1962), which did not go down well inside the BBC (see \*Jones to Leslie Page, Head of Television Establishment Department, '“Z Cars” Paperback', 26 Sept. 1962; Page to Roland Fox, Assistant Head of Publicity, '“Z Cars” Exploitation', 28 Sept. 1962 (TS/2506/2)).

<sup>71</sup> \*Rose to Norman Rutherford, '“Z Cars” Publicity Photographs of Cast,' 9 Feb. 1962 (TS/2506/2). For an early article on the *Z Cars* stars, see *Reveille*, 22 March 1962.

<sup>72</sup> The actors could become friends. Joseph Brady wrote in the *Radio Times*, 30 Dec. 1971, of the pleasure of working with Brian Blessed. By then Blessed was playing very different parts, at that time the Earl of Suffolk in *Henry VIII*.

<sup>73</sup> *Radio Times*, 29 Aug. 1963.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 April, 6 Sept. 1963.

than that for another of the great new comedy programmes of the Greene years, *Steptoe and Son*, which had been first broadcast three days after the first *Z Cars* on 5 January 1962. By early 1965 there were signs that *Z Cars* had lost ground to *Dixon of Dock Green*, which now had a different producer, Ronald Marsh.<sup>75</sup> The gap had narrowed. And by then another very different programme of the period, *Dr. Finlay's Case Book*, first broadcast on 16 August 1962, had passed the 13 million mark.<sup>76</sup>

### 9. *Steptoe and Son: It's a Square World*

*Steptoe and Son* survived—with gaps—until Boxing Day 1974, and during its long career it influenced just as many other programmes as *Z Cars* had done. It had had a very different history, however, even from the beginning, when it was conceived of not as a series but as a single programme, broadcast live, and given a different title, *The Offer*. It was the fourth programme in a Comedy Playhouse series devised by Tom Sloan after Hancock had decided to split away from his brilliant script-writers Galton and Simpson.<sup>1</sup>

Given a pioneering assignment to produce a ten-week series of individual half-hour plays, Galton and Simpson created for this fourth programme two new characters quite different from Hancock—Harold and Albert Steptoe, rag-and-bone men, both of them played not by comedians, but by actors Harry H. Corbett and Wilfred Brambell. They were the only characters, and they were initially paid what seems the odd sum of £231 10s. 6d. between them for their performance. Galton and Simpson received an equally odd sum—payments were then calculated in guineas—£726 5s. for the script. They had never before worked solely with professional actors rather than professional comedians, and they warmly welcomed the

<sup>75</sup> Douglas Moodie, who was also producer of *Whack-O!*, had produced the programme from the start, but he had asked to be relieved in 1962. It was with reluctance that he agreed to go on until the end of 1962. 'I must, I suppose, condition myself to a further stretch of six months in Dock Green Alcatraz', he wrote to Tom Sloan on 5 Jan. 1962 ('Moodie to Sloan, 'Possible Production between "Dixon of Dock Green" Series' (T12/779/1)).

<sup>76</sup> See below, p. 525.

<sup>1</sup> D. Nathan, *The Laughtermakers* (1971), p. 134; *Radio Times*, 26 Feb. 1970.

change. 'Actors don't argue—they don't reject scripts as unsuitable—they just get on and read the lines.'<sup>2</sup>

*The Offer* was so successfully received by the public and the Press—it had an Audience Research Reaction Index of 74—that Galton and Simpson were invited to produce a whole series, *Steptoe and Son*, with five additional episodes. The interest of the series lay in its exploration of the relationship, usually funny, sometimes moving, between two men, an old man and an ambitious son bound uneasily and unwillingly to his father. For the *Evening Standard* and the *Daily Herald*, this was 'the best piece of brand-new humorous television writing since Hancock', 'the richest televised fun'.<sup>3</sup> The *Sunday Times* went further; 'Messrs. Simpson and Galton have struck a vein so rich that one can almost speak of a major breakthrough in television comedy . . . There is a real recognizable human predicament at the heart of the fun; the laughter is sometimes quite near to tears.'<sup>4</sup> For *The Times* also, *Steptoe and Son* went further than *Hancock's Half-Hour*. It 'virtually obliterated the division between drama and comedy'.<sup>5</sup>

Duncan Wood, the producer of the series, was just as anxious as the producers of *Z Cars* were to create an authentic setting for the stories that were so well told by Galton and Simpson and for which they were receiving increasing credit.<sup>6</sup> Outside filming was done in a real junk yard, therefore, although it was not in London's East End but in Notting Hill. A real rag-and-bone man's horse and cart were employed also—at a time, *Z Cars* time, when such carts were beginning, as rag-and-bone men were, to go out of fashion.<sup>7</sup> The quality of acting was closely related to the authenticity of the setting, and it came as no surprise when in November 1962 the Guild of TV

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in R. Wilmut, *Tony Hancock, 'Artiste'* (1978), p. 134.

<sup>3</sup> *Evening Standard*, 14 June 1962; *Daily Herald*, 6 July 1962.

<sup>4</sup> *Sunday Times*, 15 July 1962.

<sup>5</sup> *The Times*, 21 July 1962.

<sup>6</sup> For the second series their fee per script had risen significantly. In 1964, through their agent, they signed a contract for an American version of *Steptoe and Son*. The BBC disapproved (see \*R. G. Walford, Head of Copyright, to Mrs. Beryl Vertue, 22 May 1964; Walford to Vertue, 29 May 1964 (T12/788/1)), but the American venture was unsuccessful. According to Galton and Simpson, the Americans liked success, and *Steptoe and Son* was about unsuccessful people. Sponsors, too, wanted TV series to be 'about affluent people living in nice homes' (*Radio Times*, 26 Feb. 1970). None the less, an American series based on the idea of *Steptoe and Son*, *Sanford and Son*, was televised in America between 1972 and 1976.

<sup>7</sup> For the realism, see *Acton Gazette*, 8 Nov. 1962.

Producers named Corbett television actor of the year and Wood best Light Entertainment producer.<sup>8</sup>

Four series of *Steptoe and Son* were made between 1963 and 1965. They were to be repeated often, but no new programmes were written between 1965 and 1969, when a decision was taken at a Chinese restaurant in Kensington to revive the programme. Again, the initiator was Tom Sloan, who was proud that between 1959 and 1969 the BBC had won fifteen awards from the Writers' Guild, thirteen from the Producers' Guild, and seven from the Golden Rose Festival in Montreux.<sup>9</sup> The reaction to the revival was to be just as favourable as it had been in 1962.

Sloan, in running what he called 'a national network of entertainment', was always deploying a variety of talents, and he looked back in 1969 not only to Corbett and Brambell and Warren Mitchell but to Wendy Craig, who had become a star in *Not in Front of the Children* (1967); the Australian Rolf Harris, who first broadcast for the BBC in 1954; Rodney Bewes and James Bolam, *The Likely Lads* (1964); and Harry Worth. One man he did not mention was Michael Bentine, whose memorable programme *It's a Square World*, first presented on 26 April 1961, won the Grand Prix de la Presse at Montreux.

Bentine, an old Etonian and an ex-Goon, who delighted in combining on the screen people, puppets, machines, models, and gadgets, figures in this history on account of his ingenious programmes, his ability to make the most of the talents of other comedians, and, within the context of this chapter, for one programme of his series in 1964 that was not shown on the screen as expected.<sup>10</sup> This time it was not a Chinese restaurant that was at the centre of the story, but a Chinese junk. 'Sinking the Houses of Parliament with a Chinese War Junk' was a Bentine sketch filmed on a real Chinese junk acquired in Limehouse. Clive Dunn was Fu Manchu. One section of the sketch showed Deryck Guyler in a badly cut tweed suit asking (in a Northern accent) why steps were not being taken to ban the import of Chinese raspberry blowers through Hong Kong. In the final scene, with full Bentine effects, the House of Commons was

<sup>8</sup> *Daily Express*, 24 Nov. 1962.

<sup>9</sup> T. Sloan, 'Television Light Entertainment', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 8th ser., 11 Dec. 1969.

<sup>10</sup> The actors included Dick Emery, who in one remarkable sketch, 'NATO War Games', appeared as a British general. The German general was Clive Dunn, later to win fame in *Dad's Army*. See below, p. 943. Bentine pioneered a number of techniques, some surreal, some slapstick, which were to be used later by other comedians, including Emery. He also included mock news bulletins.



shown sinking, with bowler-hatted MPs rushing out to abandon Parliament. There was a final caption: 'You have been watching a party political broadcast on behalf of the British people.'

The reason why the sketch was not shown was that by the time that its filming was complete, the general election campaign of 1964, with which this chapter concludes, was in progress, and Sloan, who believed that the MPs shown, including a Macmillan-like Prime Minister, were 'clearly caricatures of the two main parties', asked that it be postponed. *TW3* had been tolerated until the election loomed. This episode, during an election campaign, was felt to demean Parliament. Bentine consented to the postponement,<sup>11</sup> but was incensed when an article appeared in the *Sunday Telegraph*, which to him suggested that Greene himself had seen the episode. He had not. Bentine's account of the incident in his autobiography magnifies the role of Greene, and does not state that after having corresponded with Adam, who tried to 'clarify' the situation, they both decided, in Adam's phrase, 'to call it quits'.<sup>12</sup>

## 10. More Politics

Whatever electors did not see on their screens at the general election of 1964, they saw more political programmes than they had ever seen before. Indeed, following a thorough appraisal inside the BBC of the election arrangements that had been made in 1959,<sup>1</sup> they were

<sup>11</sup> \*Sloan to Adam, 'Michael Bentine—Confirmation of Telephoned Statement', 5 Oct. 1964 (WAC file Michael Bentine).

<sup>12</sup> See also *Sunday Telegraph*, 4 Oct. 1964. Greene himself was irritated by the fact that one newspaper had described him as 'inane' for cancelling an entertainment programme. He said that in the case of *It's a Square World* 'a producer had quite rightly put his foot down' (\*Adam to Bentine, 5 Oct. 1964; Bentine to Adam ('Dear Kenneth'), 5 Oct. 1964 (Michael Bentine's file)). Adam said that he had enjoyed the first two editions of the show 'enormously'. Bentine said he was glad, and had appreciated 'some wonderfully kind notices from the press'. For Bentine's account, see M. Bentine, *The Reluctant Jester: My Head-on Collision with the Twentieth Century* (1992), p. 261.

<sup>1</sup> \*Note by Beadle, 'The General Election: Television', n.d. (WAC T16/513/1); 'Minutes of a Meeting to Consider Policy Questions in Relation to the Next General Election', 24 March 1961 (T16/513/1). Peacock, then Editor, Television News, was co-opted on to this small committee, and David Butler and Robert McKenzie were employed as consultants (\*Goldie to K. Lamb, 'General Election', 3 July 1961 (T16/513/1); \*Peacock to Edwards, 'General Election Results', 3 July 1961 (T16/513/1)). There is an interesting note by Joanna Spicer on a *New York Times* report by Jack Gould on the American Presidential election of 1960. She was 'struck', she said, by 'the thousands of dollars being spent by 3 networks to give the viewer one set of facts'. Gould praised CBS, but, as Spicer pointed out, it had considerably inferior ratings to NBC (T16/513/1).

already being offered a far stronger diet of media politics in 1964 before the election campaign began than they had been in 1959. In 1959 only 70 per cent of homes had possessed television sets. In 1964 the corresponding figure was 90 per cent. Other statistics relevant to the 1964 election—and they were much noted at the time—were that nearly half the electorate in 1964 were too young to have had a vote in 1945, and that one-tenth of the electorate—nearly 4 million voters in all—had become eligible to vote only since 1959.<sup>2</sup> The latter, whatever their other characteristics, constituted a new television generation.

As early as September 1962 the Conservative Party Central Office had asked whether John Grist could be assigned to them as principal producer of their Party election broadcasts, and a similar formal request asking for Stanley Hyland to be assigned had come from the Labour Party in February 1963. Both were then producers in the Television Talks and Current Affairs Department.<sup>3</sup> Hyland had worked on the 1959 *Hustings* programmes; since 1958 Grist, who had joined the BBC in 1951 as a Talks Producer in the North American Service, had been Producer, Parliamentary Affairs, in Television Talks.

It was the 'party machines' that still set the rules and restricted the range of broadcasting possibilities, but political broadcasting was now taken for granted, thanks to Greene's determination to 'open up' news and current affairs. As Hyland put it succinctly in 1967 in an article on current affairs on television, while news could not be created, comment on news had to be created.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, for the BBC such comment could not be its own comment, since it was prohibited from expressing an editorial opinion. There was always the danger, therefore, of accusations of bias. Already by 1964, direct statements on politics by politicians amounted to a small share of radio and television political output, and the Current Affairs Group was supplying a wide range of programmes both for BBC-1 and BBC-2.

<sup>2</sup> See D. E. Butler and A. King, *The British General Election of 1964* (1965), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> \*George Hutchinson, Chief Publicity Officer, Conservative Office, to Greene, 26 Sept. 1962; \*Goldie to Grisewood, 'Stanley Hyland's Work for Labour Party', 13 Nov. 1962. Herbert Bowden, Labour Chief Whip, had asked for Hyland. The appointments were confirmed in letters from Grisewood to Hutchinson, 16 Nov. 1962, and Bowden, 16 Nov. 1962 (T16/S13/1). In both cases they were told to work through Goldie's office.

<sup>4</sup> S. Hyland, 'Current Affairs on BBC Television', *EBU Review*, Sept. 1967.

Four questions had already arisen about this increased output. First, were the broadcasters fair to the politicians in their interviews?<sup>5</sup> Second, were the politicians whom the BBC drew into its own programmes 'representative'? Third, to what extent were the media, rather than the politicians, setting the political agenda? Fourth, how should politics and politicians be treated in programmes like *TW3* that were not explicitly or entirely political? Comedians had always been liable to be attacked for making political jokes, whether or not they misfired. Light Entertainment had books of rules; *TW3* at most had monitored guidance.

The pre-election atmosphere that surrounded the short Prime Ministership of Douglas-Home had made political broadcasting interesting, if only because it often seemed likely that it would be provocative. Douglas-Home is said to have stung Wilson when, on being asked by Kenneth Harris on ITV two days after his appointment had been announced how he responded to criticism that he was the fourteenth earl, he had replied, 'Are we to say that all men are equal except peers? I suppose Mr. Wilson, when you are to think of it is the fourteenth Mr. Wilson.'<sup>6</sup>

Douglas-Home had made his first two-minute BBC appearance on a television screen on the evening of the announcement of his appointment, 19 October 1963. He was 'more at home with 'the techniques of television', however, by the time that he appeared for the first time on *Panorama* in February 1964, after returning from a visit to the United States to meet President Lyndon Johnson. He had been rehearsed for the programme by Christopher Chataway and Nigel (later Lord) Lawson, then a financial journalist, who was one of his speech-writers. His interviewer in the live programme was Robin Day, and when Day questioned him about 'amateurish and indecisive leadership', a charge which by then was losing something of its force, Douglas-Home is said to have 'parried and returned every thrust with ease'.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See above, p. 166.

<sup>6</sup> See Lord Home, *The Way the Wind Blows* (1976), p. 186, and H. Evans, *Downing Street Diary, 1957-1963* (1981), pp. 301-2. Douglas-Home was chosen, following five days of 'processes of consultation' in the back rooms of Blackpool hotels during the Conservative Party Conference, and he renounced his peerage after being chosen as Conservative leader, taking advantage of the Peerage Act of July 1963. It had been passed after a long campaign to deal with cases like that of Anthony Wedgwood Benn, who had succeeded to the title of Lord Stansgate in Nov. 1960 and wished immediately to renounce it.

<sup>7</sup> *The Times*, 18 Feb. 1964.

Wilson, who enjoyed appearing on television and who believed in its influence, would have made an admirable participant in a television panel game, for he had a remarkable memory for figures and was quick on the verbal draw. His latest biographer has compared him, interestingly but not entirely appropriately, with *TW3*: 'both were cheeky, chirpy upstarts who outraged and stimulated by the audacity of their attacks.'<sup>8</sup> Serious in purpose, a word which he often used,<sup>9</sup> Wilson sensed that television would help his Party's purposes more than the Press ever could or would. He hoped to benefit from the fact that, during their long years in the wilderness, several leading Labour Party politicians had established what they regarded as a special relationship with the BBC. He did not then know how resolute Greene would prove to be in resisting such hopes. If the Labour Party thought that it had 'got money in the bank', Greene explained vividly later, it would soon find that if it presented a cheque, there would be no money there. The cheque would bounce.<sup>10</sup>

There was no shortage of discussion inside Television Centre and Broadcasting House in 1963 and early 1964 about what the BBC should do both about coverage at the next election and about the presentation of results on election night. Grist suggested in March 1962 that *Tonight* should continue during the election campaign and that *Panorama* and *Gallery* should disappear, to be replaced by a thirty-minute election programme each night. He added that politics was 'a minority interest except in the three weeks of the actual campaign'.<sup>11</sup> In fact, *Panorama* was to continue and *Tonight* to be suspended after the first week of the campaign. *Gallery* was to remain as *Election Gallery*, and the *Hustings* programme of 1959 was to be given a new name: *Question Time*.

Responsibility for the election results programme in radio was given to Bonarjee, Editor of *Ten o'Clock*, and in television to Peacock, who recognized that success in competition with ITA would depend

<sup>8</sup> B. Pimlott, *Harold Wilson* (1992), p. 269.

<sup>9</sup> George (later Lord) Weidenfeld published three volumes of speeches by him with 'purpose' in the title, the first of them *Purpose in Politics* (1964).

<sup>10</sup> \*Greene interviewed by Gillard, March 1977. See also M. Cockerell, *Live from Number 10* (1988), p. 113, and ch. 8, *passim*, 'The Cheque that Bounced'.

<sup>11</sup> \*Grist to Miall, 'The General Election', 12 March 1962 (T16/513/1). Already by then Butler and McKenzie had agreed to take part in the results programme. In an earlier note of 2 May 1961 Grist commented that in his view both Butler and McKenzie had 'always tended to over emphasise the desire of the British public to be informed about politics' (\*Grist to Miall, 'General Election' (T16/513/1)).

on a strong team to deal at the last stage with the election results.<sup>12</sup> It consisted of Milne; Cowgill, then a producer in Outside Broadcasts; and Bill Bayliff, Assistant to Head of Technical Operations, Television Studios; and they held their first planning meeting as early as 18 October 1961. Peacock asked Miall for Fox, who was then Editor of *Panorama*, to be added, and he repeated this request to Goldie in the early summer of 1962 after she had taken over Miall's duties as Head of Talks and Current Affairs, Television.<sup>13</sup>

Before the general election took place—later than the BBC had anticipated—there had been further substantial changes in the BBC television hierarchy, and Peacock had been placed in charge of BBC-2.<sup>14</sup> It was Lamb, therefore, now Chief Assistant (Current Affairs), Talks, Television, who drafted the next Note on arrangements, which formed the basis of a paper by Edwards on 8 May 1963.<sup>15</sup> The plan Lamb proposed 'might enable us', he concluded, 'to keep our lead in broadcasting of this kind over Commercial Television'. 'It would provide the kind of public service that the occasion demands.'<sup>16</sup>

After Douglas-Home had announced in April 1964 that the general election would take place during the autumn, time was still left for the BBC to re-examine yet again its broadcasting timetable, and there was a long 'run up' before the precise date was fixed for 15 October. Once again there was no confrontation—as the Press and the Conservative Party machine explained, this was not a Presidential election, American-style<sup>17</sup>—although all three leaders appeared on the BBC's own *Election Forum* programmes. These were produced by

<sup>12</sup> In an early note about the election by Peacock, the timetable of Common Market negotiations suggested that the election would take place in Autumn of 1962, March 1963, or May 1963, ('Peacock to Miall, 'General Election Programmes', 24 Nov. 1961 (T16/S13/1)).

<sup>13</sup> Peacock to Goldie, 12 June 1962 (T16/S13/1). He congratulated her on her 'transformation' and on securing such a 'very strong team'.

<sup>14</sup> See above, p. 407.

<sup>15</sup> 'BBC Treatment of General Election: Note by E.N.C.A.', 8 May 1963 (T16/S13/1). Lamb projected 'a fuller and more challenging coverage of the campaign than we have carried through before' ('Lamb to Edwards, 'The Next General Election Campaign: Television Proposals', 2 May 1963 (T16/S13/1)).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Wilson had suggested a confrontation on 17 Sept., but an unnamed Conservative spokesman stated that this was only a ploy. 'He's trying to follow the American model. . . . We happen to be Englishmen, not Americans' (*Guardian*, 18 Sept. 1964). According to Martin Harrison, the first professional analyst of the role of the media in this particular election—and he was to analyse in equal detail the next two—few, even in the Labour Party, shared Wilson's enthusiasm ('Television and Radio' in Butler and King, op. cit., p. 158).

Anthony Smith, and were broadcast simultaneously on television and on radio on the three successive evenings before the dissolution of Parliament, 22, 23, and 24 September. Grimond appeared on the first evening, 22 September, Wilson on the second evening, and Douglas-Home on the third evening, to answer questions put to them by Ian Trethowan, who took the chair, by Day, and by Harris. Twenty minutes only were allotted for the Liberal Party leader: Wilson and Douglas-Home had secured thirty.

The questions put, which ranged widely from pensions to strikes and from Europe to immigration, had been drawn from 18,000 postcards submitted by listeners and viewers. There was still no intimation of direct access broadcasting. Despite ITV competition of a non-political variety at the scheduled times—and candid criticism in the Press—Grimond attracted an audience of 5.3 million, Douglas-Home an audience of 7.2 million, and Wilson an audience of 7.95 million.<sup>18</sup> The *Spectator* critic J. W. Thompson was not alone in concluding that in this case, as in non-political broadcasting, ratings were not a test of quality. His view was that Grimond had given the best television performance.<sup>19</sup>

For Thompson, too, Sir Keith Joseph, who had not yet emerged as the leading philosopher of the Conservative Party, had performed well in the one example of confrontation<sup>20</sup>—a discussion on housing with Michael (later Lord) Stewart, the shadow Minister, who was to become Labour's Secretary of State for Education and Science and later Foreign Secretary.<sup>21</sup> This discussion had taken place not on a BBC programme but on ITV's *This Week*. For most critics, however, politicians were thought of in terms of other images, mostly the images of sport.

Despite the increase in the number of radio and television programmes devised by the BBC and ITV—or perhaps because of them—party politicians refused to abandon their control of 'the system'. In addition to continuing 'Party Election Broadcasts' under agreed rules, rules that also encompassed the 'Party Political Broadcasts' between elections, they exercised a power of veto over the BBC's choice for their own programmes, of constituencies on which

<sup>18</sup> \*Audience Research Report LR/64/1950.

<sup>19</sup> *Spectator*, 2 Oct. 1964.

<sup>20</sup> A planned television debate on defence between Dennis (later Lord) Healey and Peter (later Lord) Thorneycroft was abandoned when Thorneycroft refused to take part. (*Daily Express*, 23 Sept. 1964, 'Face to Face: It's No' was the headline).

<sup>21</sup> At the end of the campaign one article turned from politics to the stage, and compared Stewart with Polonius (*Spectator*, 9 Oct. 1964).



to focus, and of politicians to spotlight. They also banned live broadcast audiences, and refused to clarify once and for all the legal position of broadcasters under Section 63 of the Representation of the People Act.<sup>22</sup>

The 'rules' followed for party election broadcasts were more or less the same, therefore, in 1964 as they had been before, and were determined, as they had been before, by the political parties themselves. This time, however, the two main parties agreed to a different ratio from that of 1959.<sup>23</sup> The Liberal Party, which had done well in by-elections, was granted an increase in broadcasting time, thereby changing the television ratio from 4:4:1 to 5:5:3. No other party nominated the fifty candidates that were required, according to these rules, in order to qualify for a national party election broadcast,<sup>24</sup> and the Welsh and Scottish National Parties were banned from giving broadcasts by a directive of the Postmaster-General forbidding regional party broadcasts, a description which in itself affronted them.<sup>25</sup>

It was the imposition of such rules which the journalist Anthony Howard had in mind—and not the sinking of Bentine's Chinese war junk—when he talked of the 'muffling' of television. One of the most powerful hidden bodies in British politics, he suggested, was the Meeting on Party Political Broadcasting—he did not give it its official name—the small group of people known to television as the political committee, and referred to 'even more mysteriously in the corridors of the Establishment as the annual meeting'.<sup>26</sup> The Chairman of Granada, Sidney Bernstein, agreed with him, and made something of

<sup>22</sup> See above, p. 243.

<sup>23</sup> In 1959 the sound total was 180 minutes, divided in the ratio Conservatives, 8 PEBs : Labour, 8 : Liberals, 2; and on television 215 minutes in the ratio 5:5:2.

<sup>24</sup> Despite these rules the Communist Party candidate in Douglas-Home's constituency, Christopher Grieve (*alias* the nationalist writer Hugh McDermid), applied for a fifteen minute broadcast on the grounds that Douglas-Home had given one; and after the election was over, the BBC and ITA were taken to court for having spent money on a candidate without having submitted expenses to Douglas-Home's agent, contrary to Section 63(1) of the Representation of the People Act of 1949. Greene and Fraser had to attend the Court of Session in Edinburgh in Dec. 1964. Lord Migdale judged that 'the dominant motive in the minds of the executives of the BBC and ITA [which had to be established in relation to the interpretation of Section 63(1)] . . . was to give information to the public and not to promote the election of the Respondent and that neither he nor those responsible for the BBC or ITA had been in breach of that section' ('Decision in the Court of Session, 23 Dec. 1964'—Legal File: Representation of the People Act 1949: Grieve, Dr. C. M.).

<sup>25</sup> There is an official Report on a meeting with the parties on 27 July 1963 and a set of notes by Green on the meeting on 17 Dec. 1963.

<sup>26</sup> A. Howard, 'The Muffling of Television', *New Statesman*, 18 Sept. 1964.

a stir when on the eve of the election he complained forcefully of what he called 'patball politics'. Because of rules imposed by the political parties, 'easy lobs' were 'dropped on to the racquets of the party champions'.

Why, Bernstein went on, should the viewer be virtually compelled to watch thirteen party election broadcasts without an opportunity to show his political independence by switching to an alternative programme? Why not arrange that party propaganda appear at different times on the BBC and on ITV? Why should no citizen be allowed to voice a political view on television unless he had the approval of the head office of one of the parties in London? Why should the televising of a meeting between a candidate and members of his constituency be forbidden? Why did political parties have 'any right to tell us what we may or may not watch on our television sets?'<sup>27</sup>

Grisewood, writing as Chief Assistant to the Director-General, defended the rules, as he had defended the rules at the time of Suez, claiming in a letter to *The Economist* that 'derestrictionism', as he called it, would mean abandoning 'impartiality'. (He did not add that Granada in the past had been accused of such abandonment in its current affairs programmes.) Bypassing arguments about the undue power of the party machines, he objected very defensively to suggestions that some kind of 'censorship' was being imposed on the BBC (or the ITA). Somewhat shifting the line of argument, he objected also to the view expressed not only in *The Economist* but in the *Evening Standard* that 'muffled' political television would be boring television, 'boredom by box'.<sup>28</sup> There was no case for the broadcasters embarking on a 'dash for freedom'.<sup>29</sup> Grisewood did not take account of two pertinent points made in the *Evening Standard*: first, that *Any Questions?* would confine itself exclusively to party political speeches until the election, and second, that there would be no specialist reporting from key marginal constituencies.

As far as the party election broadcasts were concerned, there were significant changes of personnel. The Conservative Party, which

<sup>27</sup> *The Guardian*, 26 Sept. 1964; letter to *The Times*, 23 Sept. 1964.

<sup>28</sup> *Evening Standard*, 25 Sept. 1964. 'The broadcasting authorities are so inhibited by their obligations to the politicians,' this article went on, 'that they have failed in their basic obligation to the public.'

<sup>29</sup> *The Economist*, 3 Oct. 1964. Grisewood was replying to an article of the previous week, 26 Sept. 1964, which stated that 'last February's agreement is based on nothing in the law; it is a straightforward piece of collaboration between the political parties in the exercise of direct political censorship'.

chose Heath, a future Prime Minister, as its presenter, had learnt from the experiences of 1959, and from the start had engaged a professional producer to help plan its programmes; he was, indeed, appointed months before. It also collected a substantial quantity of film material of various kinds during the summer of 1964. Among the speakers used were Butler, Joseph, and Boyle, and in one programme there was accompanying or background music on the guitar.

For the last programme, devised and produced in the Elstree studios of ATV, Norman Collins was also brought in to help, as he had been in 1959. The programme consisted of Douglas-Home, much rehearsed, speaking straight to the camera. It was not a success, for as he spoke, he shuffled his papers. For those who remembered, there was a sharp contrast with Macmillan's broadcast in 1959.<sup>30</sup> Douglas-Home did not mention it in his autobiography.

The Labour Party had set out early to plan its television programmes, but it was less well organized than it had been in 1959, when Benn had been in charge. This time there was no one single man in such a role, although the Party had a former radio producer, Clive Bradley, as Broadcasting Officer, Ted Willis of *Dixon of Dock Green* wrote a script, and Benn was called in to discuss tactics.<sup>31</sup> There were some new departures, with one programme taking the form of a visit to a coffee party in the home of a Labour councillor, Brian Murphy, who worked in advertising and lived not far from Alexandra Palace. In another there were contributions from Lord Sainsbury, the retailer, and Johnny Dankworth, the jazz star.<sup>32</sup>

Prosperity was as much of a Labour as a Conservative theme, and Shirley (later Baroness) Williams, complete with shopping basket,

<sup>30</sup> *The Times*, 14 Oct. 1964, called his last remarks 'a symphony in black and white delivered by a tone-deaf pianist'.

<sup>31</sup> See, e.g., T. Benn, *Out of the Wilderness: Diaries 1963-67* (1987), pp. 130-1. Benn said that on 13 July he successfully urged Wilson to focus on the theme of the first 100 days of a Labour Government, a wise choice. He learnt on the same day from Crossman that Wilson was proposing to make him Postmaster-General.

<sup>32</sup> At a Labour rally at the Empire Pool, which began the campaign, Humphrey Lyttelton played jazz, and Harry Corbett, one of the stars of the television programme *Step toe and Son*, made a speech. There were complaints that this event was an example of Americanization. Others called it 'Grand Pier Entertainment'. 'What are politicians up to half the time?', Thompson asked. 'Why did Mr. Wilson open his campaign with a sort of Grand Pier Entertainment starring a Step toe, Vanessa Redgrave, Constance Cummings, and the rest?' It was in any case, he added, 'a show business fallacy that "entertainment" is a neatly-segregated activity like philately: it rears its head in the oddest places. I would forfeit an eternity of *Compact* for the chance to enjoy Aneurin Bevan' (*Spectator*, 2 Oct. 1964).

told viewers how it was they who had worked for it.<sup>33</sup> In the same programme Richard Crossman pressed for better educational provision, to be financed from new national wealth. According to Benn, this was a recorded broadcast where everything in the studio went wrong. 'We had to re-shoot many of the bits twice and even three times.' He watched the tape being edited, and returned home 'really washed out'.<sup>34</sup>

In the last television programme by Wilson—from a Manchester studio in a converted Nonconformist chapel—the future Prime Minister, introduced after a brief filmed appearance of his predecessor, Lord Attlee, was helped by having learnt what the present Prime Minister was going to say in his last television broadcast.<sup>35</sup> The broadcast had been recorded, and Wilson was well prepared. Goldie had complained of an earlier television broadcast recorded in Lime Grove that he was already behaving as if he were Prime Minister: 'he could not yet broadcast from No. 10 Downing Street but he made certain that he could be seen seated at an executive-type desk in front of a Georgian window which created the atmosphere of an office in Whitehall.'<sup>36</sup> There must have been some tension in the air, yet Benn found the atmosphere at Lime Grove 'very cordial'.<sup>37</sup>

There had been an earlier argument about a desk in a BBC studio. Robert McKenzie, who had reported after the previous Labour Party Conference that Wilson in his final speech had 'moved the Labour Party forward 50 years',<sup>38</sup> had planned to sit behind a desk to interview Wilson, but the desk was removed after he objected. Michael Cockerell describes the incident as 'an opening skirmish in what was to become over the years a sulphurous feud between

<sup>33</sup> Rudolf Klein in the *Observer* (23 Aug. 1964) attacked this emphasis before the election: 'Young wife looks back on her 13 years of marriage. She remembers rationing, shortages. ("Funny, things seemed to look uglier . . . than they do now".) She looks around and sees washing machines and vacuum cleaners . . . A Conservative canvasser calls. She sends him away: "We're Labour here."'

<sup>34</sup> Benn, *op. cit.*, p. 150. Anthony Howard wrote later in an article 'The Parties, Elections and Television', *Sight and Sound*, Oct. 1978, that there had been no clearly delegated chain of command at Transport House. 'All too many cooks claimed to be in charge of the kitchen and senior politicians did not take easily to being treated as if they were scullery maids by Wilson's new race of media men.'

<sup>35</sup> Butler and King, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

<sup>36</sup> Goldie, *Facing the Nation* (1977), p. 262.

<sup>37</sup> Benn, *op. cit.*, p. 131 (entry for 15 July 1964).

<sup>38</sup> Quoted in H. Wilson, *Memoirs: The Making of a Prime Minister, 1916–1964* (1986), p. 199. Similar points were made in the *Guardian*, 2 Oct. 1963, by John Cole, a future (1981) BBC Political Editor.

Wilson and the BBC'.<sup>39</sup> Yet on this occasion at least, Wilson was surely right. There had earlier been a rough interview between McKenzie and Lord Hailsham in which Hailsham had complained angrily about questions put to him after the Profumo affair had become public and before a debate in the House of Commons.<sup>40</sup>

Whatever their strengths and weaknesses—and they were much criticized in the Press and by those professional broadcasters who did not take part in them—the television party election programmes, compared by one critic with commercial advertisements, commanded far bigger audiences in 1964 than the radio programmes.<sup>41</sup> The latter consisted mainly of straight talks, although Benn changed the mode when he introduced into one programme six speakers who were not professional politicians. Each explained why he or she supported Labour. The team included a Bishop, Ambrose Reeves; Head of Manchester's Institute of Science and Technology, Vivian (later Lord) Bowden, a future Minister of Education; and, straight from the stage, Vanessa Redgrave. Given such company, it was somewhat difficult for Butler to sound convincing when in a Conservative Party straight talk he told listeners that the Labour Party was the party of the nineteenth century.

There remained a number of what *The Economist* called 'finicky' restraints on candidates broadcasting while the campaign proceeded, and these were imposed by the broadcasting agencies themselves, careful of the law, not by the parties. Thus, along with the banning of the Fu Manchu sketch in *It's A Square World*, a two-minute contribution by Julian (later Lord) Amery to a BBC programme on Joseph Chamberlain was also cut, even though Amery was not identified by name. Meanwhile, ITV abandoned an episode of the popular programme *The Avengers* at 8.52 p.m. on polling day because its heroine Honor Blackman had appeared in a Liberal Party broadcast.

There was trouble of a different kind on the same evening about the scheduling of *Steptoe and Son*, not because Harry Corbett had appeared on a Labour platform, but because Wilson was worried that if the programme, a repeat, went on the screen as advertised at 8 o'clock, Labour might not get all its voters to the polling stations. He complained to Grisewood that this was in breach of an agreement

<sup>39</sup> Cockerell, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

<sup>40</sup> Goldie, *op. cit.*, pp. 248 ff.

<sup>41</sup> *Sunday Telegraph*, 4 Oct. 1964; *Observer*, 11 Oct. 1964, gave audience ratings of particular politicians and particular programmes.

with the political parties that no 'particularly glamorous programmes' should be transmitted on polling day, and when Grise-wood demurred, he went on to see Greene.

At what must have been a tense interview, Greene, according to his own account, began by telling Wilson that he must withdraw accusations that there was a 'BBC plot', and suggested that a meeting of all the political parties should be summoned, a suggestion to which Wilson not surprisingly demurred. Eventually Baverstock, not Greene, found a brilliantly simple solution. He proposed that *Steptoe and Son* should be moved to 9 o'clock. This, both he and Greene appreciated, would give the BBC 'a marvellous lead-in to the election results programme which would be starting and give us an enormous competitive advantage over the ITV'. There was for once a complete harmony of interests, for when Greene told Wilson (without giving the reason?) what he proposed to do, Wilson replied that he thought 'this may be worth a dozen or so seats to me'.<sup>42</sup> Given the smallness of the ultimate majority, according to this line of thinking, the *Steptoe* move may have won Labour the election. There is a good Wilsonian touch to the story which Greene did not mention. According to Cockerell, when Greene asked what should be put on in place of *Steptoe and Son*, Wilson replied '*Oedipus Rex*, Greek tragedy'.<sup>43</sup>

Those viewers and listeners who avoided all party election broadcasts and switched off during the political discussion programmes—and there were many of them—were not in a position to cut politics out of their daily lives in 1964 if they listened regularly, as most of them did, to radio and television news. According to the political scientist Martin Harrison's calculations, out of more than 200 news bulletins monitored during the campaign, only two carried no election news.<sup>44</sup> The election campaign was reported at more length and in greater depth than the campaign of 1959.

Throughout the campaign too there was just as obvious competition between BBC and ITN in news reporting as there was in political programmes. ITN offered a short news bulletin at 8.55 p.m. The BBC transmitted a fifteen-minute news bulletin at 9.15 p.m. Live inserts, always short, were sometimes introduced from election meetings into both bulletins. There were more of these, however, in ITN's

<sup>42</sup> \*Interview with Gillard, March 1977.

<sup>43</sup> Cockerell, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

<sup>44</sup> Butler and King, *op. cit.*, p. 167.



twenty-five-minute-long political programme, *Election 64*, with Alastair Burnet, Robert Kee, and George Ffitch, which had the edge on the BBC-1's *Election News Extra* and on BBC-2's *Newsroom*.

The politicians played up to the media by holding morning Press Conferences which dominated bulletins until reports of evening speeches came in; and they tried, if possible, to deliver their evening speeches in time for them to be reported, again by necessity very briefly, in the evening bulletins. The morning Press Conferences were said to be less successful than they had been in 1959, and an element of farce was introduced when Press journalists succeeded in keeping out television cameras in what *The Economist* called 'a genuine case of journalistic Luddism before the new competition of television'.<sup>45</sup>

What happened to cameras in the evening was more significant. Wilson, in particular, excelled in making the most of the camera attention paid him while he was speaking. Indeed, it is claimed that he changed his speeches, often to the surprise of his audience, when the television lights went on. In general, a party balance was kept as far as news reporting was concerned. One remarkable fact was that only sixty-one politicians were quoted in the news, six of them—with Wilson at the head—more often than all the rest. Even then, few quotations from their utterances, including Wilson's, were more than fifty words.

The Liberal Party found it easier to get reported on television than it did in the Press, as Grimond was happy to announce. He called television 'the Liberals' greatest asset',<sup>46</sup> without mentioning specifically the television broadcast, chaired by Kennedy, in which he urged liberals everywhere—the small 'I' mattered—to vote Liberal.<sup>47</sup> 'If you say you are a Liberal at heart and don't vote with the courage of your convictions,' Kennedy told the electors, 'then you don't have much courage at all, do you?'<sup>48</sup> All the Liberal Party broadcasts had been arranged by him, and they won considerable critical applause, although they cost less than the programmes of its rivals. 'An object lesson to all professional politicians in how to use television as a means of persuasion', wrote Anthony Howard in the *New Statesman*.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>45</sup> *The Economist*, 3 Oct. 1964.

<sup>46</sup> Butler and King, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

<sup>47</sup> *Guardian*, 8 Oct. 1964.

<sup>48</sup> L. Kennedy, *On My Way to the Club* (1989), p. 301.

<sup>49</sup> *New Statesman*, 16 Oct. 1964.

Outside the party election broadcasts, there was a sufficiently large quantity of political broadcasting in 1964, much of it regional,<sup>50</sup> for a question to be asked, perhaps for the first time, that was to be asked many times in the future—'was the quantity too much?' Certainly the numbers of viewers watching both BBC and ITV went down when party election broadcasts were on the screen. Yet it was the final broadcasts in the series that attracted the largest number of viewers. Surprisingly, perhaps, the question was not put directly to viewers and listeners by BBC Audience Research, which was content to conclude after making a detailed study of other reactions that 'there was little to suggest that . . . the BBC had overdone it'.<sup>51</sup>

For Peter Black, the election, like any other television series, seemed to get better as it went along. Repetition was all. 'By the night of polling day', it would be 'pulling in the biggest and most engaged audience since the first *Quatermass* science fiction serial', he prophesied while the campaign was in its early stages.<sup>52</sup> Thompson, writing in the *Spectator*, also compared the election on television with a series. 'If we must have serials on television I greatly prefer this one to those dreadful doctors and lawyers: it may not be any more true to life, but the characters are far more entertaining.'<sup>53</sup>

The results programme was supervised by Peacock, as had been originally envisaged; he left his desk as Chief of Programmes, BBC-2, to do it. With him in command was Fox, now Head of Public Affairs Programmes. Cowgill, now Head of Sports Programmes, was directing the cameras, along with Noble Wilson, the BBC Representative in Paris.<sup>54</sup> Milne, Head of *Tonight* Productions, was in charge of the

<sup>50</sup> Granada repeated its *Election Marathon* programmes of 1959 (see above, p. 248). The BBC's Third Programme gave its first electoral survey: it focused on Exeter. Commercial companies also produced constituency surveys.

<sup>51</sup> \*LR/64/1950, 'The 1964 General Election', Dec. 1964. None the less, Waldo Maguire, Editor, Television News, wrote to Edwards: 'Election coverage was spattered all over the schedules, and it seemed impossible to get away from it. Our reporters and cameramen all over the country told of complaints on this score wherever they went. (And I personally couldn't go into my local without having this thrown at me!)' (\*The General Election Campaign, 1964', 4 Dec. 1964 (T16/513/2)).

<sup>52</sup> *Daily Mail*, 30 Sept. 1964.

<sup>53</sup> *Spectator*, 9 Oct. 1964. This article was called 'The Old Soapbox'. According to Thompson, the politicians had not yet abandoned it. For Hugh Massingham in the *Sunday Telegraph*, 4 Oct. 1964, television had proved 'the lazy man's guide to politics'. 'No chore of going to a political meeting. No hammering on the doorstep. No reading. No effort. No commitment. No nothing.'

<sup>54</sup> Dimmock, then General Manager, Outside Broadcasts, Television, had complained in Dec. 1963 that Cowgill, who was 'really needed full time on sport', had been called to a general election meeting when he had wanted him urgently in connection with a sports matter (\*Dimmock to Hood, 'General Election', 18 Dec. 1963 (T16/513/1)). The memo was marked 'urgent'.

special interview unit. The graphics, a key element in presentation, were in the hands of Roger Laughton, and the engineering side was directed by Norman Taylor.

What Fox called 'the most complex BBC Television programme for five years'<sup>55</sup> involved more than eighteen hours of coverage on 15 and 16 October. Richard Dimbleby opened the proceedings after the music of *Steptoe* faded away, with Trethowan, Butler, and McKenzie at his side and with Day and Michelmores available to handle interviews and discussions. Lord Boothby and Sir Gerald Nabarro, two of the BBC's favourite Conservative politicians, were on tap. So, too, were Frank Cousins, who after the victory was to leave trade unionism to become Minister of Technology, George Woodcock, Bernard Levin, Alun Gwynne-Jones (later Lord Chalfont), Keith Kyle, Anthony Howard, who had already expressed his views about party rules, and Andrew Shonfield.

As it was, the computer was an invaluable recruit, for as results flowed in fast, a neck-and-neck result was promised, a closer result than ever before, 'the nearest thing to stalemate the British electorate had ever produced'.<sup>56</sup> The Labour Party, with 44.1 per cent of the poll gained fifty-six seats, which gave it 317 seats and an overall majority of four. The Conservatives, with 43.4 per cent of the poll, won 303 seats, and the Liberals nine (11.2 per cent). The swing to Labour was 3.2 per cent.

The BBC computer, like ITV's computer, began by forecasting a Conservative victory as the first results came in, but as the early results followed from Lancashire and the West Riding it seemed likely that the Labour Party would win a bigger majority than was to prove the outcome. This was a night for psephologists to savour and to remember. There were many 'upsets', many cliff-hangers. While the shires held firm for the Conservatives, it was only after the swing to Labour in the Midlands had proved smaller than the national average that the increased strength of Labour in London ensured that Wilson reached Number 10.

Audience figures were impressive. Between 10 p.m. and 11 p.m. on polling night, 39 per cent of the adult population, 19 million people, were watching the BBC, and 16 per cent ITV, and at 3 a.m. there was

<sup>55</sup> Fox, 'Election Results Publicity', 22 Sept. 1964 (T16/513/2).

<sup>56</sup> *Annual Register*, 1964, p. 43. See also *Daily Mirror*, 16 Oct. 1964, 'Neck and Neck'. 'Both channels', wrote Richard Sear, 'put up a magnificent coverage.' 'Once a viewer had chosen his channel and the pace warmed up it was useless to switch over.' *The Observer* (18 Oct. 1964) agreed, but, unlike the *Mirror*, gave the edge to the BBC.

still a BBC audience of over a million. The following day, while the result remained in doubt, BBC audiences ranged from 3¾ million at 12 noon to 5 million at 6 p.m., and Wilson was one of the most avid listeners to BBC radio. As he travelled to London on the 8 a.m. train from Liverpool, he listened to Thomas Balogh's transistor. 'I was very much afraid that Harold would step into the train ahead and step out at Euston with Labour behind', Marcia Williams (later Lady Falkender) recalled.<sup>57</sup>

The overall appreciation index was 85. The cost, however, and the strain on staffing resources, had been high. It was estimated that 2,500 BBC staff in all had been involved. The Olympic Games in Tokyo were being covered in the same month. The biggest audiences for the Olympics on BBC Television were 12.25 million on 13 October and 16 October, as against 4.5 million and 4 million on ITV.<sup>58</sup>

For Fox the two most memorable moments of the twenty-four hours were the appearance on the screen of the shocked face of Patrick Gordon Walker, who had been defeated by Peter Griffiths in a grim election at Smethwick, where race had figured in the result,<sup>59</sup> and the 'timed-to-the-minute departure of Harold Wilson from Liverpool just as we came on the air at 8 am'. Soon Fox was thinking of the next general election. 'Several meetings have already taken place,' he wrote in early December, 'to discuss new methods for displaying results, as well as other changes in presentation.'<sup>60</sup>

For Milton Shulman in the *Evening Standard*, TV, which he was to criticize scathingly in the future, proved it had 'grown up'.<sup>61</sup> For Maurice Richardson in the *Observer*, while 'the campaign may have been muffled'—Howard's adjective—'the TV election was an orgy'. It was also a spectacle. 'Hour after hour of totally compulsive viewability. It generated such a current of excitement that from midnight on even dumb blackboards, showing the most expected no-change results, took on the apocalyptic glamour of stone tablets, smoking

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Pimlott, op. cit., p. 318.

<sup>58</sup> \*LR/64/1950; Press Release 'Election Night Audiences, 15–16 Oct. 1964' (T16/513/2); Press Release, 'BBC Coverage of Election Results', 1 Oct. 1964 (T16/513/2); Press Release, 'Audiences for Olympic Games Programmes', 21 Oct. 1964 (T16/513/2).

<sup>59</sup> Greene had ruled that a *Panorama* constituency report on Smethwick during the campaign was 'inopportune' (Butler and King, op. cit., p. 162). When Gordon Walker, Foreign Secretary Designate, failed to win the by-election at Leyton designed to ensure his return to the House (see below, p. 516), the Labour majority was reduced to two.

<sup>60</sup> \*Fox to Goldie, 'Election Results 1964: Report for GAC', 3 Dec. 1964 (T16/513/2).

<sup>61</sup> 'A Narrow Win for the BBC', *Evening Standard*, 16 Oct. 1964. For Shulman's criticism see below, p. 958.

hot from Sinai.' Quickly, however, Richardson changed his metaphor to one that was more topical. From 11 p.m. onwards, with the beginnings of the Labour swing, 'it was like a very rare type of boat race complicated by the third phantom crew, the Liberals, suddenly appearing from behind remote eyots'. On ITV James (later Lord) Callaghan appeared side by side with the cricketer Ted Dexter, 'making harmless cricket jokes'. 'It will take time to adjust to normal non-political viewing' was Richardson's conclusion.<sup>62</sup>

There were, however, two other pieces of news during the hectic twenty-four hours that seemed to place the contest in perspective. News came from Russia before the poll closed that Khrushchev had fallen from power, deposed while on holiday; and the next day it was announced that China, in what was described as 'a major achievement of the Chinese people', had exploded a nuclear device near Sinkiang. With his small minority, Wilson was taking power in difficult and perplexing national and international circumstances, 'economic as well as political, while television, far more than a medium of entertainment, was increasingly carrying with it perceptions of the world as well as information about it.

It was a sign of the times that in the month of the Olympic Games in Tokyo the three big American networks—NBC, CBS, and ABC—showed great interest in the British general election of 1964, and that special facilities were made available by BBC Television to report back to the United States, where it was estimated that 45 million people would see at least part of the results programme.<sup>63</sup> Many of them were to watch the funeral of Winston Churchill on 30 January 1965, the end of an old story.

Very soon, in a decade when news speeded up, British viewers were caught up in what was happening on the other side of the Atlantic and, directly related to it, in what was happening in Vietnam. In March 1965 American planes were to pound North Vietnam, and President Johnson, Kennedy's successor, sent in American marines. Much that was happening there was to be televised. This was to be the first television war in history. Yet the first revelation of its significance in Britain was delivered in words, not pictures, by Alistair Cooke in a historic 'Letter from America'. It was reprinted in *The Listener* alongside a photograph of 'Smoke over Hanoi after the

<sup>62</sup> 'Poll-watching', *Observer*, 18 Oct. 1964.

<sup>63</sup> P. Fox, 'US Networks Come to BBC TV', 23 Sept. 1964, and 'America and Europe Come to BBC TV', 30 Sept. 1964 (T16/513/2).

US bombing of fuel tanks near the city'.<sup>64</sup> In the following number of *The Listener* there was the first of eight Third Programme talks on 'Suez—Ten Years After'.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> *The Listener*, 7 July 1966.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 July 1966. The talk was by Peter Calvocoressi.



# VI

---

## Politicians, Educators—and Pirates

It's a terrible town when the sun goes down  
And the junkie jazzman sings  
And you can't dismiss the nemesis  
That's waiting in the wings.

A pastiche of a NOEL COWARD song in *TW3*, 23 Feb. 1963.

Welcome to 1965. As the New Year bells, tape-recorded by British technological know-how, ring out from tower and steeple over Britain's smiling, chemical-envenomed fields, messages come vibrantly from famous men and women who are sure, whatever happens, to play a leading part in the stirring news paragraphs and television interviews that lie ahead.

PETER SIMPLE, *Daily Telegraph*, 1 Jan. 1965

I want to tell you what we conceive our role to be in the nineteen-sixties, the educational decade.

SIR HUGH GREENE, speaking at the Prize Awards Ceremony of West Suffolk College of Further Education, 26 Jan. 1966

Broadcasting is really too important to be left to the broadcasters.

ANTHONY WEDGWOOD BENN, speaking to the Hanham Labour Party in Bristol, 18 Oct. 1968

---

## 1. Capturing Culture

Before the world changed dramatically during the 1960s—indeed, before the general election of 1964 changed the management of British government after thirteen years of Conservative rule—two matters that were to preoccupy both the Government and the BBC between 1964 and 1967 had already forced their way regularly into the headlines: education and ‘pop music’. At first sight they may seem very different. Yet, at the time, they were inter-related, and on more than one occasion they converged. In both stories the general election of 1966, which divides this long chapter, was a turning-point. The first half of the chapter covers the period from 1964 to 1966, when Harold Wilson and the Labour Party governed on the basis of the slenderest of majorities. The second half continues the stories after the Labour Government had secured a sizeable majority of ninety-seven at the general election of March 1966. Between the two halves the general election itself deserves detailed study. It had novel features, and how broadcasters handled it can be usefully compared with how they handled other general elections, particularly those of 1964 and 1970.

It is rare in British politics for educational debate to overshadow other issues. Yet such debate was exceptionally lively during the 1960s, when a new pattern of education was emerging. Universities often hit the headlines, and all those who did not believe, like Kingsley Amis, that ‘more means worse’ put their trust in an increase in university numbers. Granada Television, which included education in the topics of its prestigious Guildhall Lectures, also produced a popular entertainment quiz programme featuring university teams, *University Challenge*.<sup>1</sup> The *Daily Mail* headlined a report on the use of television in universities ‘Top of the Profs’.<sup>2</sup>

None the less, ‘pop stars’ were to capture the headlines and the television screens far more often than professors, and the novelty of

<sup>1</sup> The Granada Guildhall Lectures began in 1959, and became an annual event. *University Challenge*, first broadcast on 21 Sept. 1962, became the longest-running British television quiz. It was based on *College Board*, an American quiz programme which won an Emmy award for the best television game of 1962.

<sup>2</sup> *Daily Mail*, 9 Nov. 1964.

the new 'pop music' of the 1960s, its content and its rhythms, as well as its stars, fascinated journalists, readers, and viewers alike. Seven months before the general election of 1964, when Radio Caroline, the first 'pirate ship' to carry the sounds of pop music in British waters, first went on the air, the event had more than a touch of sensation about it. The first question in the House of Commons on 'piracy' had been put nearly three years earlier, on 20 March 1961, when the Government of Guatemala had registered another pirate ship, Radio Veronica.<sup>3</sup>

Piracy, which opened up an entirely new phase in the history of broadcasting, bothered politicians as well as broadcasters. 'If he wants our votes he'd better not touch our radio', one young listener threatened in 1965.<sup>4</sup> As the story of the pirates came to an end in the summer of 1967, it was Edward Short (later Lord Glenamara), then Wilson's Postmaster-General, who captured the headlines; an interview he gave to the *News of the World* was headed 'Why I'm Sinking the Pirates'.<sup>5</sup> By what was doubtless a coincidence, a few months later Short became Secretary of State for Education and Science.

Questions of 'education' and of 'pop music' should not be treated, therefore, as separate historical topics. Nor at the time were they kept in entirely separate office files, either in Whitehall or in Portland Place. Educationists and pirates figure frequently in one of the most interesting political diaries of the period, that of Anthony Wedgwood Benn, Short's predecessor at St Martins-le-Grand, who became Postmaster-General in October 1964.<sup>6</sup> They would have done so also in a Hugh Greene diary, had he kept one. For Greene, the 1960s were 'the educational decade', and he spoke eloquently, as did Kenneth Adam also, of an 'educational explosion', a noun which was used even more appropriately in relation to 'pop music'.<sup>7</sup> Greene came to learn, none the less, that there were complications for the BBC, both in intervening institutionally in educational provision and in fighting the pirate pop business. There were lobbies to deal with, as well as organizations.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 637, cols. 19–20, 21 March 1961.

<sup>4</sup> *New Statesman*, 10 Dec. 1965.

<sup>5</sup> *News of the World*, 13 Aug. 1967.

<sup>6</sup> T. Benn, *Out of the Wilderness: Diaries 1963–67* (1987).

<sup>7</sup> Address to the West Suffolk College of Further Education, 26 Jan. 1966, *BBC Record*, 39 (Feb. 1966).

<sup>8</sup> When George Catlin, Margaret Popham, Robert Renwick, and Mervyn Stockwood, Bishop of Southwark, wrote a letter to *The Times*, which appeared on 16 June 1961,

Education was usually thought of during the 1960s as a sector of national life rather than a process of individual development. It was a sector, however, with an intense and intricate internal politics of its own, and in consequence there was never one single educational lobby. Many interests, including vested interests, had their own stake. As a result, while there was a highly committed group of people inside the BBC who wished to promote educational broadcasting, headed first by John Scupham, who became Controller, Educational Broadcasting, in August 1963, and later by Richmond Postgate, who succeeded him in June 1965, there were also people inside the BBC who were as uneasy as politicians often were when they had to deal with this subject. They were, indeed, more uneasy than their colleagues in the ITA. However complex the politics of education might be—and at times they were highly controversial—ignorance was never bliss.<sup>9</sup> The critics and the sceptics, the latter a bigger group, were also far more uneasy than Greene himself, who in November 1960, conscious, as always, of ITV competition, saw the urgent need for a BBC statement on 'our educational policy'.<sup>10</sup>

The world of the pirates and of 'pop music' was, of course, equally complex. It was a spectacular changing world where things were not always what they seemed. It was, too, a world in which economics

beginning with the words 'Education is one of the most important issues facing the country at this time' and suggesting a Committee to consider it, the BBC noted that three of the four signatories were members of a pro-ITV pressure group, the National Broadcasting Development Council (\*Gordon Mosley to Maurice Farquharson, Secretary, 'NBDC, VLA, etc.', 16 June 1961 (R31/101/1)). The memo was passed to Harman Grisewood, Chief Assistant to the Director-General, who in a pencilled note referred to the 'nobbling process'. Commercial lobbies were in the news following the publication of H. H. Wilson's *Pressure Group: The Campaign for Commercial Television* (1961).

<sup>9</sup> When Sir Alec Douglas-Home was preparing for his appearance in *Panorama* in 1963 (see above, p. 439), one of the mock questions put to him by Chataway concerned the 11+ examination in schools. 'They don't really expect a Prime Minister to know about things like that' was his comment (quoted in M. Cockerell, *Live from Number 10* (1988), p. 101). In fact, the viewers did, and a significant minority of them liked to have their attention drawn to the relationship between school education, higher education, and continuing education.

<sup>10</sup> \*Greene to Grisewood, 'Educational Policy', 11 Nov. 1960 (R31/101/1). 'We should not hesitate to blow our own trumpet locally', he added. Grisewood wrote around to a number of Heads of Department on 25 Nov. to arrange a meeting to discuss the implementation of Greene's request. The 'Education in Broadcasting' statement was duly drafted—with many alterations from the first draft—and appeared for the Board of Governors under Greene's name on 9 Dec. 1960. It was published as a booklet in Jan. 1961. Norman Fisher wrote to Greene congratulating him on the statement, 'saddened' though he was to find that *The Brains Trust*, which he had chaired, was not considered sufficiently educational to be included, although *Any Questions?* was (\*Fisher to Greene, 23 Jan. 1961 (R31/101/1)).

counted for as much as music. There were many intermediaries between the performers and the BBC, and in time, in music as in sport, they came not merely to impel or to arrange but to dominate.<sup>11</sup>

The agenda and the chronologies of education and pop music criss-cross in a way that could not have been foreseen when Greene became Director-General. In education the most important totally new development was the emergence—in steps—of the Open University. In the words of one of the first writers about it, the sociologist Jeremy Tunstall, who also wrote about ‘pirates’, it broke away from ‘so many traditions of British higher education that one should not perhaps be startled by the extreme nature of the attitudes expressed both for and against it’.<sup>12</sup> One startled critic, Professor Richard Aaron, a member of the BBC’s General Advisory Council, told the Council firmly in 1964 that ‘a great deal of misleading nonsense was being talked about a so-called “University of the Air” and that he was glad that the BBC was not thinking along those lines. Anyone with any experience of Universities knew that broadcasting could not even begin to take the place of a University education, whether one read that in the narrowest or broadest sense.’<sup>13</sup>

Aaron was expressing an extreme, though not unrepresentative view, but there is no evidence that when he spoke Greene—or, indeed, anyone else in the BBC—forecast the creation of a partnership between the Corporation and a completely new kind of educational institution.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, it would have been impossible to foresee at that time that pirates would play a bigger part in reorganizing BBC radio than the recommendations of the Marriott Committee had done.<sup>15</sup> The new radio pattern to be adopted after 1967, which included the creation of a new Radio 1 dealing almost

<sup>11</sup> For sport, see above, pp. 216–21 and below, pp. 579–81, 952–3.

<sup>12</sup> J. Tunstall (ed.), *The Open University Opens* (1974), p. vii.

<sup>13</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 22 Jan. 1964. Aaron, born in 1901, had been Professor of Philosophy at Aberystwyth since 1932. He was Chairman of the Central Advisory Council for Education (Wales) from 1940 to 1952.

<sup>14</sup> A prominent figure in the educational world, Lincoln (later Sir Lincoln) Ralphs, Chief Educational Officer for Norfolk, attacked the idea of ‘a university of the air’ in a letter to *The Economist*, dated 16 March 1962, a copy of which was sent to the BBC. He admitted the ‘seductive and superficial attractiveness’ of the idea. ‘A university of the air’, as he saw it, ‘was an inevitable starter from the field of Pre-Pilkington manoeuvres.’ Ralphs became Vice-Chairman of the Schools Broadcasting Council in 1965, and Chairman of the Further Education Advisory Council in 1969.

<sup>15</sup> See above, pp. 38–49. For Marriott’s role during the 1960s, see below, pp. 733–51.

exclusively in 'pop music', was an unpredictable outcome when Radio Caroline first went on the air. It was an outcome, too, that had implications for local radio, one of the themes of the next chapter of this book. Yet most of the pirates were recruited to London and not to the local stations. The pirate flag was to fly (metaphorically) from Broadcasting House.

Local radio had already been contemplated inside Broadcasting House when the BBC was presenting its evidence to the Pilkington Committee,<sup>16</sup> but the manner in which it was eventually introduced was directly related both to pop music and to education.<sup>17</sup> Like education and pop music, it had both technological and economic dimensions, and, important though the economics were, the technology mattered also in a decade when it was talked about persistently, not least by Wilson, in relation to the world of work.

Both pop music and education focused attention also on 'culture', another word used increasingly and comprehensively during the 1960s to include 'sub-cultures', class and provincial, and, not least, as the decade went by, to include also what came to be thought of as 'alternative culture', with its own values and styles. Indeed, throughout the whole decade, questions concerning 'culture', from style to morals, were a persistent source of fascination both to journalists and to a growing band of sociologists, whether they were writing about education, 'pop music', or the media as a whole.<sup>18</sup> There were contrasts in the stories of education and 'pop music', however, as well as linkages; for the power of pop music over pupils

<sup>16</sup> See above, p. 285.

<sup>17</sup> See below, pp. 619 ff.

<sup>18</sup> See T. Bennett et al. (eds.), *Culture, Ideology and Social Process*, published by the Open University in 1981. Two central figures in the debate of the 1960s and early 1970s were Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams. Hoggart was the founder and first Director of the Centre for Cultural Studies at Birmingham University, which began as a research grouping within the English Department. In Spring 1971, under the direction of Stuart Hall, Hoggart's successor, the first in a series of *Working Papers in Cultural Studies* was published. See Hall and T. Jefferson (eds.), *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Sub-cultures in Post-war Britain* (1971). Williams, who wrote a Penguin special, *Communications* (1962), had earlier written *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (1958), in which there are several references to 'mass communications', but only two *en passant* to television, and *The Long Revolution* (1961), which ends with a sixty-two-page chapter 'Britain in the 1960s', where there are still only two pages on television, but where he challenged the view that there are 'telly glued masses' (p. 334). See also his *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (1974) and the sympathetic study of him by A. O'Connor, *Raymond Williams, Writing, Culture, Politics* (1989), and his book *Raymond Williams on Television: Selected Writings* (1988). On the other side of the Atlantic, the National Association of Educational Broadcasters commissioned Marshall McLuhan late in 1959 to provide 'an approach and a syllabus' for teaching the nature and the effects of media in schools, and along with others he produced a report in June 1960. *Understanding Media* appeared in 1964.



at school, like the increasing commercialization of leisure, disturbed many of the most zealous advocates of 'educational advance', including the National Union of Teachers.<sup>19</sup>

Those who were most disturbed had to recognize, none the less, that the appeal of pop music, an appeal that crossed frontiers, was itself a sign of the increasing economic and cultural independence of what people of an older generation called—caringly or disparagingly—'the young', an independence expressed still more forcefully as the decade went by—critics would have said expressed most stridently—in the universities. How to make use of the talents of teenagers by giving them greater access to educational facilities moved educationists. How to get money out of their pockets—and there was more money than ever before—preoccupied businessmen, including those dealing in 'pop'.<sup>20</sup>

There were spokesmen of an older 'popular music culture' who were as disturbed by new style 'popular culture' as the NUT or the Association of Education Committees. 'I fear for this country', Steve Race had written in 1956, when the disc of Elvis Presley's 'Hound Dog' was released. It 'ought to have had the good taste to reject music so decadent'.<sup>21</sup> Race, a well-known broadcaster, was writing not in an educational journal but in the *Melody Maker*.<sup>22</sup> Two of the

<sup>19</sup> The NUT organized a large-scale conference on 'Popular Culture and Personal Responsibility' at Church House, Westminster, in Nov. 1960. The speakers included Norman Collins; Arnold Wesker, the playwright; Francis Williams; Cecil King, Chairman of the *Daily Mirror* Group; and Huw Wheldon. See *Times Educational Supplement*, 4 Nov. 1960. The first two sections of the published report, which was accompanied by a study outline and book list prepared by Brian Groombridge (May 1961), were called 'Why educationists are worried' and 'The threat to values'. There was also a section called 'The Controllers reply'. In his final address to the conference Sir Ronald Gould stated: 'We as teachers are engaged in a public service and we know that the purpose of that public service is to transmit culture and values.'

<sup>20</sup> See M. Abrams, *The Teenage Consumer* (1959).

<sup>21</sup> For the origins of rock 'n' roll see A. Shaw, *The Rockin' 50s* (1974); C. Gillett, *The Sound of the City* (1983); and J. Miller (ed.), *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock & Roll* (1981).

<sup>22</sup> *Melody Maker*, 20 Oct. 1956. 'How much further', he asked, 'can the public be encouraged to stray from the artistry of an Ella Fitzgerald or the smooth swinging musicianship of a Frank Sinatra?' He had made the same point earlier on 5 May. 'Viewed as a social phenomenon, the current craze for Rock-and-Roll material is one of the most terrifying things ever to have happened to popular music... the antithesis of all that jazz has been striving for over the years... good taste and musical integrity.' Compare the reaction of Cliff Richard writing of himself as a teenager: 'To escape totally into a world of Elvis music would have been my idea of heaven' (C. Richard, *Single-Minded* (1988), p. 39). See also M. Farren and G. Snow, *Rock 'n' Roll Circus* (1978). During the war Spike Hughes had written an article on 'Popular Taste in Music', in *Pilot Papers* (1943), in which he doubted whether there ever could be 'any very scientific approach to the question of popular taste in music'.

most important changes of the 1960s were the impact on pop music of the new technology of recording and of hi-fi and the intrusion on to the international 'pop scene' of British stars, beginning with the Beatles. Local publicity in the *Mersey Beat*, 'Liverpool's own entertainments paper', soon gave way to national and world publicity.<sup>23</sup> In the 1950s fears had been expressed that American pop singers were 'colonizing our subconscious'. In 1963 there was the reverse phenomenon, 'Beatlemania'.<sup>24</sup> Wilson, Member of Parliament for Huyton, was proud that Paul McCartney was a constituent.

Attempts have been made recently to assess in perspective the significance of what was happening during the 1960s both to 'pop music' and to education.<sup>25</sup> At the time, however, 'perspective' was not a word that was much in favour. In education emphasis was often placed on different versions of 'relevance'. There was also a search for new images. The media focused on topicality. In pop music the moment was what mattered. As the decade went by, other groups created their own images that seemed to respond to the rhythms in the wake of the Beatles, images that both sharpened and blurred in psychedelic light.<sup>26</sup> 'The Faster the Better' is the title of the third chapter of the most recent study of the Rolling Stones, who released their own first record in June 1963.<sup>27</sup> Speed went with immediacy. Fame went with furore. The Stones were the last of the groups to be introduced in Ed 'Stewpot' Stewart's paperback *Book of*

<sup>23</sup> *Mersey Beat*, 4–18 Jan. 1962, described them as 'top of the poll' locally, but in the same month they were rejected as performers by the recording company Decca.

<sup>24</sup> The Beatles, who chose their insect name in 1960 because John Lennon was an admirer of the American pop group Buddy Holly and the Crickets, topped the bill at the Royal Variety Performance in Nov. 1963 after their song 'She Loves You' had topped the charts for several weeks earlier in the year. Their first British disc, 'Love Me Do', had been cut in Sept. 1962. Princess Margaret was to attend the première of their first film, *A Hard Day's Night*, in July 1964.

<sup>25</sup> See, e.g., M. Shattock, *New Universities of the 1960s* (1991); S. Frith (ed.), *Facing the Music: Essays on Pop, Rock and Culture* (1988); L. Masterman, *Teaching about Television* (1980); and R. Gilbert in *The Listener*, 6 Jan. 1983, 'Rock-n'-roll will always be, it'll go down in history.' In parallel, there have been attempts to 'return to the fab 1960s' through compact discs, as well as through radio and television. 'Remember the original mini-skirts,' one 1992 advertisement for discs begins, 'flower power . . . the first man on the moon . . . making love not war . . . The Beatles exploding out of the music scene? In the sixties anything seemed possible . . . men landing on the moon . . . youth culture ruled. Now you can recapture the sheer exuberance of those fabulous years.' Hear also *The Rock 'n' Roll Era: The Stars, the Years, the Hits, the Memories*, original recordings digitally preserved on compact disc (Time-Life Music), and examine Linda McCartney's book of superb photographs, *Linda McCartney's Sixties* (1992).

<sup>26</sup> See S. Frith, *Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure and the Politics of Rock* (1983).

<sup>27</sup> A. E. Hotchner, *Blown Away: The Rolling Stones and the Death of the Sixties* (1990).

*Pop*, which appeared in 1973.<sup>28</sup> Stewart had been the chief disc jockey of one of the pirate stations, Radio London, before becoming the first pirate to sign on for BBC's new Radio 1. As presenter of the BBC's *Junior Choice* he was to become one of the leading children's broadcasters.

The first Rolling Stones 'classic' was 'Time Is On My Side' (1965), but time was not on the side of most of the pop groups who dazzled their audiences visually as well as musically during the 1960s. Indeed, in 1966 the *Sunday Times* proclaimed that 'with no formal announcement, no fuss, nor for that matter any great astonishment' Beatlemania, which had seemed to start it all, was 'at an end'.<sup>29</sup> Two years later, Jeff Nuttall in his book *Bomb Culture* claimed, if prematurely, that 'the freakout' was over.<sup>30</sup> The Rolling Stones continued, however, as an 'energy centre' that survived 'the death of the sixties',<sup>31</sup> and Hotchner's detailed study of them begins with a quotation from Keith Richards, who, like Mick Jagger, always had the power to hit the headlines: 'You can build a wall to stop people, but eventually the music will cross that wall. That's the beautiful thing about music—there's no defence against it.'<sup>32</sup>

## 2. Education

Education comes before 'pop music' in this chapter, because a general 'statement of BBC policy' concerning education was placed high in Greene's own priorities before Radio Caroline was launched. It was issued by the BBC in January 1961 while the Pilkington Committee was still at work, and it brought Government into the reckoning from the start.<sup>1</sup> In its first paragraph it reported a speech

<sup>28</sup> The book offered 'lots of facts, figures, quotes and anecdotes'. It was typical of 'pop' that it developed a voluminous literature, factual as well as fantastical. In the words of Frith (*Facing the Music*, p. 4), it was 'constituted not simply as music but also as knowledge'. Very different from classroom knowledge. See, e.g., J. Marks, *Mick Jagger, The Singer, Not the Song* (1973).

<sup>29</sup> *Sunday Times*, 13 Nov. 1966. See also P. Norman, *Shout* (1981), and D. Hoffman, *With the Beatles* (1982).

<sup>30</sup> J. Nuttall, *Bomb Culture* (1968), p. 243.

<sup>31</sup> See J. Wenner, introduction to *The Rolling Stones Interviews* (1971). See also C. Reich, introduction to J. Wenner and C. Reich, *A Signpost to New Space* (1972).

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Hotchner, op. cit., p. 39.

<sup>1</sup> The draft was seen by the Chairman of the Governors and other members of the Board, several of whom made suggestions for amendments in the text ('Scupham to

made in 1960 by Sir David (later Lord) Eccles, then Minister of Education, at the Annual Conference of the National Institute of Adult Education. In it Eccles looked forward enthusiastically to an 'expansion of every kind of facility for the formal and informal education of the adult population as the next great educational advance'. He had gone on to draw attention, the statement continued, to 'the further help that radio and television [note the order] might give'.<sup>2</sup>

The second paragraph noted that under the BBC's Charter the Corporation had an obligation to disseminate 'education' as well as information and entertainment. It claimed, however, as it had claimed earlier and was to continue to claim, though less complacently, that it met this obligation largely through 'its programmes as a whole'.<sup>3</sup> 'While reflecting at their starting point existing levels of taste and interest they should also contribute to a progressively wider enjoyment of the arts, a progressively deeper understanding of the contemporary world, and an increased awareness of human possibilities.' Broadcasting, as a 'means of communication with universal appeal', could help to close the gap between 'experts' and 'plain men', and could create 'a general common culture'.

Most of the statement gave details concerning the contribution that the BBC was already making to education in general programmes. It started with *Tonight* and *Panorama*, from which there were, it went on, spin-off programmes that threw light on current problems or on recent history. Among them were *Portraits of Power*, which dealt with 'the makers of the modern world', and *The Inheritors*, a series which examined—after a year's research and travel—'the situation of the emergent nations of the Commonwealth'. Curiously, while there were brief references to literature and music

Grisewood, 'BBC Statement on Educational Policy', 22 Dec. 1960 (R31/101/1). Copies were sent to the Pilkington Committee. On 22 March 1962 Colin Shaw sent to Grisewood the copy of a speech delivered by Sir Robert Fraser on 15 May 1958 to the Society for Education through Art, in which he had set out his views on the need for a 'specialist educational service' on a separate channel. In 1957 he had noted that there were already twenty-eight educational stations in the USA. Shaw observed rightly that this speech foreshadowed 'almost everything which has been said in recent months about educational television' (\*Shaw to Grisewood, 'Attached Speech by Sir Robert Fraser' (R31/101/2)).

<sup>2</sup> *Education in Broadcasting: A Statement of Policy by the BBC*, Jan. 1961. Later in the statement emphasis was placed on the need 'to maintain standards of excellence in all its output'. This, it said, was the BBC's first duty.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 403.

and to *Monitor*, little was said of the visual arts, even in relation to a second television channel.<sup>4</sup>

In programmes with a more specific educational purpose—and the distinction between the two types of programmes was to gain in importance—special attention had been devoted to science, which C. P. (later Lord) Snow had recently discussed in cultural terms in his Rede Lecture at Cambridge, *Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* (1959). In it Snow had argued that there was not even a ‘common language’, let alone a ‘common culture’, that was shared by scientists and non-scientists.<sup>5</sup> A few years later, Snow, offered the uncomfortable role of Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Technology—he had said too little about technology in his *Two Cultures*—was to tell the House of Lords that the ‘educational use of television’ could be of real value ‘to our society’.<sup>6</sup>

The science programmes offered by the BBC had included a substantial series marking the tercentenary of the Royal Society, a body in which, long ago, a ‘common language’ had once been spoken. Another very early science series, *The Hurt Mind*, still picked out in *Education in Broadcasting*, had been based on preliminary researches into attitudes to mental illness carried out by the BBC’s Audience Research Department; this was a subject which, under the influence of brilliant writers like R. D. Laing, was to be approached very differently before the 1960s were over.<sup>7</sup> Both the Royal Society and the British Association for the Advancement of Science had been pressing behind the scenes for new science programmes, even before Greene had become Director-General, and his predecessor, Sir Ian Jacob, had written a comprehensive Memorandum on the subject in May 1959.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Art films were mentioned, ‘deprived’, as they were, ‘of the subtleties of colour’.

<sup>5</sup> F. R. Leavis had not yet replied to Snow. His Richmond Lecture, ‘Two Cultures? The Significance of C. P. Snow’, was delivered, also in Cambridge, in Feb. 1962. For the argument, the context, and the reactions, see *inter alia* a leader in *The Times*, 30 March 1962; *Times Literary Supplement*, 23 March 1962; and R. Hagman, *Leavis* (1976), pp. 111–19. See also L. Trilling, *Beyond Culture* (1965).

<sup>6</sup> *House of Lords, Official Report*, vol. 262, col. 999, 20 Jan. 1965. See *Times Educational Supplement*, 22 Jan. 1965.

<sup>7</sup> The first programme in the series was praised by AMQ (later Lord Quinton) in the *Oxford Magazine*, vol. 7 (March 1957) (see above, p. 1) as ‘factual reporting’ which presented material that would not have been presented in any other way.

<sup>8</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 29 Sept. 1958, which reports a meeting on 23 Sept. 1958 between BBC representatives and leaders of the scientific community, among them Sir Cyril Hinshelwood, President of the Royal Society; Sir Alexander Fleck, President of the British Association; and Sir Alexander Todd, Chairman of the Advisory Council on Scientific Policy; \*Jacob to Wellington and Beadle, ‘Science Broadcasting’ (Talks File:

In December 1962 Stuart Hood, then Controller, Programmes, Television; R. D'A. Marriott, Assistant Director, Sound Broadcasting; Grace Wyndham Goldie, Head of Talks and Current Affairs, Television; and J. H. Camacho, Head of Talks and Current Affairs (Sound), met members of the Royal Society and the British Association for the Advancement of Science. As a result of this and later meetings, the Board of Governors agreed to set up a Science Consultative Group.<sup>9</sup> This met for the first time in May 1964, and one of its founder members was Sir Michael Swann, a future BBC Chairman.<sup>10</sup> By then, Aubrey Singer, energetic and enthusiastic, had been appointed Head of Outside Broadcast Features and Science Programmes, Television, part of a future bigger Television Features set-up, in the reorganization of January 1963.<sup>11</sup> He had with him a group of lively producers and writers, including Philip Daly, Gordon Rattray Taylor, and James McCloy. They were given greatly expanded opportunities with the launching of BBC-2.

Further education programmes of a varied kind were mentioned in *Education in Broadcasting*, although from 1957 to 1963 the output of the Further Education Unit in Sound was confined to Network Three.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, until 1965 there was no Further Education Department in Television, a serious limitation when, in a phrase of Brian Jackson, one of the young educational reformers of the period, television was considered 'the great stimulant'. He saw it as a force that could counteract restricted and limited school education, restricted in access and limited in content.

Only one paragraph in *Education in Broadcasting* dealt with schools. This was because the BBC's record in school broadcasting by radio

Science, File IV); Evidence of the Royal Society to the Pilkington Committee, Cmnd. 1819-1 (1962), pp. 1240-1.

<sup>9</sup> \*R. D'A. Marriott, 'Note of Meeting at Burlington House, 12 Dec. 1962', 19 Dec. 1962 (T16/582/1).

<sup>10</sup> \*R. D. Pendlebury, Secretariat, to Jean Rowntree, Head of Further Education (Sound) *et al.*, 'Science Consultative Group', 15 Apr. 1964 (T16/582/1). Other founder members were Professor Hermann Bondi and Sir Lawrence Bragg.

<sup>11</sup> See above, p. 390. Note of a conversation between Singer and John Cain, 10 Oct. 1985.

<sup>12</sup> See above, pp. 49-50. For an account of the Unit see *Ariel*, July 1961. The Unit was part of Talks Division until Educational Broadcasting was given separate status in 1961 (see below, p. 468). Jean Rowntree headed the Unit until 1967, when she was succeeded by C. G. Thorne, who subsequently became a professor at the University of Sussex. In 1961 there were seven producers in the Unit, and the Further Education Liaison Officer, John Robinson, who had succeeded Joseph Trenaman in 1959, after the latter moved into academic research, was supported by an Assistant.



could by then be taken for granted; and although AR had been a pioneer in introducing regular television programmes for schools,<sup>13</sup> already by 1961 the BBC was providing more school television programmes than all the independent companies combined.<sup>14</sup> They were also, of course, the only school television programmes then available throughout all parts of the country before ITV extended its national coverage.<sup>15</sup> School radio broadcasts, under the oversight of the School Broadcasting Council for the United Kingdom, were then being used by over 29,000 schools, and over 9 million pamphlets accompanying the radio programmes had been sold to the schools in the previous year. By the end of the decade, there had been a significant increase in the number of series on offer and an equally significant shift towards experimentation in content and methodology.

John Scupham, who was the BBC's first Controller, Educational Broadcasting, had begun his BBC career in 1946 as an Education Officer, and had become Head of School Broadcasting in 1950. He had been given overall responsibility for further education in radio in 1954, with the title of Head of Educational Broadcasting, and in April 1961, after Greene took over, his Department had been moved out of the Talks Division. In Greene's words, he could then 'be seen both inside and outside the BBC to work to DSB and DTelB without

<sup>13</sup> See above, p. 26, and *Radio Times*, 20 Sept. 1957, the first page of which was devoted to the BBC's Television Service for Schools. The Ministry of Education was reluctant to commit itself to a Schools Television Service, but there were 'well-informed people' outside the BBC who claimed that 'the BBC dragged its feet badly over school television, and let the pace be set by the commercial companies' ('Scupham to Greene, 'Educational Broadcasting', 24 July 1961 (R31/101/1)). Before that, opponents of commercialization like Joseph Reeves, Labour MP for Greenock and a member of the Beveridge Committee, had stated categorically that 'only a public body like the BBC' could and would undertake 'purely educative and cultural work', and that ITV was unlikely 'even in the wildest dreams of those who support the scheme to put forward a plan for a schools television service' (*Hansard*, vol. 527, col. 229, 4 May 1954). Another Labour MP, William Warbey, had spoken then of schools television being 'postponed to the Greek Kalends as a result of the surrender to purely money grabbing interests' (*ibid.*, cols. 217–8).

<sup>14</sup> An interesting brochure published by the School Broadcasting Council for Great Britain, *After Five Years: A Report on BBC School Television Broadcasting* (1962), covers the first phase in its history.

<sup>15</sup> No fewer than 3,000 schools were using the twenty series that were on offer. Radio, however, was still being used in ten times as many schools. The figure remained about the same throughout the period covered in this volume, while the number of schools using the television service rose to 7,000. Total television school broadcasting hours increased from 3,400 in 1962 to 8,149 in 1974. For the early years Betty Smith, then an Assistant in Educational Broadcasting, produced a useful study, *School Television—How it Began* (1978).

the interposition of a Controller'.<sup>16</sup> It was logical, therefore, formally to recognize the change, and eventually to give Scupham the title of Controller on 1 August 1963. Problems remained. Inside Television Centre, the language that Scupham spoke, still common language at the time in most educational circles, was thought to belong already to the past. It did not always help Scupham either that, like the members of the Further Education Unit, he moved easily in the world of education outside the BBC, and that he attached the utmost importance to his contacts, what he called 'liaison with educational bodies'. Scupham's strength lay in his earnest commitment to education and to educational broadcasting.

Realizing that educational concerns were constantly in the process of identification, clarification, and extension during the early 1960s, his vision was influenced by his reading, as well as by his long experience in school and in adult education. Indeed, he referred back in tradition to the nineteenth century and to Matthew Arnold. If the schools and the mass media worked together, and if 'their powers' could be 'extended and used to the full in the home as well as the classroom', Arnold's hopes would be realized. 'The best knowledge, the best ideas of our time' could be carried from 'one end of society to the other'. Already for most adults 'in our society' television was the main highway for that traffic.<sup>17</sup>

If the main emphasis on 'educational advance' during the early 1960s was not on schools but on higher and adult education, this was because of changes which had already taken place in schools before the decade began. Most schools now had bigger sixth forms. Some of them had 'gone comprehensive'. The 'secondary modern school' was on its way out.<sup>18</sup> New methods were 'in'.<sup>19</sup> During the late 1950s the University Grants Committee, the body responsible for the oversight of university education—and at that time it was

<sup>16</sup> \*Greene to Grisewood *et al.*, 'Educational Broadcasting', 11 Nov. 1960 (R31/101/1). Greene asked at the same time for the Director of Religious Broadcasting to be placed in the same position.

<sup>17</sup> J. Scupham, 'Broadcasting and Education', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 2nd ser., 13 Nov. 1963, p. 9. See also Scupham's later book, *Broadcasting and the Community* (1967), esp. ch. VII.

<sup>18</sup> None the less, *After Five Years* does not mention comprehensive schools, and in discussing classroom situations in school television refers only to primary schools, secondary modern schools and secondary grammar schools.

<sup>19</sup> The Schools Council, founded in 1964, was a characteristic product of the period—representative in structure and reformist in its attitudes towards curricula and teaching methods.

directly responsible to the Treasury—based its recommendations for an increase in university numbers not only on demographic forecasts—the movement of ‘Bulge’ as it was called, the increase in the number of children in the university age-group—but on the influence of ‘Trend’, conceived of as educational, social, and economic forces influencing the demand for higher education in the family and in the school.<sup>20</sup>

More children, including a larger number of girls, were staying on at school beyond the minimum school leaving age—the proportion of the age-group doing so rose from 9 per cent in 1951 to 14 per cent in 1959—and more of them were acquiring at least the minimum school leaving qualifications to enable them to go on to universities. They came from a broader social group also. A significant proportion of university entrants came from families where no member of the family had ever been admitted to a university before. The changes in schools before 1960 had often been more controversial than general statements about educational advance suggested, for there had been many local battles about moves towards making grammar schools comprehensive.<sup>21</sup> Neither such battles nor their outcome were touched on, however, in the BBC’s ‘statement of policy’, *Education in Broadcasting*, although there were references to two official reports, the Crowther Report and the Albemarle Report. These were concerned with access, participation, the ‘needs of youth’, and the relationships between education and work and education and leisure. They were to be the first of several.<sup>22</sup>

One passage from the Crowther Report, quoted in the statement, had seemed to have direct relevance to the BBC, although it did not name the Corporation. Three main tasks were identified: the first,

<sup>20</sup> See J. Carswell, *Government and the Universities in Great Britain* (1985). B. Simon, in *Education and the Social Order, 1940–1990* (1991), p. 198, traces the ‘break-out’ in education back to 1956. It was in that year that the Scientific Manpower Committee, an official forecasting body, recommended an expansion in the output of scientists and technologists.

<sup>21</sup> For the content and tone of the controversy see M. Cole, *What is a Comprehensive School?* (n.d.); B. Simon, *The Common Secondary School* (1956); R. Pedley, *Comprehensive Schools* (n.d.); idem, *Comprehensive Education, a New Approach* (1956); H. Rée, *The Essential Grammar School* (1956); S. C. Mason, *The Leicestershire Experiment and Plan* (1960); and, for a retrospect, I. G. K. Fenwick, *The Comprehensive School, 1944–1970* (1981).

<sup>22</sup> Sir Geoffrey (later Lord) Crowther had been Editor of *The Economist* from 1938 to 1956. During the War he worked in the Ministry of Information and the Ministry of Production. His Report for the Central Council for Education, 15–18, was published in 1959. He became Chairman of Trust House Hotels in 1960, and in 1969 the first Chancellor of the Open University. He died suddenly in 1972 at the age of 62. The Countess of Albemarle was Chairman of the Departmental Committee on Youth Service from 1958 to 1960, when its report, Cmnd. 929 (1960), *Youth Service in England and Wales*, was produced. Hoggart was a member.

that of 'helping young workers, many of them of limited intelligence, to find their way successfully about the adult world—to spend their money sensibly, to understand the many ways in which the welfare state touches their lives, to see how its services are paid for, and to play their part as useful citizens'. A second and more difficult task, in the opinion of the Committee, was that of 'helping them to define, in a form which makes sense to them, a standard of moral values by which they can live after they have left the sheltered world of school and find themselves in novel situations where they desperately need guidance'. The third task, easier to carry out and described as 'infinitely rewarding', was that of helping young workers to carry over into their working lives 'the pursuits and activities, physical and aesthetic, which they practised at school' and which too often they had abandoned.

In the light of the Crowther Report, the BBC stated that it would consider the way in which its programmes might deal with these tasks. It was already involved, its statement said, in discussions as to the best way of contributing to full-time and part-time day release courses in technical colleges and colleges of further education. Now it would change the format of its publication, *Learn while you Listen and Look*. An effort would be made to turn it into 'a more attractive and efficient help towards planned listening and viewing'.

Another official report was produced during the last years of Conservative Government before 1964—the Newsom Report on the education of children of average and less than average ability, *Half Our Future*—which greatly interested the BBC.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, Scupham was a member of the Newsom Committee, and may well have been responsible for the insertion of at least one key passage in the Report. After urging the need for more school work in civics, current affairs, modern history, and social studies, the Committee argued positively that

Television has made this notably easier to do than it once was, and perhaps the main strength of school television as a new resource at the disposal of the teacher lies for our pupils in its power to extend their knowledge of the contemporary world and enlarge their sympathies . . . [Television] has the prestige of a medium that belongs to the outside world; and although it is necessarily a one-way communication it can serve all the more effectively as

<sup>23</sup> Ministry of Education, *Half Our Future: A Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England)* (1963). Sir John Newsom, a publisher, had formerly been an educational administrator.

a basis for discussion in so far as it is an experience shared with the teacher, and not immune from criticism.<sup>24</sup>

Scupham believed that schools television, which was to expand its provision during the late 1960s, was particularly well adapted to the needs of 'Newsom children': 'its powers of presentation' had 'special value' in terms of 'the actual, the concrete and the sharply individual' for children 'who will perhaps never move easily among abstractions'.<sup>25</sup> He believed also that further education in general could benefit greatly from broadcasting. 'Industry needs technicians as well as technologists; commerce must have copy typists as well as personnel managers, and it is from the Newsom ranks that more and more of them must be recruited.'<sup>26</sup>

In referring to the Report as a whole, Scupham drew attention to a passage to be found in the Foreword to it by Sir Edward Boyle, who had taken the place of Eccles as Minister of Education, himself a reforming Minister, in July 1962. 'The essential point', Boyle wrote, 'is that all children should have equal chance of acquiring intelligence.' Doubtless 'intelligence' was not the right word, but Boyle's sense that it was difficult in the circumstances of the early 1960s to discriminate between 'the effects of nature and the effects of nurture' was strong and healthy. Scupham went further. Echoing Michael Young, he emphasized that it would be dangerous 'to think in terms of a Britain stratified into two nations—the clever and the stupid'.<sup>27</sup>

For Scupham, the greatest significance of the Report, was not its identification of human waste—it argued against the view that there was a 'limited pool of ability'—but its 'reasoned faith that everyone can be given some understanding of the social order and his own place within it, some insight into the ways of thinking that have shaped the modern world, some habit of creative response to the arts, some basis for a personal sense of values'.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *Half Our Future*, para. 214. There was the same insistence on this point in Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* (1957).

<sup>25</sup> Scupham, *School Broadcasting and the Newsom Report* (1965), p. 3. For 'concrete' and 'abstract', see also Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (1957), pt. I. Scupham complained specifically in 1960 that 'the BBC unlike its rivals, offers only *Juke Box Jury* as its contribution to the special interests of "youth" ' (\*Scupham to Grisewood, 'Educational Policy in the Educational World', 8 March 1960 (R31/101/1) ).

<sup>26</sup> Scupham, 'Broadcasting and Education'.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8. Young's book *The Rise of the Meritocracy* had appeared in 1958. In 1965 Young, who from 1963 to 1966 was a member of the Central Advisory Council for Education, was to become first Chairman of the new Social Science Research Council. In 1956 he had founded the Consumers' Association.

<sup>28</sup> Scupham, 'Broadcasting and Education'. See also B. Williams, 'Robbins, Newsom and after', *The Listener*, 7 Nov. 1963.

Scupham had not yet been made Controller when, following an exchange of letters between him and Adam during the last months of 1962, both the BBC and ITA set up Adult Education Liaison Committees in response to two Government White Papers of July and December 1962.<sup>29</sup> In the wake of the Pilkington Report, the Government announced that the hours of television broadcasting would be extended to provide more time for adult education.<sup>30</sup> By a coincidence, the news was announced on the afternoon of a meeting of BBC staff and adult educationists at Television Centre (the usual rendezvous had been Broadcasting House), and 'a mood of excitement was generated by this news', one of those present recalled, 'that could almost be compared with Mafeking euphoria'.<sup>31</sup>

The two newly formed Adult Education Liaison Committees decided to choose the same Chairman, John (later Lord) Fulton, Vice-Chancellor of the first of Britain's cluster of new universities, Sussex, founded in 1961. This was the first sign that the BBC was given of the complexities of entering new educational territory, for the decision, which cut out all talk of competition, did not please everyone in Television Centre or even in Broadcasting House. Greene himself, uneasy about all forms of co-operation with Brompton Road, was unhappy. So too was Adam.<sup>32</sup> There were, however,

<sup>29</sup> On 7 March 1961 Woodrow Wyatt had introduced a Private Member's Bill, 'a modest little measure', not put to any vote, to allow adult education broadcasting outside the permitted hours of broadcasting. The Government awaited the Report of the Pilkington Committee (*Hansard*, vol. 636, cols. 267 ff.). Scupham commented in a note to Grisewood ('Educational Broadcasting: Woodrow Wyatt's Bill', 15 March 1961 (R31/101/1)) that the way in which Wyatt had introduced his bill 'was not perhaps a model of persuasion'.

<sup>30</sup> Cmnd. 1770 (July 1962), *Broadcasting*; and Cmnd. 1893 (Dec. 1962), *Broadcasting*, gave an agreed formula for adult education (para. 43): 'Educational television programmes for adults are programmes (other than school broadcasts) arranged in series and planned in consultation with appropriate educational bodies to help viewers towards a progressive mastery or understanding of some skill or body of knowledge. The definition shall be held to include programmes primarily designed for class use (eg in technical colleges or in centres for adult education) and also programmes primarily designed for the home viewer.'

<sup>31</sup> J. Robinson, *Learning Over the Air* (1982), p. 152.

<sup>32</sup> He had described ITV interest in education as 'broadly propagandist and self-seeking' ('Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Educational Television: The BBC View', 29 Nov. 1962). None the less, when he told the Governors ('Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 10 Jan. 1963) of the invitation of the ITA to Fulton, Greene said that he 'suggested certain pros and cons without advising in any way'. Sir James Duff, in the chair, said that it was likely that Fulton would accept. Duff had been Chairman of the Planning Committee of the University of Sussex. Fulton was to join the Board of Governors of the BBC as Vice-Chairman in Sept. 1965. I myself had refused the Chairmanship of the BBC Committee in Autumn 1962 in order to serve on both committees. This was described in a note by Scupham to Grisewood as 'a significant pointer'. Scupham's conclusion was sensible. 'We



obvious advantages in the arrangement for both educationists and broadcasters, since each of the two Committees initiated and supervised complex activities that required detailed pre-planning. As in school broadcasting, there was an annual round to prepare and a schedule of broadcasts and supporting material to sustain. There would have been waste of time and people had the activities of BBC and ITV duplicated each other.<sup>33</sup>

Fulton was less interested in routines than in 'innovation', one of his favourite words, and he used the word frequently in his capacity as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sussex. It was a word that directed attention at once to television, closed circuit or public.<sup>34</sup> At the time, Ministers, as well as Vice-Chancellors, chose to employ the ugly and inadequate words 'visual aids' to describe innovations in this field. So, too, did the University Grants Committee and the Nuffield Foundation. They were, however, words that could be conveniently applied alike to what was coming to be called 'continuing education', a far broader term in its implications than 'adult education', to higher education, and, not least, to school education, which had interested the BBC since the 1920s. Another Vice-Chancellor of a new university, Charles (later Sir Charles) Carter, Vice-Chancellor of Lancaster, was made Chairman of the School Broadcasting Council of the United Kingdom in 1964. 'Broadcasting and television', he claimed comprehensively, 'open up possibilities in education which are as exciting [another key word of the period] as anything since the arrival of the cheap printed book.'<sup>35</sup>

can no longer do all that needs doing and any refusal of ours to cooperate will only bring discredit on us' (\*Scupham to Grisewood, 'Educational Publicity', 6 Nov. 1962 (R31/101/2)).

<sup>33</sup> *The Times*, 15 April 1963, considered the arguments for and against 'integration' of programmes, both for schools and in adult education, and came out against it. It saw no 'real case' for 'coordination' as the Universities Council for Adult Education had recommended. For earlier suspicion of 'coordination' inside the BBC, see above, p. 26. For a considered criticism of the BBC, expressed not in a new university but in an old civic university, see the University of Liverpool's *Outlook*, Spring 1963, which criticized the Pilkington Committee for its 'unjust treatment of much of the interesting and imaginative work which has been accomplished by some independent networks, notably by Granada here in the North. It may also have been responsible for a serious underestimate of the beneficial effect on the BBC of the independent companies' energy and impatience of accepted methods.'

<sup>34</sup> For early developments in closed circuit television see *Times Educational Supplement*, 17 April 1964.

<sup>35</sup> Preface to Scupham, *School Broadcasting and the Newsom Report*, p. 1.

In the field of educational television, complexities were created for the BBC before and after Fulton's appointment.<sup>36</sup> They followed what to the BBC was too much action on the part of the commercial broadcasters, not too little. Some of them showed exceptional imagination and zeal in launching innovative programmes, and in the preparation of them they were prepared to offer a larger part than the BBC did to people—and institutions—already involved in the world of adult education, encouraging them to reach out.<sup>37</sup> They were programmes too which blurred some of the hallowed distinctions between different 'levels' of education. It was before Fulton's appointment that an important ITV conference was held at Norwich early in 1962, when *inter alia* Joseph Weltman, newly appointed Education Officer of ITA, a former BBC Talks producer, and head of a school broadcasting department at Granada, discussed arrangements proposed by Ulster Television for a well-thought-out series of university television lectures, *Midnight Oil*, broadcast in the summer of that year.

There was considerable suspicion inside the BBC of such conferences, one of which was held in London in May 1962 with Bernard Sendall, the Deputy Director-General of the ITA, in the chair and with R. B. Henderson of Ulster Television as one of the main speakers.<sup>38</sup> It was the same kind of suspicion that was always present when the ITA talked of a separate educational channel.<sup>39</sup> For Greene such a move was a 'smoke screen'. He told Marcus Lipton, Labour MP, who had raised questions about educational broadcasting in the House of Commons, 'that religion as well as education' might 'be used during 1962 by the commercial lobby'.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Scupham prepared a paper, 'Television and the Universities', 14 Feb. 1963, in which he described what the universities themselves were already doing (R31/101/3).

<sup>37</sup> Some of them were already seeking to do so. The Workers' Educational Association, for example, breaking out of an earlier period of introspection and malaise, provided a series of papers during this period, recognizing the opportunities offered by radio and television, the first of them *Aspects of Adult Education* (1960).

<sup>38</sup> 'Note of an ITA Conference on Adult Education by Television held on 25 May 1962', 31 May 1962 (R31/101/2). Leslie Davidson, BBC Education Officer, North and Northern Ireland, had written to the Secretary of the School Broadcasting Council on 9 May 1962 describing a Belfast Conference for 'educational VIPs' and one in Newcastle. 'Needless to say,' he noted, 'the BBC has not been invited' ('Davidson to Steele, 'ITV Educational Channel', 9 May 1962 (R31/101/2)).

<sup>39</sup> Letters on the subject appeared in the *Manchester Guardian*, 16 Dec. 1961, written by Scupham, Laslett, and Maurice Bruce, Director of Educational Studies, Sheffield University, and a member of the BBC's General Advisory Council. See also *The Times*, 11, 12 April 1962.

<sup>40</sup> 'Greene to Lipton, 1 Jan. 1962 (R31/101/2). See also 'Board of Governors, Minutes, 11 Jan. 1962, and B. Sendall, *Independent Television in Britain*, vol. 2 (1983), p. 275. Greene

In 1963 Anglia Television was to come into the picture also—with ‘Dawn University’ programmes and related courses, a form of educational integration that was to be adopted by the Open University, the new educational enterprise of the decade which was to affect everything else in educational broadcasting.<sup>41</sup> From 21 to 26 October a series of early morning first-year lectures, produced by Anglia Television and strongly backed by the ITA, linked student audiences in Cambridge, Norwich, and London, drawing an impressive list of distinguished lecturers, among them Fred Hoyle, the astronomer.<sup>42</sup> It was estimated that 200,000 viewers saw these programmes, with full-time students in a small minority.

Peter Laslett was the main driving force, and, backed by Young, he hoped to follow up the programmes with a complete televised first-year university course which would incorporate residential schools and a correspondence course.<sup>43</sup> Overseas models were examined—from both the Soviet Union, which had already been mentioned by Wilson, when in 1963 he popularized the idea of a University of the Air, and from the United States, where ‘Sunrise Semester’ and the Chicago Television College seemed especially interesting. The scale of the venture had to be reduced when support from the television companies proved limited, although in a six-week experiment of a different kind, arranged with Anglia, GCE O level English and Mathematics courses were offered.

was wary, too, of plans for an Institute for Educational Television, both a clearing-house and a centre for research, which had been suggested by David Hardman, a former MP, in a letter to *The Times* on 8 Sept. 1961. I headed the list of its possible sponsors (in alphabetical order). It also included Leslie Farrer-Brown, Sir Arthur Forde, Sir Robert Fraser, Sir Ronald Gould, Sir Charles (C. P.) Snow, and Sir John Wolfenden. Peter Laslett was approached also, and Lord Bessborough, a Director of ATV, was in the background. Colin Shaw, then in the BBC Secretariat, questioned the approach (\*Shaw to J. Camacho, Head of Talks (Sound), ‘Notes for Graham Norton of Bow Group’, 6 Dec. 1961 (R31/101/1)).

<sup>41</sup> See below, pp. 567–70.

<sup>42</sup> See Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 168. David Grugeon, later to become Director, Educational Services, Office of Continuing Education at the Open University, was one of the main organizers.

<sup>43</sup> Laslett informed P. H. Newby, Controller, Third Programme, of the series and its aims (\*Newby to Adam, ‘Television as a University Teaching Medium’, 10 Jan. 1963 (R31/101/3)), and wrote to Scupham suggesting possible BBC involvement in an extension of the scheme. Scupham, he noted, had told him in Nov. 1962 that ‘this is just the type of operation which the Corporation might find most difficult, both financially and because of restricted technical resources’ (\*Laslett to Scupham, 3 Feb. 1963 (R31/101/3)). For scepticism, see \*Miall to Adam, ‘Television and Cambridge University’, 27 Feb. 1963 (T16/380). He had met Laslett at a BBC lunch in Cambridge.

Like Laslett, Young, who was one of the great educational and social innovators of his time, had high hopes of the BBC in 1963. Yet despite Scupham's eloquence and Greene's support from above, the Corporation was moving more slowly than they wished. In their view—and they did not know the whole story<sup>44</sup>—it was still concentrating primarily on 'further education' and on 'adult education' at a time when educational horizons were changing in the light of the Robbins Report on Higher Education.<sup>45</sup> The remit given by Harold Macmillan to Professor Sir Lionel (later Lord) Robbins in 1961 had been not dissimilar to that given to the Pilkington Committee—in each case a whole field was to be surveyed;<sup>46</sup> and since the Pilkington Committee chose to devote substantial time to educational issues, there had been some convergence of approach in the two Reports, which were published within the life of the same Parliament.<sup>47</sup>

The close relationship between the two Reports is revealed by the fact that before the Pilkington Committee reported, *The Economist* published an interesting article called 'Televarsities', in which the author asked whether television could be used to give an impetus to a major experiment in British adult education. 'A British Television

<sup>44</sup> When Young applied to the Post Office for a licence to use the sound radio services of Rediffusion Ltd. for a limited educational venture which would be run by the Advisory Centre for Education in conjunction with the University of Hull (\*Letter of 16 Aug. 1963, copied to BBC (R31/101/3)), the Post Office ruled, after consulting the BBC, that the venture would not be possible since it 'would be regarded as an experiment in local sound broadcasting' (\*A. Wolstencroft to Young, 16 Aug. 1963: Young to Wolstencroft, 21 Aug. 1963). 'The proposal to provide lectures from local sources for transmission over local relay networks', Curran, then BBC Secretary, told B. L. Savage of the Post Office, 'would seem to us to be perilously close to origination of programme material by the networks, which we have consistently opposed on grounds which are familiar to you' (\*Letter of 17 Sept. 1963 (R31/101/3)). Curran in a note to Grisewood (\*Relations with Dr. Michael Young, 20 Sept. 1963 (R31/101/3)) noted that Young was 'not going to be very pleased with our reply to the Post Office'.

<sup>45</sup> Cmnd. 2154 (1963), *Higher Education*. Robbins was a Professor at the London School of Economics, but had strong business connections.

<sup>46</sup> Waste created by 'drop-out' had been a main theme of the Crowther Report.

<sup>47</sup> The BBC did not submit evidence to Robbins. Sir Harold Bishop, Director of Engineering, who sat next to Eccles at a dinner, wrote to Greene about this (\*Bishop to Greene, 'Robbins' Committee', 28 Feb. 1963 (R31/101/3)). Frank Gillard, Controller, West Region, told Greene that Sir Philip Morris, the former BBC Vice-Chairman, who was a member of the Committee, had explained to him confidentially that the information the Committee had collected made the Robbins study 'the event of the century' (\*Gillard to Greene, 1 March 1963 (R31/101/3)). Scupham wrote to Greene on the same subject on 5 March 1963, and Greene wrote to Robbins explaining 'the very great interest the BBC would have in the Report' and inviting him to lunch. Robbins replied that he would have lunch 'when I am a little clearer what our conclusions are' (\*Greene to Robbins, 5 March 1963; Robbins to Greene, 7 March 1963 (R31/101/3)). Television was mentioned only once in the Robbins Report—and then vaguely and briefly—as 'an ancillary both for part-time and correspondence study' (Cmnd. 2154 (1963), para. 821, p. 262).

University (or universities)' would be an experiment 'which might just conceivably do more than anything else to transform Britain's position in the world'.<sup>48</sup>

The Government's response to the two Reports was connected also. On 31 July, before Macmillan gave way to Douglas-Home, the Television Act of 1963 incorporated the considered official response to Pilkington;<sup>49</sup> and three months later the Government, now headed by Douglas-Home, accepted the expansionist recommendations of the Robbins Committee at once.<sup>50</sup> There was a popular dimension to this also, and Scupham, despite Laslett and Young's concern, was as quick as the Government in picking out aspects of the Robbins Report which called for speedy action. He saw both the Robbins Report and the Newsom Report as 'the poles on which public debate' on education was turning, and in his opinion they were not really 'poles apart'. It was in the Robbins institutions that the teachers of the Newsom children would be trained, and it was from 'Newsom homes' that increasing numbers of 'Robbins students' would come.

Scupham paid particular attention to the twelfth of the Robbins Committee's 178 recommendations—that 'curriculum research and development and the training of school teachers in new methods should be fostered'—pointing out that this was of 'immediate and high importance to us [the BBC]', and to the sixty-sixth—the need to meet 'the increased need of commerce for oral fluency in foreign languages'. This, he said rightly, was 'an obvious field for help by radio'.<sup>51</sup> It was more difficult for Scupham to push new initiatives than it was for some of his counterparts in ITV. Yet, in practice, the latter were concerned with far more limited fields of education, mainly regional fields, than he was. Inside the BBC there was an awareness of expanding educational opportunity, not least in the teaching of foreign languages, although there were often internal obstacles to speedy action.

<sup>48</sup> *The Economist*, 16 Dec. 1961.

<sup>49</sup> See above, pp. 303–8.

<sup>50</sup> The Committee proposed, *inter alia*, a doubling of numbers of university students and the immediate granting of university status to the Colleges of Advanced Technology.

<sup>51</sup> Cmnd. 2154 (1963), p. 278; \*Scupham to Grisewood *et al.*, 'The Robbins Report and Educational Broadcasting', 4 Nov. 1963 (T16/63/S). Recommendation 101 urged that 'those who wish to embark on or resume higher education later in life should be encouraged to do so'. Scupham did not pick up on this recommendation in his note on the Report, but he observed on a related recommendation, largely concerning refresher education (no. 102), that 'there is no doubt we can make an important contribution in both media towards refresher courses enabling women in middle life to return to professional employment . . . an urgent national need'.

Within radio the Further Education Unit<sup>52</sup> was active and adventurous, and in 1963 was given a large expansion of time: one hour each evening from 6.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m., an hour and a half on Saturday mornings, and a special programme on the Home Service on three afternoons a week. It was also prepared to tackle topical issues like *Colour in Britain* (1963). Meanwhile, the pamphlet *Keep Up Your Russian* (1960) continued to sell, and was commended in a Ministry of Education report produced by a committee chaired by Noel (later Lord) Annan on the teaching of Russian.<sup>53</sup>

Further Education moved into Television in 1963, although a separate Department was not set up until 1965.<sup>54</sup> It was to be headed by Donald Grattan, an ex-teacher, who had moved from the BBC's School Broadcasting Television Department, where he had been since 1956. In October 1962, however, when the idea of such a department had been first mooted, it had been questioned by Stuart Hood on the grounds that there were already 'experts in the field of Talks, Music, Women's Programmes and Scientific Programmes who could bring into the programmes a high degree of professionalism'.<sup>55</sup> Grattan had one kind of professionalism that Hood lacked. He was experienced enough to produce a brilliant typology of different kinds of adult education programme in 1964, which appropriately included 'series primarily addressed to members of specific professional or occupational groups'.<sup>56</sup>

It was Hood, as Controller of Programmes, Television, not Grattan, who gave publicity to the first new programmes at a news conference in Blackpool in September 1963;<sup>57</sup> but within a few months there

<sup>52</sup> See above, p. 182.

<sup>53</sup> \*'Further Education by Television: The Teaching of Russian', 14 Feb. 1962 (R31/101/2). Trenaman, interested as he was in problems of language, had produced a detailed analysis of the impact of a series, *En Voyage*.

<sup>54</sup> Scupham, 'Adult Education in Television', *Ariel*, Sept. 1963. 'We shall be using a very wide variety of programme ingredients and programme forms: studio demonstrations and specially shot film dramatisation as an instrument of the new audio-visual methods in language teaching and OB techniques in an experiment with scientific lectures to an invited audience.' The initial programmes included *Ten Modern Painters*, *Parliamo Italiano*, and  $E = mc^2$  (an introduction to relativity).

<sup>55</sup> \*Hood to Adam, 'Adult Education by Television', 11 Oct. 1962 (T16/63/3). Ironically Hood was to be the next BBC Lunch-Time Lecturer in 1963 after Scupham's lecture, 'Broadcasting and Education' was delivered on 13 Nov. 1963.

<sup>56</sup> \*Grattan to Scupham, 'Further Education Television', 30 Sept. 1964 (CEB file Adult Education (TV): Policy and Development, 1958-65). Grattan noted that 'educational', as distinct from 'educative', broadcasts 'must be addressed to defined audiences and must have specific educational aims'.

<sup>57</sup> \*Press Announcement, 'New Ventures in Adult Education Programmes on Sound Radio and Television', 12 Sept. 1963.



were bitter clashes between Hood and Scupham on questions of how best to organize adult education programmes, after a long paper by Scupham called 'The Future of Educational Broadcasting' had been considered by the Board of Management in January 1964. Indeed, even before the paper was circulated, the clash had already begun inside a BBC internal co-ordinating committee for adult education set up by Adam in November 1962, the members of which included Hood, Goldie, and Baverstock, as well as Scupham.<sup>58</sup>

Scupham's paper started from the premise—Scupham called it a conviction—that education would be 'overwhelmingly the most important domestic problem for as far ahead as can be foreseen'. He also maintained more provocatively that 'responsible opinion will, as further channels become available, set a far higher priority on the development of educational broadcasting, by whatever agency, than on the continued expansion of competitive entertainment programmes'.<sup>59</sup>

Scupham's memorandum infuriated some, perhaps most, of his influential colleagues inside BBC Television. Baverstock and Peacock were as hostile as Hood, who resented the pressure of what he believed to be a formidable education lobby.<sup>60</sup> Baverstock complained that Scupham was seeking to be both 'the sole interpreter of needs' and 'the sole originator of programmes', while Peacock described his proposals for pulling together educational television as 'an outright take-over bid which must be resisted in principle. The creation of television programmes for adults is the job of television professionals, not educationists.'<sup>61</sup> A month later, Baverstock warned Adam that a separate 'Executive Group' formed by Scupham was 'assuming functions that overlap and powers that are superior to those of your Television Adult Education Committee', of which Scupham was a member.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>58</sup> \*Hood to Adam, 'Adult Education by Television', 11 Oct. 1962 (T16/63/3); \*Scupham to Adam, 'Extension of Educational Television', 14 Feb. 1962 (R31/101/2); \*Adam to Scupham, 'Educational Television: The Next Steps', 28 Feb. 1962 (R31/101/2); \*Adam to Scupham, 'Adult Education by Television', 6 Nov. 1962 (T16/63/3); \*Scupham interviewed by John Cain for the Oral History Project, 24 Oct. 1984.

<sup>59</sup> \*Board of Management, *Papers*, 'The Future Development of Educational Broadcasting', 16 Jan. 1964.

<sup>60</sup> \*Stuart Hood interviewed by John Cain for the Oral History Project, 29 Aug. 1985.

<sup>61</sup> \*Baverstock to Adam, 'Adult Education: CEB's Memorandum 17th February 1964', 28 Feb. 1964 (T16/63/6); \*Peacock to Adam, 'The Future of Educational Broadcasting', 24 Jan. 1964 (T16/374). Baverstock, in discussing Scupham's use of the word 'responsibility', quoted Alice: 'Who's to be master, that's all.' Scupham commented further in a memorandum to Adam ('Organisation of Adult and Higher Education by TV', 17 Feb. 1964 (T16/63/6)).

<sup>62</sup> \*Baverstock to Adam, 'Adult Education', 25 March 1964 (T16/63/6).

Adam probably needed no such warning, for as early as February 1962, before Scupham had been given the title of Controller, Adam had told him that he was not alone in 'presenting the BBC case to the educational world', adding proudly—and not without bombast—that he himself had recently chosen education as his theme for a talk to the Cardiff Business Club.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, he had warned Scupham at the same time of the dangers of speaking a language that would benefit the BBC's enemies rather than its friends. Adam had been particularly 'alarmed', he went on, by a suggestion of Scupham's in a paper sent to him that 'education is one of the vital concerns of society, the provision of mass entertainment is not'. If that proposition were accepted by the BBC, Adam added, 'it would destroy the most vital difference between ourselves and those who now clamour for a separate educational channel'.<sup>64</sup>

Ironically, it was doubtless because Greene feared a build-up of pressure outside the BBC to create such a separate channel that in July 1964 he issued a strong and decisive statement in support of Scupham, confirming Scupham's powers that had been challenged by Baverstock and Peacock—and eventually by Adam. All proposals for adult and higher educational programmes 'from whatever source' were now to be presented to Scupham for approval before 'executive action' was taken; and in order that he could implement policy effectively, a new post of Editor, Further Education (Television), was to be created: it was filled by Grattan.<sup>65</sup> Adam was left with 'a general responsibility for the whole of his output', which gave him the right to require that 'educational programmes, like all other programmes which figure in his output, are produced in such a way as to be creditable to it'.<sup>66</sup>

By the time that the Conservative government gave way to the Wilson government in October 1964, the BBC's educational policies had become far more dynamic than they had ever been before. The

<sup>63</sup> He had also chosen it as his theme—an obvious theme—for the Annual Oration at the Institute of Education held at London University's Beveridge Hall.

<sup>64</sup> \*Adam to Scupham, 'Educational Television: The Next Steps', 28 Feb. 1962 (R31/101/2). He drew Scupham's attention to the fact that, appropriately, his Institute Oration had been given in the Beveridge Hall. At the request of Scupham, T. R. (later Sir Toby) Weaver, Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Education, was sent on 19 March 1962 a copy of the BBC's submission to the Pilkington Committee dated Feb. 1962 on 'The ITA's Proposals for the Future of Television', in particular the idea of an educational channel.

<sup>65</sup> See above, p. 479, and below, p. 484.

<sup>66</sup> \*Greene to J. B. Clark *et al.*, 'Functions of Controller, Educational Broadcasting in Television', 9 July 1964 (CEB file Adult Education (TV): Policy and Development, 1958–65).

volume of school broadcasting, which was still extending its range of coverage, was scheduled to increase by 35 per cent 'in accordance with priorities determined by the School Broadcasting Council', and in 1964/5 the number of series being provided was forty-nine a week. Although further 'phased progress' was said to depend on 'the availability of new financial resources', the 'question of air time', Scupham claimed, had already been 'settled'. As far as teaching methods were concerned, 1964 was a year when promising experiments began with 'radiovision', the use of specially made film-strips to accompany a number of school radio series. They introduced a visual element into schools which did not have television facilities, a visual element which children took for granted when they watched television in their homes. There was also an increasing use of tape recorders in schools, which made it possible for schools to record programmes and fit them into the timetable at their own convenience.<sup>67</sup>

Tape recorders, like comic strips, were already associated with popular culture, and their use in education, whatever the doubts of traditionalist teachers, was narrowing the gap between classroom and home.<sup>68</sup> There were changes in the titles of courses also, which reflected the educational changes of the 1960s. Thus, in primary school education *Travel Talks* became *Lands and Peoples*, and *Nature Study* became *The World Around Us*. There was also talk of changing *Stories from World History* into *Stories from the Past* and changing *Stories from British History* into *You and Your World*. Recommendations for these changes came from the School Broadcasting Council. They were said, however, to be 'wholly in line with the thinking in School Broadcasting Department (Sound)'.<sup>69</sup>

Such thinking, stressing 'child centredness', a concept that a generation later was to be under fierce critical review, directed more attention to primary education than had previously been the case;

<sup>67</sup> See School Broadcasting Council for the United Kingdom, *School Radio and the Tape Recorder* (1968).

<sup>68</sup> \*Gillard to Greene, 'Educational Broadcasting Radio', 7 April 1965 (T16/63/7). In the case of both radiovision and tape recorders, Gillard, who had started life as a teacher, stressed the role of the teachers who were, he emphasized, in control of the new devices. Radiovision enabled the teachers to go back over passages in the lessons not fully assimilated. Tape recordings could be used selectively. The performers' unions accepted the use of tape in educational broadcasts only on condition that the tapes were destroyed at the end of the year.

<sup>69</sup> \*SBC 44/64, Paper presented to the School Broadcasting Council Primary Programme Sub-Committee, 19 June 1964. The paper referred to what became a long-standing series *How Things Began*, which was then broadcast for 10–13-year-olds.

and for at least one historian of educational broadcasting, the real breakthrough in school television occurred with the use of television at the primary school level.<sup>70</sup> Significantly, at the first meeting of the ITA's School Committee, chaired by Newsom, in October 1964, the need for more primary school programmes was spotlighted.<sup>71</sup>

There was to be a new link in the chain of educational reports and the people responsible for them, in that Lady Plowden, whose report on *Children and their Primary Schools*, published in January 1967, shared Newsom's concerns, and stressed how important it was that young children be taught to use educational television profitably, and in the process to associate television with learning as well as with entertainment.<sup>72</sup> Lady Plowden was to become Vice-Chairman of the BBC in 1970, and to make history by leaving this post to become Chairman of the IBA in 1975.

In further education, where traditionalist adult education was losing much of its appeal, there were still unresolved questions, in this case relating to the timing of programmes. By 1964, however, the 'total amount of time available for the purpose of liberal adult education and of language teaching' in sound broadcasting was felt to be adequate<sup>73</sup> and in the same year a research inquiry surveyed the wide range of 'adult interests', picking out as 'highest common factors' home and family interests and vocational and working interests. It also directed attention to minority audiences, including immigrants (and the retired), and singled out 'some notable absentees' in the list of interests, among them formal bodies of knowledge, 'international relations and politics generally', and 'religious education'.<sup>74</sup> The list was totally acceptable to local education authorities concerned with adult education, although the limitations of its list of 'notable absentees' were soon to be exposed.

<sup>70</sup> J. Langham, *Teachers and Television: A History of the IBA's Educational Fellowship Scheme* (1990), p. 64. Primary school teachers found it easier to integrate television into their timetables than secondary school teachers. See also J. Weltman, *21 Years of Independent Television for Schools, 1957-78* (1978).

<sup>71</sup> The Pilkington Committee had recommended the abolition of the Children's Advisory Committee, and the recommendation, included in the Television Act of 1963, led to the setting up of the new committee. Newsom's appointment was warmly welcomed. *The Teacher's* comment (20 March 1964) was: 'The Authority could hardly have done better.'

<sup>72</sup> The Plowden Report was a product of the Central Advisory Council for Education, which was chaired by Lady Plowden. For her later career see below, p. 605.

<sup>73</sup> \*Scupham, 'Educational Broadcasting: The Next Steps' (R31/101/4).

<sup>74</sup> \*J. Robinson, 'BBC Adult Education: Summary of Enquiry into Adult Interests', 14 Nov. 1964 (T16/63/6).

Some of the local education authorities and other 'responsible bodies' concerned with adult education were by then working closely with the BBC.<sup>75</sup> Thus, a series of radio programmes for GCE students of English language and literature was being run as a joint operation in the Midlands with the National Extension College, with the College employing a correspondence course as backing. Other such co-operative courses—each with its own local or regional audience—were a refresher series for doctors in Devon and Cornwall, put on in collaboration with the British Medical Association, and a series in Welsh mounted in collaboration with Coleg Harlech.<sup>76</sup>

When Grattan was given the title of Editor, Further Education, Television, in October 1964, a battle had been won, and the current output of five separate 'liberal adult education programmes a week' in television seemed to Scupham to be 'as much as could be expected' so long as BBC-1 remained 'the main competitive channel'.<sup>77</sup> Grattan proved an able and, when necessary, tough administrator, who was to become Controller, Educational Broadcasting, in 1972. Among the first producers working with him were Sheila Innes, a language specialist who was to succeed him as Controller in 1984; Michael Bunce, later to move to Television Current Affairs and Publicity; Nancy Thomas, who had worked with Huw Wheldon on *Monitor*; and James McCloy, who produced *Science on Saturdays* and was later to produce Open University programmes.

Two interesting articles appeared in *The Listener* on television and education in April 1964. Scupham, concentrating largely on schools, observed how the television screen had 'incomparable powers of demonstration'. The time and energy of the teacher could be saved for 'the vital task of consolidation'. It could also cope effectively with 'new knowledge'. There had never been a time before 'when new knowledge was so rapidly transforming the traditional academic disciplines themselves'. The second writer, Grace Wyndham Goldie, who had herself worked before the Second World War as a WEA

<sup>75</sup> A session on 'Adult Education through Television' was part of the Annual Conference of the National Institute of Adult Education on 6 Sept. 1964. About 150 delegates attended. \*John Robinson wrote a Report on it, 21 Sept. 1964 (T16/63/6). Robinson pointed out, correctly, that if education by television were to be used for 'specific instruction' rather than 'general enlightenment', it would require 'combination with other forms of teaching'. The Workers' Educational Association produced an important policy document, *Viewing and Learning*, in 1964.

<sup>76</sup> \*Gillard to Greene, 7 April 1965. Gillard's paper ended not surprisingly with a reference to local radio: 'Our greatest hopes for an expansion of adult education broadcasting lie in the opening of local stations.' For the link, see below, pp. 633–4.

<sup>77</sup> \*Scupham, 'Educational Broadcasting: The Next Steps', 4 Nov. 1964 (R31/101/4).

tutor, a neglected period of her life, was far more cautious. 'The full disciplines of education, by which pupils are expected not only to watch and listen but to work, and produce criticizable evidence of work, cannot be part of the television programmes.' Goldie looked forward to the time, however, when 'educational centres' would be scattered round the country to which everyone would have access. They would be 'fully equipped with every kind of teaching machine—of which television, recorded on tape, will be only one instrument among many'.

Both writers pleaded for research, in Goldie's phrase, 'to find out how the nature of communication by television can supplement those other great media of communication, the printed and the spoken word',<sup>78</sup> and it was a sign of the times that when the Ministry of Education itself had set up a Research and Intelligence Branch in the early months of 1962, this branch was given the responsibility for co-ordinating policy on educational broadcasting, including television. The research had practical implications for policy, and for this reason it was encouraged by Boyle, who by 1963 had come to the conclusion that, whatever the resistances, a separate television channel would be necessary in the long run to provide educational television. Meanwhile, his Ministry, at least as jealous as the BBC was of outside-inspired initiatives, was seeking to acquire funds for experimental programming on a pilot basis to prepare the way.

Meeting with opposition of different kinds from the Post Office and the Treasury—opposition as real as that faced by Scupham in Television Centre—Boyle had to hold back, however, and to accept instead as the best on offer the setting up of an interdepartmental Working Party in January 1964. This included representatives of the Post Office, the Treasury, and the Lord President's Office, and it was asked to consider the whole question of the timing, placing, and broader implications of such experiments with television.

Arguing that 'we need a much better educated man in the street', 'better informed, more intelligent and responsible in judgement, and capable of coping with a rapidly changing world around him', the Department of Education and Science (as it had become in April 1964) stated in the summer of 1964 that a new separate channel, which would carry out 'direct teaching', would do much to secure this. It also proposed that pilot broadcasts lasting at least a year should begin in a number of quite different areas of the country, in

<sup>78</sup> *The Listener*, 16 April 1964.



order to test its feasibility. In each 'region' chosen, the broadcasts on offer would have to be in addition to existing television services, and would have to be broadcast on an unallotted frequency.<sup>79</sup>

Doubts expressed by the Post Office, which also extended to other schemes for pilot broadcasts that were being mooted at the time, led to an impasse in the Interdepartmental Committee, although, according to Adam, by the time the Conservatives had lost the general election of October 1964, the Department of Education and Science had come down 'flatly and uncompromisingly on the side of the BBC to run the educational channel', and was ready 'to ask for permission to approach the BBC to discuss a largescale experiment in UHF'.<sup>80</sup>

In a wide-ranging memorandum, 'Educational Broadcasting, the Next Steps', dated 4 November 1964, Scupham tried to take account of the changes in educational policy that might follow the Labour victory at the election. Claiming forcefully that with the new Labour Government in power the BBC had a special educational mission of a distinctive and comprehensive long-term kind, his covering note began with the stirring words: 'This paper is written in the conviction that education will be overwhelmingly the most important domestic problem for as far ahead as can be seen . . . We are still in the early stages of a social revolution.' Both political parties, Scupham noted, were 'committed to a policy of educational expansion on an unprecedented scale'. In a list of 'national needs'—and these were being drawn up by educators—'school needs' were fundamental, since the schools were at 'the base of the educational pyramid'.

Scupham recognized, nevertheless, that there were bound to be changes after the Labour victory. In particular, the 'extension of liberal adult education', to which the BBC was already committed—as the Pilkington Committee had been—was bound, he argued, to be placed relatively low in the priorities of the Department of Education and Science, well behind, for example, teacher training or schemes

<sup>79</sup> A departmental memorandum on the subject, 'Educational Television, Future Developments and Proposed Pilot Experiment', was circulated in July 1964 (T16/374). The areas where such experiments would be feasible included Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, and considerable detail was provided about it. The transmitter available was an ITA transmitter, Chillerton Down.

<sup>80</sup> \*D. G. Lawrence, Post Office, to Curran, 7 May 1964 (R78/647/1); \*Curran, 'Educational Broadcasting, Ministry Views', 28 July 1964 (R78/647/1); \*Adam to Greene, 'Meeting with Jack Embling', 13 Nov. 1964 (R31/101/4).

to deal with 'Newsom children'.<sup>81</sup> Whatever the BBC were to do—and here Scupham was taking a very different line from that of most of his BBC colleagues who were not directly concerned with 'education'—success, he insisted, would depend on 'close consultation with appropriate outside educational bodies'. There would also have to be 'a tightly knit internal machinery with a high degree of autonomy under educational control'.

At this point in the presentation of his case, Scupham turned in more detail from educators and those who sustained them outside Westminster and Whitehall to the politicians, carefully scrutinizing similarities and differences in the approach of political leaders in both parties as they had been revealed before the general election. Boyle had been sympathetic to change, believing that the 'full use of audio-visual aids could lead to a dramatic reinforcement of teaching methods during the next decade'.<sup>82</sup> The 'new ministerial team', Scupham claimed, was 'likely to take the same view and press ahead'. None the less, even in this endeavour there would be new differences of interest and outlook. Michael Stewart, the new Secretary of State for Education and Science, was close to London Labour opinion, and would be likely to treat as a priority the move away from grammar schools to comprehensive schools, while of the new Ministers, Reginald (later Lord) Prentice was particularly interested in industrial training, and Lord Bowden in technological education at all levels.

Bowden's Parliamentary Under-Secretary, James Boyden, had a special concern of his own in correspondence education. Indeed, during the previous Parliament he had introduced an abortive Private Member's Bill to regulate correspondence colleges. Moreover, both Bowden and Boyden—the similarity of their names proved confusing—had attended two Ditchley Park conferences on broadcasting and correspondence course tuition, and had been involved with Young in planning the National Extension College with its headquarters in Cambridge. Young, who was its Chairman from 1962 to 1971, when he became its President, would now figure even more prominently on the national scene. It was Prentice, however, who somewhat surprisingly had been given charge of educational broadcasting as one of his tasks.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>81</sup> See above, p. 472.

<sup>82</sup> *Times Educational Supplement*, 9 Oct. 1964.

<sup>83</sup> \*Adam to Greene, 'Meeting with Jack Embling'.

Scupham knew most of the *dramatis personae* involved in education before and after the general election of 1964, and his advice concerning a switch in official policy was sound. Yet, in this memorandum he was addressing his colleagues inside the BBC, not the educators, and he had to remind them that while it was beyond doubt that there would be expansion of education during the next few years, it was 'much less certain' that the BBC would be asked to undertake it, 'at any rate on the present terms'. While, for example, there was a strong undercurrent of opinion in the Department of Education and Science in favour of a large-scale venture into the field of 'direct teaching', for which the BBC *might* be asked to provide facilities, various agencies, including the ITA, were still pressing for a fourth TV education channel that would be run entirely by educationists.

The Pilkington Committee, which had been backed at the time by most influential education bodies, had turned down the idea of a separate channel on general broadcasting grounds<sup>84</sup>—why should education be 'segregated'?—but the idea had resurfaced and had won somewhat surprising support. Even the National Extension College, which envisaged the use of both BBC and ITV facilities, treated such use only as 'a transitional step' towards the possession of its own radio and television facilities. The development of the idea of a University of the Air, a thread—although not the only thread—throughout the whole period from 1963, when Wilson raised it, to 1969, when Walter (later Lord) Perry became its first Vice-Chancellor, also revived the idea of a separate channel.

The proposals in the last part of Scupham's new memorandum were as highly controversial as his earlier memorandum had been, and Peacock, from his BBC-2 vantage-point, quickly responded to them. 'The continuance of experiments in sound' in collaboration with the National Extension College required extra finance, Scupham emphasized, and he now demanded 'national' instead of limited local coverage.<sup>85</sup> In television there was a need also, he urged, for more repeats of educational programmes on BBC-1, while on BBC-2, which was now providing its *Tuesday Term* series, more educational programmes should be offered on days of the week other than Tuesdays.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>84</sup> See above, p. 297.

<sup>85</sup> In 1964 the National Extension College offered a joint course with BBC Further Education, Radio, in the Midlands only in GCE O level English. A year later the course was offered nationally under the title *After School English*. For 'opt-outs', see below, p. 758.

<sup>86</sup> For the origins of *Tuesday Term*, see above, p. 409. Oliver Whitley, Chief Assistant to the Director-General, wrote to Scupham asking for his views on future co-operation

Peacock had previously gone so far as to state that 'for political reasons the BBC must develop its use of television for educational purposes during the next decade',<sup>87</sup> but now he balked once more at what Scupham was suggesting. *Tuesday Term* should be firmly in his own hands. Nor was there scope for expensive 'experiment'.<sup>88</sup> 'There is no doubt that influential circles in the Labour Party are sold on the idea of ETV,' he had written in March 1964, before the general election had taken place, 'and if we are not prepared to move into the field of Higher Education by Television, then someone else will.'<sup>89</sup> Now he himself held back.

Scupham asked the readers of his memorandum to look far ahead. There should be not only experiments in programming, but a 'national library of recorded material' available to students in all branches of higher scientific education. The Brynmor Jones Committee on the use of visual aids in higher education, appointed in February 1963, had been pressing for it.<sup>90</sup> Other outside bodies were pressing for other things, and although the BBC was in a strategic position to work on many fronts and would have an unused daytime television channel (BBC-2) at its disposal, it faced many competitors. It would be unwise for it 'to wait upon events'.

'If the BBC wishes to be the national agency in the field of educational broadcasting', Scupham concluded his survey, it would be necessary to bear in mind four considerations. First, 'an extension of the specialised types of education now called for could not properly be financed out of licence revenue', nor was any increase of licence revenue for the purpose likely. Second, 'any Government

with the College, noting that Laslett would be returning to the subject in the new year ('Keele Foundation Year', 29 Dec. 1964 (T16/63/6)).

<sup>87</sup> \*Peacock to Adam, 'Organisation of Higher and Adult Education by Television', 26 March 1964 (T16/63/6). He expressed reservations about Scupham's 'use and misuse' of the word 'education'. He also doubted whether the use of local radio in the education field would 'satisfy the appetite of the educationalists and interested politicians or capture the imagination of the public'. Adam himself entered the fray in a sharp note to Scupham on 2 April 1964 ('The Organisation of Adult Education Programmes' (CEB file Adult Education (TV): Policy and Development, 1958-65)).

<sup>88</sup> \*Peacock to Adam, 'Proposals for an Experimental Service of Educational Television on BBC-2', 11 Jan. 1965 (T16/63/7).

<sup>89</sup> \*Peacock to Adam, 26 March 1964.

<sup>90</sup> Press Release from the University Grants Committee, 13 Feb. 1963, headed 'The Use of Audio-Visual Aids in the Field of Education' and announcing the appointment of an official committee chaired by Brynmor (later Sir Brynmor) Jones, a former Professor of Chemistry and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hull since 1956. His report, *Audio-Visual Aids in Higher Scientific Education*, appeared in 1965. He was later to serve as a member of the Planning Committee of the Open University.

that means business' would certainly aim at a closer co-ordination of radio and television and of BBC and ITV: the Pilkington Committee had recommended the setting up of a statutory ITA Education Committee for the latter purpose.<sup>91</sup> Third, an increase in income through a Government grant-in-aid would 'inevitably' be accompanied by 'a greater degree of control by the Department' and this might mean 'a radical re-thinking of the School Broadcasting Council machinery'. Fourth, 'a new venture in educational broadcasting, under Government auspices might . . . absorb the strictly educational activities of the BBC and the programme companies, unless the broadcasting agencies adapt themselves in advance to the new climate of educational need'.

The last section of Scupham's memorandum was called 'questions for decision', each one of which meant entering a hornets' nest. 'What further steps should be taken to prepare realistic development plans, with provisional costings and timetables, showing (a) what could be done on existing radio and television channels; (b) what developments could only be achieved through the creation of a fourth channel and a network of local sound broadcasting stations?' 'What should be done to bring such plans to the notice of the Government and at what level should there be exploratory contacts with the Department of Education and Science?' 'What should be the attitude of the BBC towards grants-in-aid in relation to (a) existing channels (b) new channels and what machinery of control would be acceptable to it?' 'What should be done to improve and regularise our present machinery of consultation with the educational world over higher and adult education?' 'What new machinery of voluntary consultation with the ITA might serve to stave off pressures for the compulsory and external coordination of BBC and ITA output?'<sup>92</sup>

### 3. Towards the Open University

The University of the Air did not figure in Scupham's memorandum, comprehensive though it set out to be, although before the general election of 1964 it was already beginning to take shape. The first

<sup>91</sup> Cmnd. 1753 (1962), *Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960*, ch. XXIII, esp. para. 1046, p. 282.

<sup>92</sup> \*Scupham, 'Educational Broadcasting: The Next Steps'.

landmark date in the story before the general election of 1964 had been 8 September 1963, in the days of Macmillan and Boyle, when Wilson, as Leader of the Opposition, delivered a speech at a Labour Party rally in Glasgow, the opening of his pre-election campaign, putting the case for a new 'University of the Air'.<sup>1</sup> The term was not his own, but it was picked up at once by the Press, as he had wished, and from then onwards the name and the freight that it carried with it passed into politics as well as into education.<sup>2</sup> It also strongly influenced the direction of educational broadcasting, diverting it from the course that Scupham had been following in talks both with the Department of Education and with the Post Office.

The name that was eventually to stick, the 'Open University', was coined by Young, although the main ideas that lay behind it were almost as old as he was.<sup>3</sup> Young had already suggested in 1961 that university facilities in Cambridge should be used to create in vacations a 'second university' open to people from outside, and he had used the term 'open university' in 1962, if in a somewhat different sense from that which was to pass into institutional and social history.<sup>4</sup> He and Brian Jackson, who wished, above all else, to extend

<sup>1</sup> This was not the first sign of interest within the Labour Party itself. Among the recommendations of a study group appointed in March 1962 and chaired by Lord Taylor was the setting up of an experiment in educational broadcasting for adults involving both the BBC and the ITA. Published in March 1963, the Taylor Report described what it was recommending as a 'University of the Air' (Lord Taylor's Labour Party Study Group on Higher Education, *The Years of Crisis, Labour's Policy for Higher Education*). There was later talk in 1963 about a 'Correspondence School of the Air' which drew in officials of the Department of Education. Wilson himself had seen *Encyclopedia Britannica* teaching films on a visit to Chicago in Jan. 1963 before he became party leader. On 7 Feb. 1963 Frank Barlow, Secretary of the Education Group of the Parliamentary Labour Party, wrote to Greene stating that several members of the Group wished to visit the BBC to discuss educational television. In Greene's absence, Grisewood and Scupham met them later in the month (\*Barlow to Greene, 7 Feb. 1963; Greene to Barlow, 8 Feb. 1963 (R31/101/3)).

<sup>2</sup> *The Times*, 10 Sept. 1963. According to Brian MacArthur, later Editor of *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, Wilson deliberately put in the reference, because he knew that if he concentrated mainly on Scottish affairs, his speech would not be reported outside Scotland.

<sup>3</sup> 'The University of the Air' was the title of a *Radio Times* article by Charles Trevelyan in Sept. 1927; it gave details of BBC programmes for Workers' Educational Association classes and other bodies. Even earlier, in Oct. 1926, J. C. Stobart, the first of Scupham's predecessors, had referred to a 'Wireless University'. See Briggs, *The BBC: The First Fifty Years* (1985), p. 116.

<sup>4</sup> *Where?*, his counterpart to *Which?*, Autumn 1962. For uses of the term around that date see G. Catlin, 'A University of the Air', *Contemporary Review*, 1960, and a series of speeches by R. C. G. Williams, Chairman of the Electronics and Communications Section of the Institution of Electrical Engineers, who argued strongly in favour of the creation of a 'televarsity' in 1963. See *Electrical Journal*, 23 Feb. 1972. See also P. Hall, *Change, Choice and Conflict in Social Policy* (1975).



access to higher education, one of the main social purposes of the 1960s, regarded the National Extension College as 'the nucleus of an open university'.<sup>5</sup>

A little later, the Professor of Adult Education at Nottingham University, Harold Wiltshire, devised in co-operation with ATV a



"USING THE TELLY FOR EDUCATION? WHY. IT'LL JUST PUT DANGEROUS IDEAS INTO THE HEADS OF YOUTH!"

10. 'Using the telly for education? Why, it'll just put dangerous ideas into the heads of youth!', Vicky in *Evening Standard*, 10 Sept. 1963.

televised course of thirteen programmes in basic economics presented by one of his tutors, F. J. Baylis.<sup>6</sup> Wiltshire was prominent in a small group of people in the world of adult education who were keenly interested in the possibilities opened up by television.<sup>7</sup> In the Nottingham scheme the 'lectures' were accompanied by published materials, including a course book, and by correspondence tuition,

<sup>5</sup> See J. Jenkins and H. Perraton, *The Invisible College* (1988).

<sup>6</sup> The programmes were transmitted on Sunday mornings during the autumn of 1964, and repeated on Monday evenings. The *Birmingham Post*, 23 Jan. 1963, headed its article on the series 'Midland Plan for Television University'.

<sup>7</sup> His colleague at Leicester University, Professor Alloway, told Gerald Nethercot, BBC East Midlands Representative, that while Leicester preferred to work with the BBC, 'it could not be left out' from any 'attractive proposition' ATV might make relating to a scheme for linking Birmingham, Leicester, and Keele Universities ('H. J. Dunkerley, Controller, Midland Region, to Greene *et al.*, 'Nottingham University: Television University Project', 28 Jan. 1963 (R31/101/3)).

establishing a pattern that was to be followed by the Open University. Wiltshire, who assured that his 'experiment' was carefully monitored, was to serve on the first Advisory Committee which preceded the establishment of the new Open University.<sup>8</sup>

For all this ferment, there might have been no Open University at all without Wilson, who after he had become Prime Minister, although not immediately, threw the whole weight of his authority behind it. It was imperative for him to do so, since in 1965 and 1966 there was strong and active opposition in both educational and political circles as there was in the civil service. Moreover, some of the most active hostility was still to be found inside the BBC, even after Hood's resignation in June 1964, when how to manage educational broadcasting figured prominently in the reasons that he gave for leaving.<sup>9</sup> It took time—and patience—to create a working partnership between the BBC and the Open University, and there were many strands in the subsequent story before the Open University took in its first students in 1971.<sup>10</sup>

The year 1965 was critical in the prehistory of the Open University, for it was in March of that year that the arrival of Jennie (later Baroness) Lee on the scene totally transformed its prospects. Before then, Wilson had not requested the Department of Education and Science to examine the idea of the University of the Air or how to implement it, although not very productive talks had started. By appointing Jennie Lee to the Department of Education and Science in March 1965, however, he ensured that the idea would be thoroughly examined, and ultimately energetically implemented. She was allowed, too, to start with a completely clean sheet.

It was Scupham now who became sceptical, although he warned his colleagues soon after Lee had seen Greene—at her request—on 8 April, that it would be 'a mistake to understate the emotional appeal of a "University of the Air" scheme of limited scope designed for the

<sup>8</sup> As President of the Workers' Educational Association between 1958 and 1967, I encouraged the Association to take the same positive attitude towards television. Another early enthusiast was Brian Groombridge, Research Officer of the National Institute of Adult Education. He was to become Education Officer of the ITA—in succession to Weltman—in 1967.

<sup>9</sup> See above, p. 391, and *Sunday Times*, 7 June 1964, 'Why Hood Hit the Roof'. See also his *BBC Lunch-Time Lecture*, 3rd ser., 'The Prospect Before Us', 11 Dec. 1963, which is significant because it leaves out educational television altogether.

<sup>10</sup> See below, p. 935. On 25 July 1965 Whitley wrote to Adam and Gillard expressing the hope that after Postgate had succeeded Scupham as Controller, Educational Broadcasting, his 'relations with non-educational colleagues should continue to be easier and happier than in the past' ('C.E.B. and Educational TV and Radio Plans' (T16/63/7)).

“educationally underprivileged” or to write off its feasibility’.<sup>11</sup> Lee was accompanied at the meeting by Ralph Toomey, an able and independent-minded civil servant, to whom she was to owe much and who would have strongly resisted Scupham’s use of the word ‘emotional’. He would have been right, too, to do so, for at this time Lee’s vision was far broader and bolder than Scupham’s, as she had revealed in a debate on a Private Member’s motion on the ‘University of the Air’ on 2 April.<sup>12</sup>

Rightly describing as out of date the approach of many adult educationists to expanded educational provision—and this had been one of the main themes in the last days of Boyle—she talked eloquently of a new ‘dimension’. She had no desire, she said, for ‘a poor man’s University of the Air’. What she demanded was something ‘rigorous and demanding’. ‘If we are to mount a really élite corps of lecturers—and nothing less than that has any relevance—and if we want a university of the air ending with a definite qualification which I should like to be nothing less than the external degree of London University . . . one of the preliminary things that we must do is to find out where people would be able to study in peace and quietness.’ Her confident use of the word ‘élite’ remains striking. So, too, does her obvious impatience with cynicism and defeatism.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> \*Scupham, Draft Report to the Board of Governors, 3 May 1965 (R31/101/5). Before meeting Jennie Lee, Greene collected material from J. G. L. Francis, Controller, Finance, about the cost of the ‘University of the Air’ hiring BBC transmitters (\*Francis to Curran, ‘University of the Air’, 7 April 1965 (R31/101/5)). After seeing her, Greene wrote about times when there would be scope for broadcasting, as well as about costs—‘on a full sharing basis’, of the order of £3,350 per programme hour (\*Greene to Lee, 20 April 1965 (R31/101/5)).

<sup>12</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 709, cols. 2007–70, 2 April 1965. The debate was initiated by Richard Buchanan, MP for Glasgow, Springburn. Another Glasgow MP, William Hannan (Glasgow, Maryhill), said that it was fitting that a Glasgow MP should take this initiative, since Wilson’s speech on the University of the Air had been delivered in Glasgow. In the course of the debate Geoffrey Johnson Smith described the concept of a University of the Air as ‘inflated’: it had to have the gas taken out of it. Christopher Chataway—as he had argued in an earlier Paper prepared for the Conservative Central Office—thought that the Government’s priority should be ‘a more rapid development of local closed circuit systems.’ One such system was already in use in Glasgow schools. ‘I do not think’, he added, ‘that the University of the Air concept conveys anything very realistic or practical.’ Dame Anne Godwin complained at the next meeting of the Board of Governors that there had been no references in the debate to the substantial work already being done by the BBC in educational broadcasting (\*Minutes, 14 April 1965).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 2063. After meeting Jennie Lee, Greene, in repeating her ideas to the Governors (\*Minutes, 14 April 1965), had referred to her envisaging ‘an operation under the command of a Vice-Chancellor . . . assisted by a corps d’élite of lecturers skilled in television presentation’.

Lee's vision and determination were to prevail; but in 1965 the immediate consequence for the BBC of her taking over was finally to dash any hopes of securing, in co-operation with the Department of Education and Science, a much discussed experimental extension of educational television on BBC-2, using additional hours which the Department recognized would have to be financed by an extra grant-in-aid.<sup>14</sup> Even before Lee met Greene, however, the Treasury, as was so often the case, had already made the scheme 'flounder', and it had no place whatever in Lee's own thinking, which was quite independent of the Department's. By the time of her meeting with Greene, the Minister's mind—to use Scupham's language—was 'running almost entirely on the idea of a "University of the Air" ' in what Scupham called 'the most literal interpretation of the phrase'.<sup>15</sup> Fortunately, both Adam and Gillard were prepared to adapt their own approach, though the language they used was somewhat out of place. They arranged a working lunch at Television Centre for Lee (at which BBC Educational Heads would be present), to 'impress on our guests the range of our output'.<sup>16</sup>

Lee impressed her hosts at least as much as they impressed her, and she went on to impress most of the people whom she met in the course of what for her became a challenging campaign that she was determined to win. An interesting note of May 1965 survives too, of a very different meeting at a very different level. Maurice Plaskow, Education Officer of the South-Eastern Division, who had spent twenty minutes with her—again with Toomey at her side—told John

<sup>14</sup> The proposals, which had been discussed at length with officials of the Department and in the Board of Management (\*Minutes, 30 Nov. 1964), were set out in a Note by Scupham (\*Board of Governors, Papers, 'Proposals for an Experimental Service of Educational Television on BBC-2', 14 Jan. 1965). They were agreed upon by the Governors at their meeting a week later (\*Minutes, 21 Jan. 1965), and were forwarded by Lord Normanbrook to Anthony Crosland, Secretary of State for Education and Science (\*Letter of 29 Jan. 1965 (R31/101/5)). On 23 March 1965 Crosland formally turned down the idea while offering strong 'support to the expansion of educational television' (\*Crosland to Normanbrook (R31/101/5)).

<sup>15</sup> \*Scupham to Fulton, 8 April 1965 (CEB file Adult Education (TV): Policy and Development, 1965- ). While the BBC was presenting its case, many influential people associated with ITV, among them Lord Bessborough, were presenting the case for a new separate educational channel. The BBC wanted to know how far the Opposition backed it (\*Note by Grisewood to Whitley, 22 Jan. 1965 (R31/101/5), following a House of Lords debate on 20 Jan. in which the case had been made by Lord Aberdare for a second ITV service (*House of Lords, Official Report*, vol. 262, cols. 933-5, 20 Jan. 1965)).

<sup>16</sup> \*Gillard to Scupham and Richmond Postgate, Assistant Controller, Educational Broadcasting, 'Visit of Miss Jennie Lee', 17 May 1965 (R31/101/5). Adam had summarized the story of 'educational television' down to that time in an *aide-mémoire* for Greene, 'Educational Television', 7 April 1965 (R31/101/5).

McKnight, Assistant Secretary (Administration) of the School Broadcasting Council, that while she knew little of the School Broadcasting Council, she was 'excited and determined' about the University of the Air, which she emphasized was still 'in its early stages'. 'She was, at the moment, collecting "voices".' The 'major obstacle', she admitted, was resources.<sup>17</sup>

Both the opportunities and the obstacles were discussed fully on 8 June 1965 by an Advisory Committee which was set up by the Ministerial Committee on Broadcasting, a standing Cabinet Committee which had to deal with pirates as well as educationists. Lee herself was Chairman of the new Advisory Committee which, with Wilson's blessing, was asked to consider not organization and finance, but educational functions and procedures. Described by its Chairman as 'an informal group', its members included Annan, Brynmor Jones, Laslett, Scupham, just about to retire from the BBC, and Wiltshire.<sup>18</sup> They met six times, and finished their task with speed on 8 August 1965, producing a report which was positive in its conclusions about both the usefulness and the practicality of a new institution that would primarily offer courses leading up to degrees.<sup>19</sup>

Meanwhile, an official Committee on Broadcasting, consisting of civil servants and appointed in May 1965, was examining finance and resources. It was far slower in its deliberations, and it did not engage in direct approaches to the BBC and the ITA until December 1965.<sup>20</sup> It was fortunate for Wilson, therefore, that the Report of the

<sup>17</sup> \*Plaskow to McKnight, 'Meeting with Jenny Lee', 14 May 1965 (R31/101/5).

<sup>18</sup> Another influential member was Norman MacKenzie, Head of the Centre for Academic Services at the University of Sussex, who met Curran, then Secretary of the BBC, on 14 July 1965 at the suggestion of Dennis Lawrence of the Post Office. MacKenzie talked of co-operation between the University of Sussex and the BBC (\*Record of Interview sent to Adam *et al.* (R31/101/6), and in 1966 was to organize a conference at Sussex on educational broadcasting, with full BBC support. Postgate was co-organizer. (See *Educational Television and Radio in Britain: A New Phase in Evolution* (1966).) The University of Sussex had set up a pioneering audio-visual services centre in 1965.

<sup>19</sup> The names of the members of the Committee and a list of its recommendations were in an undated confidential Memorandum sent to the BBC by the Post Office (\*R78/647/1). Scupham also loaned a copy to Greene (\*Scupham to Greene, 19 Aug. 1965 (R31/101/6)).

<sup>20</sup> The BBC's Governors had been told by Fulton two months earlier (\*Minutes, 21 Oct. 1965) that 'the target for the "University of the Air" was now becoming clearer'. Questions about provision were quite deliberately put to the BBC and the ITA. There had been an earlier discussion by the Board of Management (\*Minutes, 30 Nov. 1964) as to whether it might be useful to plan 'new machinery of voluntary consultation with ITA to stave off pressures for compulsory coordination of BBC and ITV educational output'. Both Adam and Greene had then attacked any idea of a 'National Association of Educational Broadcasters' spanning the BBC and the ITA. Adam in proprietorial fashion



Advisory Committee had appeared in time for him to be able to include a section on the University of the Air in the important address that he delivered at the tenth anniversary dinner of the ITA held in the Guildhall on 16 September.<sup>21</sup>

'I am satisfied', Wilson declared at the end of his address, 'that the educational problems of the University of the Air can be overcome . . . [and] I hope that in the near future it will be possible to start discussions with the broadcasting authorities on how this can be achieved and how it can be financed.' Wilson saluted ITV and its accomplishments,<sup>22</sup> but the Press, led by *The Times*, picked entirely on the passage on education, heading its report 'Mr. Wilson's Hopes on TV Education'.<sup>23</sup> In his speech Wilson had ruled out nothing, 'including the use of a fourth channel, perhaps on a shared or partnership basis', and there was still more talk between then and the end of the year about the ITA providing an Open University service on a second channel.<sup>24</sup>

Wilson referred also in his speech to 'local broadcasting stations, linked when possible with nearby colleges of further education and other colleges'.<sup>25</sup> Once again, Lee's vision was clearer, and it was she who coped with all the awkward points raised in the Ministerial Committee on Broadcasting and in the interim reports of the Official

stated that such a move 'would encourage the Government to treat the BBC and ITA as equals in this respect'. He emphasized rightly that co-operation between BBC television and radio was of fundamental importance.

<sup>21</sup> Part of Wilson's speech referred to television programmes that had made their mark, including the *Maigret* series in which 'my old friend Rupert Davies' had appeared. 'It is a fact that Ena Sharples or Dr. Finlay, Steptoe or Dr. Who . . . have been seen by far more people than all the theatre audiences who ever saw all the actors that strode the stage in all the centuries between the first and second Elizabethan age' ('Copy of speech in R31/101/6). For an interesting assessment of ITV programming over ten years, see P. Black, 'Ten Years of ITV', *Author*, Winter 1965. See also *Daily Mirror*, 16 Sept. 1965.

<sup>22</sup> 'His relations with it', his secretary Marcia Williams was to write, 'were always entirely different from his relations with the BBC' (M. Williams, *Inside Number 10* (1972), p. 232). Benn called it a 'folksy' speech (op. cit., p. 321). Refusing to wear a white tie and tails, Benn had dreaded the dinner. 'I fought hard against commercial television in 1954,' he wrote, 'and accept the Pilkington Committee view that ITA ought to get all the advertising revenue and buy the programmes from the programme contractors' (op. cit., p. 320). *The Economist*, 18 Sept. 1965, called ITV 'the Second Auntie'.

<sup>23</sup> *The Times*, 17 Sept. 1965. So, too, did the *Daily Express*, 17 Sept. 1965, 'Premier Wants Peak Hour Viewing for TV Lessons'.

<sup>24</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 23 Oct. 1965. Postgate in a note to Whitley referred to the article as 'a mere kite' ('ITV-2 for ETV Purposes', 5 Nov. 1965 (R31/101/6)).

<sup>25</sup> Hoggart was said to be organizing a lobby to bring in local broadcasting and to associate the new University with four existing universities ('Board of Governors, Minutes, 17 Feb. 1966).



Committee on Broadcasting.<sup>26</sup> She had noted a paragraph in the BBC Report on the year 1964–5, published on 23 November, where the BBC described itself as having been ‘in close touch with the Department of Education and Science over . . . the project for a “University of the Air”’. Were the Government to use a fourth television channel, the Report had stated, ‘the BBC would be glad to bring its experience to such a new broadcasting enterprise in association with appropriate consultative and supervisory bodies from the world of education, and for this purpose, to accept a Government Grant-in-Aid comparable in principle to that under which at present it conducts external broadcasting’.<sup>27</sup>

Events moved even faster in 1966 than they had done in 1965, beginning with a meeting at Chequers on 6 February, when Lee pressed the case for the University of the Air so eloquently that the project was given a place in the Labour Party’s general election manifesto; and two days later, at a Cabinet meeting held on 8 February, she was sufficiently assured that the new university would be brought into existence that she was prepared to compromise on the introduction of a separate fourth channel, which she had previously declared to be a necessary prerequisite. The idea of any further pilot schemes was completely dropped also, and the way was prepared, therefore, for the presentation of ‘a realistic assessment of the relative costs of launching the University of the Air on BBC-2’.<sup>28</sup>

It was stated categorically in a White Paper which appeared on 25 February 1966 that ‘the Government believes that an Open University . . . can be established’, and that ‘the Government are now discussing with the broadcasting authorities arrangements for the television and radio programmes that will form part of the new structure of a University of the Air’.<sup>29</sup> Press reactions to the White Paper were not in general favourable. *The Times Educational Supplement*, for example, began its editorial: ‘Mr. Wilson’s pipe dream of a University of the Air, now adumbrated in a White Paper, as vague as

<sup>26</sup> Some of the difficulties were described in a well-informed article by Colin Chapman in the *Sunday Times*, 23 Jan. 1966. See also W. Perry, *The Open University* (1976), pp. 14–15.

<sup>27</sup> Cmnd. 2823 (1965), *Annual Report and Accounts of the British Broadcasting Corporation, 1964–65*, pp. 15–16.

<sup>28</sup> Lee to Goodman, 8 Feb. 1966 (quoted in Perry, op. cit., p. 17). Benn believed mistakenly that the Cabinet meeting must have ‘been a terrible set-back for Jennie’ (op. cit., p. 385, entry for 8 Feb. 1966). Fraser and Whitley were exchanging notes on cost in reply to a questionnaire from Jennie Lee (\*Fraser to Whitley, 8 Feb. 1966 (R78/648/1)).

<sup>29</sup> Cmnd. 2922 (1966), *A University of the Air*.

it is insubstantial, is just the sort of cosy scheme that shows the Socialists at their most endearing but impractical worst.<sup>30</sup>

The word 'impractical' in the *TES* editorial proved to have been as badly chosen as the word 'emotional' in the earlier private comment on the University by Scupham, for between the Cabinet meeting on 8 February and the publication of the White Paper, a new figure with 'special status' had emerged to make things move. The solicitor Arnold Goodman, recently raised to the peerage, had been brought directly into the picture by Wilson and Lee.<sup>31</sup> Sharing as they did the highest possible opinion of Goodman's talents and integrity, they asked him at a meeting on 15 February to offer his own ideas on the financing of the new institution. The idea of a 'trust' was not ruled out, and they asked him also to take soundings not only from broadcasting organizations but from American foundations that it was then felt might assist with the launching costs.

Goodman proved from the start to be not only an indispensable intermediary, eschewing all ideology, but a superb ally, practical in his approach. He applied himself with meticulous care to the task of writing an independent report of his own, convinced as Lee herself was that there could be 'no question of offering to students a make-shift product inferior in quality to other universities'.<sup>32</sup> A critical date was 22 February, when he met Greene for the first time and established an immediate *rapprochement*. Together they were to initiate the partnership between the BBC and the new institution, the first possible terms of which were set out in a letter from Greene to Goodman on 29 March.<sup>33</sup>

Reporting to the Governors after his first meeting with Goodman, Greene stated simply—and again this was the language that mattered most in Broadcasting House—that it had 'emerged' during the meeting that Goodman was a firm friend of the BBC, and that he did not regard 'the orientation of Independent Television' as being 'compatible in any real sense' with a major effort in educational broadcasting. He was also wholly opposed to advertising as a means of finance for a 'University of the Air'. Instead, he conceived of the BBC 'acting as an agent'. He had already come to the conclusion, moreover, that the potential role of radio in the programming of

<sup>30</sup> *Times Educational Supplement*, 4 March 1966.

<sup>31</sup> Goodman, born in 1913, had become Chairman of the Arts Council in 1965, and also Chairman of British Lion Films.

<sup>32</sup> Cmnd. 2922 (1966), para. 4. On 15 Feb. he met Wilson, Crosland, and Lee to discuss plans.

<sup>33</sup> \*Greene to Goodman, 29 March 1966 (R78/648/1).

university courses was probably greater than that of television, as was 'the development of correspondence courses and publications'.

Fulton led the Governors in welcoming the opportunity opened up by the meeting between Goodman and Greene. There was further discussion, however, in the Board and outside about the timing of Open University programmes—Goodman wanted them to be between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m.—and about the status of Open University producers. Would they be under contract or on secondment? Here Greene pointed to the model of the relationship between the School Broadcasting Council and the School Broadcasting Department.<sup>34</sup>

After a meeting at the Post Office and a further meeting between Greene and Goodman, at which Goodman said that 'Departmental thinking about the "University of the Air" did not contemplate a large academic staff',<sup>35</sup> Greene submitted BBC proposals.<sup>36</sup> It would be possible for ten hours a week of BBC television time to be set aside for the first University year of forty weeks, a figure to be increased to thirty hours in the third year. The television programmes would be supplemented by radio programmes—six hours a week in the first instance—broadcast from low-power local radio stations, around sixty of them, set up in major centres of population. The hours suggested were fewer than those proposed by the Advisory Committee.

It was fortunate for the BBC—and for the new university in the making—that in the hard work leading up to the formulation of the BBC's proposals, BBC-2 had a new Controller, David Attenborough, who was himself the son of a University Principal. An extremely cogent paper of his in March 1966, prepared within a short period of time, said of the relationship between BBC and University that editorial responsibility would clearly have to rest with the latter. 'The University is a degree-giving authority. It must, therefore, be able to control the content of its programmes in detail through its academic staff . . . It follows that the University should have direct control over the television directors handling its programmes.'

Of the financial arrangements Attenborough stated equally clearly that it was assumed that the Government would finance the Univer-

<sup>34</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 2 March 1966. A note of the meeting on 22 Feb. mentioned also the use of colour and studio facilities. Goodman was reported as having said that he doubted whether an American Sunrise Semester would be practicable in British conditions ('Meeting between Sir Hugh Greene and Lord Goodman on "University of the Air" on BBC-2', 23 Feb. 1966 (R78/648/1)).

<sup>35</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 17 March 1966. See also '\*Notes of a Meeting at the Post Office, 25 Feb. 1966' (R78/648/1). For discussions on BBC finance at this meeting see below, p. 543.

<sup>36</sup> \*Greene to Goodman, 29 March 1966.

sity by 'subvention'. Were University and BBC to operate in 'a manner which intermingled their staff and facilities, programme allowances and studio allocations, it would be impossible to disentangle one body's expenditure and financial commitments from the other's'.<sup>37</sup> Postgate, Scupham's successor, added a new and more arguable point. The BBC would have to be 'the sole provider of the radio and television programmes'. It would have to be safeguarded against 'undertaking a large commitment which would then be whittled away'.<sup>38</sup>

Goodman and Lee accepted the BBC's proposals as they were finally set out, while recognizing that further financial discussions would be necessary, and that 'the broadcasting operation could not begin until the academic requirements had been stated'.<sup>39</sup> The proposals were kept confidential, however. They were not revealed, for example, to the newly established Further Education Advisory Council, which twice wished to discuss them.<sup>40</sup> Ironically, the first conscientious and hard-working Chairman of this Council, Sir Peter Venables, was to become the first Chairman of the Council of the Open University.<sup>41</sup>

Before Goodman presented his report to the Prime Minister and Lee on 25 May 1966, the general election had intervened. The calculations of what finance was required for the new university were to change by the time that agreement was reached, but Greene was now as committed as Lee was. His own worries were now on other fronts. They concerned, as they had done for some time, a different set of calculations, those relating not to finances of the University of the Air but to the finances of the BBC as a whole.

When the Labour Government had taken office, it had been told, as the Conservative Postmaster-General, Reginald Bevins, had known, that unless the BBC's licence fee were increased, the Corporation would have accumulated a deficit of £125 million by March 1969.<sup>42</sup> A £6 combined licence fee was now deemed necessary,

<sup>37</sup> \*Attenborough to Wheldon, 'University of the Air', 9 March 1966 (R78/648/1).

<sup>38</sup> \*Postgate to Curran, 'University of the Air', 25 March 1966 (R78/648/1).

<sup>39</sup> \*Postgate, 'Report of an Interview with Mr. R. Toomey', 3 March 1966; Curran, 'Report of an Interview with Toomey', 30 Aug. 1966 (R78/648/1).

<sup>40</sup> \*Postgate to Whitley, 'Attached Report', 29 Sept. 1966 (R78/648/1), stating that he was in a quandary over what to say at the FEAC meeting on 28 Oct. 1966.

<sup>41</sup> Venables, born in 1904, had been Principal of the College of Advanced Technology in Birmingham since 1956. From 1962 he had been a member of the Advisory Council on Scientific Policy. He was knighted in 1963. His College was among the first CATs to become universities, in this case, Aston.

<sup>42</sup> For Bevins's statements about the licence see above, p. 306.

therefore, alongside a £1 5s. radio licence fee. The Labour Government had shown itself as nervous about any increase, however, as its predecessor, and had prevaricated until the spring of 1965, by which time the situation had sharply deteriorated. It was not until 14 April 1965, as late as possible, that the Postmaster-General, Anthony Wedgwood Benn, announced to the Commons that shortly after the recess he would be laying before Parliament proposals for raising the licence fee.<sup>43</sup>

The cost of the new sound licence fee would be set at £1 5s., the sum that had been asked, instead of the current £1, but the cost of the combined licence fee would be raised not to £6 but to £5. At the same time, the Postmaster-General announced that he had set up a review of BBC finance, 'part of a wider review of broadcasting policy which the Government are undertaking'.<sup>44</sup> The review would obviously encompass everything, including education.<sup>45</sup> Nothing, however, had been specifically set aside for a 'University of the Air' when the 1966 general election took place.

#### 4. The Pirates

While far-reaching questions about education were being posed within this disturbing financial context—and each one of them represented a challenge to the BBC—a new and very different challenge, both to the BBC and to the politicians in power, had appeared on the horizon, and had soon moved into the middle of the picture. On 29 March 1964, seven months before the general election, Radio Caroline, the first 'pirate' pop music station that directed across the sea its broadcasting at the United Kingdom, was heard on the air. The ship, fitted out in Eire and manned by a Dutch

<sup>43</sup> At this time Anthony Wedgwood Benn called himself Benn, and later Tony Benn. For the rest of this volume he is referred to by the name which he prefers.

<sup>44</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 710, col. 1404, 14 April 1965. Benn referred to the failure of the previous Government to carry out an undertaking made in its White Paper on Pilkington (Cmnd. 1770 (1962), para. 19): 'The proposals will . . . mean increased BBC expenditure. The Government accepts its responsibility to see that the BBC can secure sufficient income to finance adequate services.' For the Pilkington proposals see above, pp. 294 ff.

<sup>45</sup> After he had made his announcement, Michael Foot asked whether if, 'under pressure from the Opposition', Benn was looking for money, 'would he have another look at the fat profits being made by Independent Television?' (*Hansard*, vol. 710, col. 1409). This was after a levy system had been introduced in the Television Act of 1963. See Sendall, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, ch. 25. The system was not operative until 30 July 1964.

crew, moved confidently to moor itself just outside the three-mile national territorial waters limit not far from Harwich. She was named Caroline after the young daughter of President Kennedy, who had been assassinated the previous November. Kennedy had seemed to represent the new generation, and Wilson was to model his 1964 general election campaign on Theodore White's account of Kennedy's 1960 Presidential campaign, *The Making of the President*.<sup>1</sup>

Radio Caroline flew a Panamanian flag of convenience for two reasons. First, the Wireless Telegraphy Act of 1949, following previous Telegraphy Acts, had banned any British radio station, specifically including any station on a British ship, from operating without a licence from the Postmaster-General. Second, Panama was not a party to international agreements regulating the distribution of wavelengths.

Before Radio Caroline began to broadcast, a writer on pop music had observed that there was 'something irresistibly romantic about a radio ship wallowing lazily in a light swell, its high aerial mast swinging gently to and fro, its massive generators purring away to power the brightly glowing transmitter tubes, and a small team of technicians and disc jockeys defying State monopolies in broadcasting to take programs into the homes of millions of people'.<sup>2</sup> Such writing, however, was far more romantic than the reality. It was not always possible to wallow lazily in a light swell in the North Sea, as the history of the oil rigs has subsequently shown, and as, indeed, the history of the pirate ships themselves, a history which went through different phases, was about to show. Nor was the history of pop music, the staple fare of the pirate ships, an entirely romantic history either, although it undoubtedly had a glamour of its own, even independently of its products. Increasingly it became big business, with agent entrepreneurs engaged in large-scale bargaining for their often unlikely clients.

Fashions in pop, like clothes—or food—both made and followed trends, and by 1964 the style and content of 'pop music' had

<sup>1</sup> Cockerell, op. cit., pp. 88–9. Giving a television interview at the White House, Wilson had told reporters in 1963 that he and the President shared the same outlook—'a genuine desire to get into the 1960s and start thinking in terms of the 1970s as quickly as we can'. He also told Benn, who interviewed him in a Party Political Broadcast in 1964, that 'what I think we are going to need is something like President Kennedy when he came in after years of stagnation. He had a programme of a hundred days of dynamic action.' Benn had earlier put the case for this to Wilson (Benn, op. cit., entry for 13 July 1964, p. 130).

<sup>2</sup> P. Harris, Foreword to J. S. Kotschack, *The Radio Nord Story* (1963).



changed considerably since the initiation of *Six-Five Special* and *Oh Boy!* and the coming of Cliff Richard and Billy Fury.<sup>3</sup> The emphasis had shifted from solo performers to groups, most of whom had their own ideas about performance and production. There was real romance, however, in the story of the Beatles. They had made a dazzling impact, and during the summer of 1963 a series of eleven programmes about them, *Pop Go the Beatles*, was broadcast on the BBC's Light Programme. In 1964 their success was ratified in America, which they visited for the first time on 7 February. They had been invited to New York to make three appearances on the Ed Sullivan television show. Wilson, who was not then in power, was soon to give them public recognition with the award of MBEs in June 1965.<sup>4</sup>

Already during the election campaign of 1964 they had figured in Douglas-Home's speeches, when they had been praised for their dollar-earning role, but it was Wilson whom they supported. Before he became Prime Minister, he was shown on television with them after they had won Variety Club 'silver heart' awards, and Paul McCartney told him in front of all the viewers that he should have had one himself.<sup>5</sup> There was certainly glitter there.

There was little, however, that seemed romantic in pirate broadcasting for Ministers or for officials of the Post Office. Nor was there for the BBC, which now faced a new competitor that was difficult to track down, a competitor, too, that directly threatened the maintenance of its remaining and greatly treasured land monopoly in sound, already under threat from a group of politicians before Radio Caroline set the challenge. The first Minister to be involved, Bevins, had given a warning in the House of Commons—before Radio Caroline began to broadcast—that since the ship's broadcasts would break international rules and dislocate domestic communications, special legislation might have to be initiated to deal with piracy.<sup>6</sup> Significantly, however, a senior Minister, Selwyn Lloyd, then Lord Privy Seal

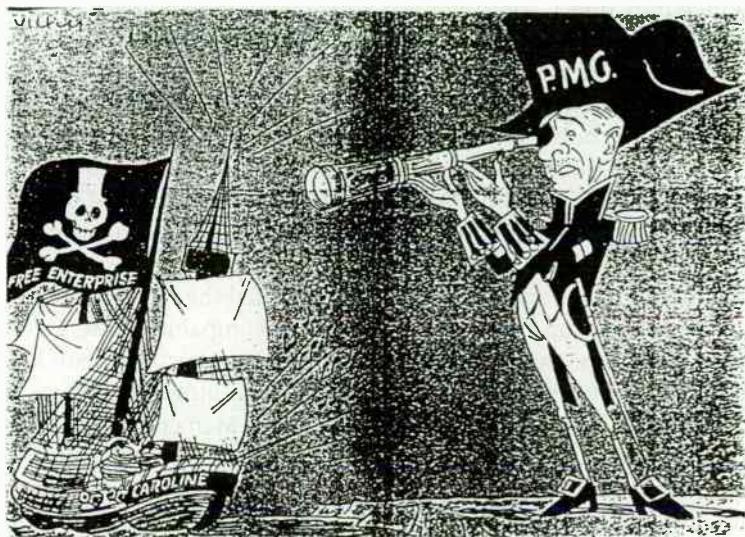
<sup>3</sup> See above, pp. 198 ff. For the main musical and cultural changes see also G. Melly, *Revolt into Style* (1970); P. Watson, *Inside the Pop Scene* (1977); and B. Woffinden, 'Hit or Miss?', *History of Rock*, no. 19 (1982).

<sup>4</sup> Benn wrote in his *Diary* (op. cit., p. 272, entry for 13 June 1965): 'No doubt Harold did this to be popular and I expect it was popular, though it may have been unpopular with some people too.' 'The Beatles', he added, 'have done more for the royal family by accepting MBEs than the royal family have done for the Beatles by giving them.'

<sup>5</sup> *Guardian*, 20 March 1964.

<sup>6</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 688, written answers, col. 168, 5 Feb. 1964; 'Board of Management, *Papers*, 'Pirate Broadcasting, a Background Note', 15 May 1964. See E. D. Robbins, 'The Postmaster General and the Pirates', *EBU Review*, March 1967.

and Leader of the House of Commons, was anxious not to break the pirates before the general election. He detected 'a strong emotional gust of sympathy' for them.<sup>7</sup> It was Lloyd who had stood out as a supporter of the end of the BBC's monopoly when serving as a member of the Beveridge Committee.<sup>8</sup>



11. Comment on pirate radio by Vicky, *Evening Standard*, 29 May 1964.

Radio Caroline was not the first pirate ship. There are said to have been eleven of them before 1964, although none of them was transmitting directly to a British audience. For the previous four years Radio Veronica, operating from a 520-ton ex-lighter anchored in international waters off Scheveningen, had defied the Dutch broadcasting authorities and the Dutch Government. It was netting around £1 million a year in advertising revenue, and some of its programmes were in English.<sup>9</sup> As early as 1961, the *Daily Mail* had described how it was proposing to step up its transmission power in

<sup>7</sup> *Spectator*, 29 May 1964, 'Selwyn and the Pirates'. If the Government had 'dealt firmly with the first pirate stations at an early stage in their existence', there would have been no forced changes of BBC policy, Edgar Robbins, Legal Adviser to the BBC, wrote in 1967 ('The Postmaster General and the Pirates', *EBU Review*, March 1967).

<sup>8</sup> See Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, p. 358.

<sup>9</sup> P. Harris, *Broadcasting from the High Seas* (1977), p. 11.

order to increase its British audience—and revenues. It was then broadcasting twelve hours of pop music each day, with only an occasional announcement in Dutch—or English.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, Radio Syd, first reported in 1958, was broadcasting off the Baltic coast of Sweden. Neither the Dutch nor the Swedish Governments proved capable of dealing with them effectively. Indeed, in the Netherlands direct confrontation with commercial interests was to sink not a pirate ship but the Dutch Government itself.<sup>11</sup>

Neither of the two young founders of British pirate radio, which has an unassailable place in the history of British broadcasting, was British. Both, however, had carefully studied British law, and were well aware of what they could and could not do. Ronan O'Rahilly, founder of Radio Caroline, who it was claimed had financial backing to the extent of £250,000,<sup>12</sup> was Irish, and had been agent for Georgie Fame, a pop singer who had occasionally appeared on the television screen. Fame, whose group was called the Blue Flames, had not been taken up by the big four record companies, EMI, Decca, Pye, and Philips, and O'Rahilly wanted to make effective use of him. He was to have a hit, 'Yeah, Yeah', at the beginning of 1965.

Meanwhile, an Australian, Allan Crawford, Managing Director of Southern Music, one of the world's largest pop music publishers, had for several years been planning his own pirate station, Radio Atlanta, which started transmitting on 9 May 1964. His transmitter operated on 200.7 metres from a former Swedish pirate ship with an Italian name, *Mi Amigo*, and it had been completely refitted in Texas. Anchored south-east of Frinton, it was within sight of Radio Caroline, which operated on 197.5 metres. Neither of these wavelengths had been allotted to the United Kingdom in the international agreements which had determined the most recent round of allocations at Stockholm in 1952 and 1961.

The two pirate chiefs, rivals before they became associates, had first met at the Soho Club in Great Windmill Street, which had 7,000 members. Most of them were young, and many of them were fans of

<sup>10</sup> *Daily Mail*, 25 March 1961. In the previous month Greene had told the Governors about commercial radio programmes being broadcast from Radio Veronica ('Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 23 Feb. 1961). Later in the year, he reported that 'an application by the "pirate" company [pirate was put in inverted commas] to the Eire Government for permission to establish a station in Southern Ireland had met with a sharp negative reaction'. The Minute concludes: 'Noted with satisfaction' (*ibid.*, 9 March 1961).

<sup>11</sup> In 1965 commercial broadcasting was to figure prominently in Dutch politics when the Government resigned in Feb. (*The Times*, 27 Feb. 1965).

<sup>12</sup> *Guardian*, 'Making Waves', a report by Bob Tyler, 20 March 1989.

the Rolling Stones.<sup>13</sup> From the start, pirate radio set out to exploit what it considered to be the BBC's lack of enterprise in broadcasting pop music. It was also critical of Radio Luxembourg, the BBC's old rival, for its dependence on the big recording companies, who, when they plugged their own discs, paid for the air time they took over.<sup>14</sup>

Part of the appeal of Radio Caroline and Radio Atlanta was precisely that they were buccaneering. If not illegal, they were either defying the forces of law and order or cunningly side-stepping them, and for that reason Sir Alan Herbert, Chairman of the British Copyright Council, described them in not the best chosen of phrases as 'a scandal at Britain's own front door'.<sup>15</sup> Their stance was bound to appeal, however, to many of the young rebels of the 1960s, almost irrespective of what was on offer.<sup>16</sup> It was a bonus that there were some new things on offer also. Young couples were invited to 'kiss in the car' at 11.30 p.m. each night, and drivers on roads near the sea were asked to point their car headlights out to sea and flash two for yes and one for no to questions put by the disc jockey.

There was irony in the fact that the appeal of the pirates depended on the triumphs of a new and far more sophisticated electronic technology, a technology that in a quite different context figured prominently in Wilson's campaign speeches in 1963 and 1964. Tape recording made possible sophisticated editing, multiple-track re-recording, and dazzling electronic effects. The mass sale of cheap and attractively packaged vinyl 45 r.p.m. microgroove records was big business. Television had hitherto stolen the show. Now radio was back in its own. Transistor radio sets could be carried everywhere.<sup>17</sup> Total staff employed in BBC radio had increased slightly between 1960, when they numbered 5,550, and 1964, when they numbered 5,800.

<sup>13</sup> See above, pp. 209, 463–4.

<sup>14</sup> Radio Luxembourg possessed a strong signal. Its transmitter had a power of 1,200 kilowatts. The word 'plugging' is said to have been derived from the name of Captain Leonard Plugge, a Conservative MP who had organized pre-war broadcasts in English from Radio Normandie at Fécamp in France. Roy Plomley, who was to devise *Desert Island Discs*, was one of the announcers (see Briggs, *The Golden Age of Wireless* (1965), pp. 324–7). Plugge lived on into a very different age. He died on 19 Feb. 1981. He is reputed to have invented a two-way radio telephone for cars and a form of stereoscopic cinema.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in the *Illustrated London News*, 19 Nov. 1966.

<sup>16</sup> This was appreciated at the time, when so much was being written about the relationship between 'culture' and 'sub-cultures'. See *New Statesman*, 10 Dec. 1965: 'The pirates became for example fully established as an integral part of the teenage way of life, a symbol of their separation, like their clothes and haircuts.'

<sup>17</sup> See below, ch. IX, for the further history of the relevant technologies.

The BBC's response to the advance of recording technology was influenced by two factors—one cultural and one legal—and both were relevant. First, there was no interest in 'pop music' among most Governors, and some disliked it intensely. Interest was limited, too, among the main Sound Broadcasting Controllers in Broadcasting House, although the setting up of the new Popular Music Department in July 1963, a significant departure, was reported in the BBC's *Annual Report and Accounts* for 1963–4.<sup>18</sup> 'Popular Music' was defined extremely comprehensively as including 'all jazz, all Top Twenty material, dance music, popular folk music, old-time dance music, *Music While You Work*, morning music, and also some concert music'. It was recognized that fashion changed in the business with 'tremendous speed', 'more rapidly than women's clothing'.<sup>19</sup>

Even in BBC Television, where *Top of the Pops* was introduced as a new programme on 1 January 1964 and was an immediate hit, attitudes towards pop music were equivocal,<sup>20</sup> while in radio, by contrast, programmes like *Family Favourites* and *Housewives' Choice* were taken more seriously than *Saturday Club*, a two-hour show which included live groups and interviews as well as records. None the less, Brian Matthew, 'Master of Ceremonies' of *Saturday Club*, who was different enough to have a regular stint on Radio Luxembourg, employed an American, not a BBC, idiom. He was also enterprising enough to work for ITV as well as the BBC. He introduced the performers on *Thank Your Lucky Stars*.

The *Radio Times*, in introducing *Top of the Pops*, asked as its leading question; 'Why does a "pop" come to the top?' It also noted that in the programme the performers would—against BBC tradition—mime their songs, not sing them. The first show was introduced by 'that Manchester favourite' Jimmy Savile.<sup>21</sup> By 1965, however, the BBC had started compiling its own 'Top Tunes Chart', based on requests from listeners, and in its *Annual Report* it drew attention to the contrast between the two charts. 'The more tuneful numbers establish themselves far more rapidly in the BBC charts and tend to hold their place longer.'<sup>22</sup> The 'Top Twenty' were played each Sunday morning on *Easy Beat*.

<sup>18</sup> Cmnd. 2503 (1964), p. 32. See also above, p. 398.

<sup>19</sup> *Ariel*, July 1963.

<sup>20</sup> See above, pp. 204–6.

<sup>21</sup> *Radio Times*, 20 Dec. 1963. Savile, born in Leeds in 1926, was to become far more than a 'Manchester favourite'. He was to be awarded an OBE in 1971 and to be knighted in 1990. He was to claim that he was a man of many parts who made dreams come true. His own did.

<sup>22</sup> Cmnd. 3122 (1966), *Annual Report and Accounts of the British Broadcasting Corporation* 1965–66, p. 32.



The many public critics of pop music, who included parents and teachers, were in agreement with what had been 'traditional' BBC policy. They felt that *Saturday Club* and *Pick of the Pops*, the latter chaired by Alan Freeman, were quite enough for the BBC. *Easy Beat* was too much. And there were large numbers of Conservatives among such critics, like a party agent who, in an address to Young Conservatives in Cornwall, had complained that the BBC ought to concentrate not on the 'scatter-brained' teenagers who watched *Six-Five Special* but on 'healthy teenagers' like the members of the audience before him. It was wrong for the BBC, he went on, to give the impression that 'the youth of today were only interested in rock 'n' roll and wore nothing but jeans and sweaters, and spent their leisure beating time to "pop music"'.<sup>23</sup> Significantly, his remarks were made before 'pop music' passed into its explosive and, later, psychedelic phases.

The second reason why the BBC did not do as much with pop music as teenagers were demanding concerned not values, but restraints imposed from without. There were highly restrictive and irksome limitations on the BBC's use of 'needletime', far less publicized than the limitations on political broadcasting. In 1971, after the long and intricate history of 'needletime' was at last beginning to be seen in perspective, R. G. Walford, then Head of Copyright in the BBC, who produced 'a plain man's guide to needle time', was to call such restrictions 'radio's bridle'.<sup>24</sup> The bridle was placed there, however, not by politicians, as was the Fourteen Day Rule, but by a powerful coalition of rich record manufacturers and highly protectionist trade unionists. And in the first instance, the law, which pirates contrived to get around, supported the restrictionists rather than the BBC.

The Copyright Act of 1956, the first such Act specifically to mention broadcasting, had confirmed restrictions on the playing of 'sound recordings as if they were musical works', restrictions first

<sup>23</sup> *Cornish Guardian*, 6 Feb. 1958. The headline of Ivor Jones's address to the Liskeard Young Conservatives was 'BBC Give Wrong Impression of Youth'. Jones added: 'I hear that Tommy Steele is to "earn" twice as much money for one week's appearance than a Member of Parliament earns in the whole year. We are losing our sense of values.' For a more widely read and more devastating Conservative critique of pop music see *The Stretchford Chronicles, 25 Years of Peter Simple: Extracts from the Way of the World Column of the Daily Telegraph* (1981), e.g., pp. 27, 30 (1958); pp. 85-6 (1965); and pp. 162-3 (1970).

<sup>24</sup> \*Memorandum by R. G. Walford, 'A Plain Man's Guide to Needle Time', 6 May 1971 (R78/7/1). For the 14-Day Rule see above, pp. 84, 114-6.



introduced in an earlier Act of 1911. Copyright in a music record was deemed separate from, and additional to, the composer's copyright in the music. The 1956 Act, however, got rid of the phrase 'as if they were musical works', and listed a number of 'restricted acts', among them the broadcasting of a recording. Before and after the passing of the 1956 Act, the BBC was required, therefore, to negotiate with a central body, Phonographic Performance Ltd. (PPL), set up in 1934 to represent most British record manufacturers, in the same way as it had to negotiate with the Performing Right Society, the body set up in 1914 to enforce the rights of composers and music publishers.<sup>25</sup>

A licence from PPL was necessary for the BBC—or for any other broadcasting agency—and had to be paid for. It was a licence, too, that stipulated precisely how much 'needletime' was covered by it. The Musicians' Union—with over 30,000 members—came prominently into the picture also; for it had made it clear to PPL from its inception that if the BBC were ever granted what the Union deemed 'excessive' needletime, it would be prepared to take industrial action against the record manufacturers. In this way, while not being involved directly in negotiations, the union was always in the background, pursuing a policy of 'so far, and no further'.<sup>26</sup>

In 1955, in the light of the breakdown of the BBC's television monopoly, negotiations began between the BBC and PPL to decide on how to update or replace the latest arrangements agreed upon three years before. The negotiations were held up, however, until the Copyright Act was passed; and when they were completed three years later in 1958 not one minute of extra needletime was secured by the BBC. The maximum weekly hours agreed upon for the next five years remained twenty-two for Home, Light, and Third, six hours for all the Regions, three hours for Television, and a generous-sounding eighty hours for the external services. A slight increase of six hours was permitted for the domestic services in 1959, when the BBC increased its hours of broadcasting. For all this the cost of the licence increased.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Most foreign records enjoyed protection also, in their case under the terms of international conventions, supervised by the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI), to which PPL was affiliated. The Soviet Union, China, and a number of Arab countries had not signed the conventions. For the Performing Right Society, see A. Peacock, *The Composer in the Market Place* (1975). Peacock in 1985–6 was to carry out an inquiry into broadcasting in Britain. I wrote a foreword to his study of the history of the PRS.

<sup>26</sup> Walford, loc. cit., pp. 3–4.

<sup>27</sup> Needletime did not end until July 1990, when a new deal with PPL set out agreed hourly rates, but made no reference to permitted hours of use.

After the publication of the Pilkington Report and the Government White Paper of July 1962 a determined attempt was made by the BBC to have the hours increased substantially, from twenty-eight hours a week for domestic radio to seventy-five hours a week; and in lunch-time talks between Marriott, Assistant Director of Sound Broadcasting; Anna Instone, Head of Gramophone Programmes; Sir Joseph Lockwood, Chairman of EMI; and Sir Edward Lewis, Chairman of Decca, it was agreed that the increase was justifiable.<sup>28</sup> There was adamant opposition, however, from the Musicians' Union, which feared, as it had always done, that more record time would prejudice the employment of musicians.<sup>29</sup>

In consequence, no progress could be made, and when the 1958 agreement expired in 1963, once again, as five years earlier, the cost of the BBC's licence was increased, but no more hours of needletime for domestic radio were forthcoming. Indeed, the allocation for external services, which the BBC had not fully taken up, was reduced from eighty to fifty-five hours. That was still the position when a year later Radio Caroline began to broadcast twelve hours a day of almost continuous records on 29 March 1964.<sup>30</sup>

There had been no contact between the pirates and PPL, and neither the BBC nor PPL was in any position to control the growth of the pirate audience, which quickly reached 2 million.<sup>31</sup> Simon Dee, Radio Caroline's first disc jockey, who in time was to be the first pirate to join the BBC, was the link man. In 1964 his occupation was not recognized officially inside the BBC. During the first week of Radio Caroline, Dee was heard clearly in Liverpool and Bristol as well as the East and the South. Other disc jockeys followed in Dee's wake, as Radio Caroline, after taking over Radio Atlanta, split in the spring of 1964 into two services,

<sup>28</sup> 'Report of a Lunch given to Lockwood and Lewis', 15 Aug. 1962 (Central Reg. file: Management: PPL: Negotiations).

<sup>29</sup> 'Report of a Meeting on 18 Dec 1962', 20 Dec. 1966 (same file), at which PPL's two representatives reiterated that they were still in favour of the BBC's proposal, but that 'they could not ignore the Union's opposition'. The Union took the view that there was always a sizeable reserve army of unemployed musicians whose interests it had to protect.

<sup>30</sup> The BBC was required to obtain four licences for dubbing and broadcasting a commercial disc containing copyright music; the first from the PRS for the right to broadcast the music on the record, the second from the Mechanical Copyright Protection Society for the right to record the music, the third from the PPL for the right to broadcast the record (needletime), and the fourth from the gramophone company concerned for the right to dub (re-record) the record.

<sup>31</sup> *Time and Tide*, 9 April 1964.

North and South. *MV Caroline* was then moored off Ramsey in the Isle of Man, and *Mi Amigo* off Frinton.<sup>32</sup> They were to be backed by the publisher Jocelyn Stevens.<sup>33</sup>

Within a month of Radio Caroline's first going on the air, the Head of the BBC's Secretariat, Lance Thirkell, who lived not far away from the transmitter, reported gloomily to Frank Gillard, Director of Sound Broadcasting, that 'most of our part of Suffolk is listening to Radio Caroline and, I am sorry to say, comparing it favourably with our own output'. Thirkell added pertinently that Radio Caroline, which was unpopular with coastguards, was popular with Suffolk retailers because it boosted the sale of transistors, and that petitions were being circulated and signed in its favour.<sup>34</sup> During the same month, April, a Radio Caroline Defence League was launched, and two apprentice hairdressers picketed the BBC's transmitter in Wrotham, in Kent, carrying a placard that read 'Hands Off Caroline'.<sup>35</sup>

Continuous pop music had an obvious appeal, and in 1965 and 1966 Radio Caroline and Radio Atlanta were followed (among others) by Radio London, 'Britain's Biggest Sound', located on a minesweeper off Harwich;<sup>36</sup> Radio Sutch, later Radio City, operating nine miles from Whitstable, Kent; Radio Scotland, transmitting from an ex-Irish Government lightship 'Comet' in the Clyde, five miles off Troon; Radio England/Britain Radio, said to be backed by a Texan group; Radio 270, stationed four miles off Scarborough; and Ted Allbeury's Radio 390, formerly Radio King and before that Radio Invicta. Radio 390 deviated from the pattern by offering 'impeccably square' music, 'light melodies, Frank Sinatra and slush'. All these stations were operating on pirated radio frequencies.<sup>37</sup> All were outside the jurisdiction of British courts. If they had been broadcasting on British

<sup>32</sup> J. Bugler, 'The Pirates Make for Port', *New Society*, 21 Oct. 1965.

<sup>33</sup> 'Pirate Radio: The Storm is About to Break', *Illustrated London News*, 19 Nov. 1966. Stevens, Editor of *Queen*, with a fascinating career before him, including nine years as Rector of the Royal College of Art, had been a journalist with the Hulton Press from 1955 to 1956. In 1968 he was to become Personal Assistant to the Chairman of Beaverbrook Newspapers Ltd., and in 1972 Managing Director. In 1991 he was to be made Deputy Chairman of the Independent Television Commission.

<sup>34</sup> \*Thirkell to Gillard, 20 April 1964 (Man. Reg. File D5-3).

<sup>35</sup> *Daily Herald*, 9 April 1964.

<sup>36</sup> One of its disc jockeys, John Peel, who was to become a BBC late-night disc jockey star, had learnt his disc-jockeying in California. He counts hearing Elvis Presley on *Family Favourites* as a turning-point in his life (*Independent*, 25 Aug. 1989).

<sup>37</sup> There was television piracy too on a very limited scale. Radio Nordzee was the first television pirate, but occasional television signals were picked up in East Anglia from Tower Television in Nov. 1965 (*Financial Times*, 19, 22 July 1966).

soil, the courts would have been empowered to deal with their breaches of the Copyright Act.<sup>38</sup>

Some of the new pirate stations, many of which changed names and often merged with other stations, were established in disused maritime forts and towers with Stevensonian piratical names, like Roughs Tower off Harwich (Radio Essex), Shivering Sands off Whitstable, and Knock John Tower in the Thames estuary (Radio City, later merged with Radio Caroline). Names mattered to listeners, and the fact that the pirates' disc jockeys often used aliases added to their glamour. They won sympathy too. The young disc jockeys (the youngest 17, the oldest 26) operated in cramped conditions, and they often interrupted their programmes to be sick. This, though completely unromantic, appealed to sections of their young audience. 'I think people enjoy hearing us go through it', Tony Blackburn, one of the best-known disc jockeys, declared.<sup>39</sup>

People knew also, of course—and they were impressed rather than shocked—that the disc jockeys, young as they were, were being paid what were then large sums of money—said to be between £1,500 and £2,000 a year.<sup>40</sup> The way they behaved when they had money in their pockets seemed a natural expression of 'the teenage way of life' of the 1960s, 'a symbol of their separatism, like their clothes and haircuts'.<sup>41</sup>

One commercial station was legal in June 1964: Radio Manx, the only station located on land, the privileged land of the Isle of Man. Unlike the rest, it had to observe restrictions on needletime. Unlike the BBC, however, it took legal action to increase the amount of needletime originally allotted to it, 20 per cent of its output. It had asked for unlimited time, and after appealing to a special arbitration court, the Performing Right Tribunal, it had won the conditional right to broadcast pop for 50 per cent of its time. In any single week a maximum of forty-two hours was set, and it was part of the agreement that no record should be broadcast more than twice in any twenty-four hours or more than ten times a week.<sup>42</sup> A representative of the BBC was present at the hearings of the Tribunal as

<sup>38</sup> When on 8 April 1964 PPL threatened a court injunction to stop Radio Caroline from broadcasting their records, Radio Caroline countered by announcing that it had been offered membership in the PRS (*Daily Herald*, 9 April 1964).

<sup>39</sup> *Observer*, 13 Dec. 1966.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, colour supplement, 13 Feb. 1966, 'Pop Pirates Ride the Storm'.

<sup>41</sup> 'Magnus Turnstile', 'The PM and the Pirates', *New Statesman*, 10 Dec. 1965.

<sup>42</sup> \*Walford, loc. cit., p. 4.

an 'interested party', and the BBC was itself to appeal to the Tribunal in 1967.<sup>43</sup>

It was not until October 1966 that the *Radio Times*, with its wide circulation, was to publish an article entitled 'Why No Continuous Pop? The BBC Explains'. Arranged in the form of a catechism, it began with the leading question 'Why can't the BBC provide a continuous pop service, like the pirates?' 'Because nearly all of it is on records' was the answer. 'The BBC has the right to broadcast them. It's rationed to a fixed number of hours each week. That's called "needle time". The BBC can't buy any more.' Cautiously, there was no reference to the Musicians' Union. The spotlight was cast instead on the gramophone companies, who were said to be afraid of their music being over-exposed: 'they are convinced that if [their records] are broadcast too often . . . their sales fall off.' The answer to the last question 'Is there any chance of the situation changing?' began: 'In the long run, it is really up to Parliament.'<sup>44</sup>

In face of the continuing pirate onslaught, Gillard had bravely claimed in 1965 that the pirates had not made 'any significant inroads on Light Programme listening', and that 'the biggest single handicap to radio at the moment' was 'the appalling reception that most people suffer on the medium wave', a reception that got worse and worse as every new unauthorized station opened up on the waveband and added to the interference.<sup>45</sup> He knew, of course, that by then there were signs that too many pirate ships would spoil the pops. The pirates might go to war with each other, rather than fight the BBC. Indeed, it was because he already 'sensed' that war was

<sup>43</sup> The Tribunal was careful to lay down that it was 'fallacious' to 'equate Manx Radio with the BBC'. It did not want to set precedents. It added generally that the Musicians' Union had 'a strongly argued case for its allegation that any increased use of gramophone records for broadcasting militates directly against the employment of "live" musicians' (\*Walford, loc. cit.). According to the *Illustrated London News*, 19 Nov. 1966, Radio Caroline, Radio London, and Radio 390 made token payments to the PRS, which was in the vanguard of bodies opposing the pirates. 'If we were to refuse the money,' a spokesman for the Society said, 'the pirates would publicise the fact and we would look really silly.'

<sup>44</sup> *Radio Times*, 6 Oct. 1966. The article was reprinted in *BBC Record*, 45 (Oct. 1966). By then one possible way out was envisaged in the catechism: 'In the short run, if the Government were to ask the BBC to provide an extra service of popular music it would do its best to do so.' There was also a reference in the catechism to the Copyright Act. 'Can't the Act be changed?' 'That's a question for the politicians. Last time it took eleven years to get everyone concerned to agree.'

<sup>45</sup> *Observer*, 5 Dec. 1965.

imminent, that Simon Dee left Radio Caroline in March 1965 and joined the BBC's Light Programme.<sup>46</sup>

None the less, Gillard, who had emerged as the strongest advocate of BBC local radio, was to remain deeply concerned about the possibility of the pirates being legalized. Philip Birch, head of Radio London, believed that if this were to be done, their total advertising revenue would rise more than five times to £10 to £15 million a year.<sup>47</sup> Advertising rates varied from ship to ship, from £20 for a one-minute peak spot on Radio Essex to £180 on Radio Caroline, North and South.

## 5. The Benn Regime

Since the new Labour Government had taken over in 1964 Tony Benn had been the man responsible to Parliament for the difficult question of how to deal with the pirates. He was a young politician, who had hitherto made the most of the Labour Party's appeal to youth, and for a short time he had worked in the BBC. His voluminous diaries present an unparalleled commentary on the way in which piracy and other issues, including education and the possible use of an education channel, influenced each other behind the scenes in the Labour Government. They reveal also the difficulties that Benn faced at Post Office headquarters, some of them of his own making. As far as the pirates were concerned, Benn thought in very different terms from the civil servant who had been, and remained, concerned with piracy and with other BBC questions, Peter Lillicrap, Director of Radio Services. He also thought in very different terms from some of the members of his own party. He was aware of this at some of the meetings of the Home Affairs Committee of the Cabinet, and later at meetings of the Ministerial Committee on Broadcasting.

There appears to have been little discussion of the 'pirate' issue during the election campaign, although at least one important

<sup>46</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 23 June 1966. At the end of 1965 representatives of Radio Caroline and Radio London were meeting once a month to discuss matters of common interest (*Observer*, 5 Dec. 1965).

<sup>47</sup> *Observer*, 5 Dec. 1965. For a later general narrative and analysis see D. R. Browne, 'The BBC and the Pirates: A Phase in the Life of a Prolonged Monopoly', *Journalism Quarterly*, 1971.



Labour candidate, Patrick Gordon Walker, an old friend of the BBC,<sup>1</sup> had declared during the course of it that the Labour Government would introduce early legislation to deal with them.<sup>2</sup> Gordon Walker, Wilson's nominee for the Foreign Secretaryship, was defeated, however, at Smethwick, a Midlands constituency that was much in the news during the 1960s because of controversies about racism. A senior politician to Benn, Gordon Walker was immediately offered an opportunity to fight a by-election at Leyton, and again he was defeated after a recount. His opposition to the pirates was doubtless not the cause. None the less, a pressure group had carried placards at Leyton bearing the words 'Don't vote Labour, they are going to kill Caroline'.<sup>3</sup>

With or without Gordon Walker, the Labour Government found it difficult to carry legislation to deal with the pirates, although before the election Lillicrap and other civil servants in the Post Office had been trying hard to prepare it, not least because they were coming under increasing pressure to do so from the European Broadcasting Union as well as from the BBC. There was also pressure from their counterparts in a number of foreign countries—Belgium was the first—who objected to piratical interference with their domestic radio reception. Clearly, therefore, there was a Foreign Office as well as a Post Office dimension to the issue. There was also an economic aspect. Some of the successful pirates were making far more money than the disc jockeys whom they employed, and as the *New Statesman* put it in October 1965, 'it was this more than any other factor' that united 'a diverse lobby now pressing the Government for action'.<sup>4</sup> The lobby now included coastguards and owners of radio-controlled planes.<sup>5</sup>

The legislation being drafted by the Post Office was based on the idea of an international convention that would make it illegal to supply pirates with particular services,<sup>6</sup> and while Benn did not disapprove, he took a different line in arguing both with himself and with his colleagues. He refused to treat the pirates, 'fly by night companies' as he described them, on their own terms. Instead, he

<sup>1</sup> For his role in the debates on the founding of commercial television see Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 841, 846.

<sup>2</sup> \*Sir Hugh Greene, reporting to the Board of Management, *Minutes*, 9 Nov. 1964. At that time Greene's son Graham was married to Gordon Walker's daughter.

<sup>3</sup> Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 53. See above, p. 458.

<sup>4</sup> *New Statesman*, 10 Oct. 1965.

<sup>5</sup> *New Society*, 21 Oct. 1965.

<sup>6</sup> Benn, *op. cit.*, pp. 162–3, entry for 19 Oct. 1964.

contemplated their activities, as did the Prime Minister, within the context of what he called 'broadcasting in all its aspects', and he remained consistent in his thinking on what he called fundamental issues, even when some of his suggestions seemed more calculated to hit the BBC than the pirates.<sup>7</sup>

He knew that he was fighting on more than one front, for his diaries make it clear that he wanted to reorganize the Post Office as much as he wanted to reorganize the BBC. His object was to turn it into a Ministry of Communications, which for a brief period it was eventually to become.<sup>8</sup> He devoted his energies and his imagination to that end, considering different options as he went along, many of which were as unappealing to his senior civil servants as Jennie Lee's ideas were unappealing to senior civil servants in the Department of Education and Science. Not surprisingly, after months in office he was to complain that he 'had made no progress whatsoever on the broadcasting front'.<sup>9</sup>

Benn referred on at least one occasion in his diaries to the future judgement of historians, and in retrospect Benn stands out as the one Postmaster-General in the history of the office who, while believing strongly in public service broadcasting, did not identify public service broadcasting with the BBC. Moreover, while he followed his predecessors in refusing to answer questions in Parliament on the content of BBC programming,<sup>10</sup> he was the only Postmaster-

<sup>7</sup> In a written reply to a question in Parliament on pirate stations on 10 Nov. 1964 he stated that he was considering legislation and studying 'a number of issues in broadcasting policy' (*Hansard*, vol. 701, written answers, col. 32, 10 Nov. 1964). On 8 Dec. 1965 he stated that he would introduce legislation 'as soon as practicable' (*ibid.*, vol. 722, written answers, col. 97, 8 Dec. 1965). By then Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Belgium had already enacted such legislation.

<sup>8</sup> He had exploratory talks on this possibility with the McKinsey firm of management consultants which was later to be commissioned to write a report on the BBC (Benn, *op. cit.*, p. 216, entry for 4 Feb. 1965). See below, pp. 723 ff.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 279, entry for 22 June 1965. He felt later, after attending a meeting of the Broadcasting Committee of the Cabinet, that he had had some limited success (*ibid.*, p. 342, entry for 1 Nov. 1965). See below, p. 541.

<sup>10</sup> When asked if he would use Section 14(4) of the Licence and Agreement to require the BBC to refrain from the use of obscene words, Benn replied: 'No. Successive Governments have reaffirmed as fundamental the principle that the broadcasting authorities are independent in matters of programme content' (*Hansard*, vol. 722, written answers, col. 98, 8 Dec. 1965). He also refused to establish either a viewers' council or a council similar to the Press Council. 'There is a strong tradition of no political interference, which I share' (Benn, *op. cit.*, p. 225, entry for 25 Feb. 1965). One of the questions put to Benn which most deserves to be remembered—by Yorkshiremen at least—was: 'Is the Postmaster-General aware that the only time we can see television in parts of Swaledale and Wensleydale is when it is foggy?' Benn replied that he was not responsible for fog (*Hansard*, vol. 708, col. 1054, 16 March 1965).

General who related what he considered to be 'the fundamental issues' of broadcasting to even more 'fundamental issues', as he saw them, those concerning Britain's role in the world. 'Defence, colour television, Concorde, rocket development—these are all issues raising economic considerations that reveal this country's basic inability to stay in the big league. We just can't afford it.'<sup>11</sup>

Such general talk was bound to be uncongenial to Normanbrook, Chairman of the BBC. As a former head of the civil service and of the Home Office Defence Committee and a Secretary of the Cabinet, he was, as Benn rightly noted, 'at the very centre of the Establishment'.<sup>12</sup> There was no meeting of minds when the two men saw each other officially for the first time on 11 November 1964 and discussed not only pirate broadcasting but the licence fee, at that stage still unchanged, colour television, local broadcasting, and 'the need for educational television'. Benn's willingness to contemplate the BBC taking advertising riled Greene, who was present with his Chairman. Benn's attitude to Greene was less clear-cut, however, than his attitude to Normanbrook. While he thought privately that the BBC was 'wildly right wing',<sup>13</sup> he was fully aware of the opposition Greene faced from sections of the Conservative Party, those sections of which Benn himself disapproved most.<sup>14</sup>

Five days later, Benn went on to hold a Press Conference for radio and television correspondents, at which he raised five general questions, the first the broadest of all, 'Are we making the most of radio and television in England?', the last two: 'Is public service synonymous with monopoly?' and 'Is advertising synonymous with commercial broadcasting?'<sup>15</sup> After answering some of his questions—and

<sup>11</sup> Benn, *op. cit.*, p. 204, entry for 14 Jan. 1965: 'The real choice is do we go in with Europe or do we become an American satellite.' He was deeply interested also in the role of the Commonwealth (*ibid.*, p. 279).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215, entry for 3 Feb. 1965, written after visiting the BBC Television Centre at the BBC's invitation. Benn added that he thought Normanbrook 'a stupid man and highly suspicious' of him. Indeed, Normanbrook had tried to prevent Benn's selection as Postmaster-General. He was aware too, however, that the Prime Minister retained a respect for Normanbrook (p. 289, entry for 10–11 July 1965). See also *Sunday Times*, 11 July 1965, for an article by Anthony Howard on Benn's relationship with Normanbrook. The article led Normanbrook to ask Benn for an interview with him (p. 290, entry for 12 July 1965).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183.

<sup>14</sup> At a dinner in Feb. 1965 his wife, Caroline, sat next to Greene, and told him what a great respect Benn had for him 'and so on'. Benn's comment was equivocal: 'This is necessary in view of the massive campaign the BBC are waging against me at the moment' (*ibid.*, p. 221).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 183, 187, entries for 11, 16 Nov. 1964.

Benn found the answers extremely interesting—the correspondents asked him questions in their turn. Unfortunately, he did not list them in his diary.

There was no shortage of questions for Normanbrook and Greene at this time, very different questions from those which Benn was asking. They centred mainly on programmes and public reactions to them, and some of the questions reached the floor of the House of Commons. In March 1965 there were calls for Greene's resignation from two Conservative MPs, James Dance and Sir Leslie Thomas, and in May 1965 Dance added for good measure that he did not believe that Normanbrook and the Governors were doing their work properly either.<sup>16</sup> He had asked a few days earlier whether it might be possible to arrange for radio and television sets to be made that were incapable of receiving BBC broadcasts and that would exempt listeners and viewers from paying licence fees.<sup>17</sup> Dance, MP for Bromsgrove, was to become Chairman in 1966 of Mrs Whitehouse's National Viewers' and Listeners' Association, and her book *Who Does She Think She Is?* (1971) was dedicated to him.

A main source of irritation for Dance and Mrs Whitehouse was the *Wednesday Play*, which was a source of pride for Sydney Newman and his team—with Greene in the background. It may have been a source of pride for them also, if sometimes rueful pride, that Mrs Whitehouse described the Wednesday plays as purveying nothing but 'Dirt, Doubt, and Disbelief'. In fact, the range of plays produced in 1965 included Simon Raven's *Mr. Jocelyn, the Minister*, David Mercer's *And Did Those Feet*, John Hopkin's *Horror of Darkness*, Nell Dunn's *Up the Junction*, and no fewer than four plays by Dennis Potter: *The Confidence Course*, his first televised play, *Alice, Stand Up Nigel Barton*, and *Vote, Vote, Vote for Nigel Barton*. The producer of all but one of the plays was James MacTaggart, and the directors included Peter Duguid, James Ferman, Kenneth Loach, Brian Parker, and Don Taylor. The average size of the audience was 7.3 million, an increase on the 1964 figure. In 1966, when the Governors were

<sup>16</sup> The March calls were made in motions appearing on the Commons Order Paper. They were reported to the Governors on 18 March (\*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 18 March 1965). The Governors expressed their full confidence in Greene, for which he thanked them. For the broader no confidence statement, see *Hansard*, vol. 712, col. 816, 13 May 1965.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 711, col. 1356, 5 May 1965.

concerned about it, as well as Mary Whitehouse, it was to peak at 8.6 million.<sup>18</sup>

Newman thought of the series as dramatizing 'the turning points in contemporary Britain'. They were usually controversial. 'Pre-marital sexual intercourse has increased enormously since World War II,' Newman wrote; 'homosexuality and abortion have become subjects for parliamentary debate and legal concern. The Labour Party is totally responsible and so are the unions, the divorce rate has gone up, the relations between management and labour, parent and child, worshipper and minister, England and the World—all these are food for the hungry and aware playwright.'<sup>19</sup>

Newman's successor, Shaun Sutton, who took over from him in 1967, and who three years later changed the title *The Wednesday Play* to *Play for Today*, wrote of Newman 'creating a climate'. 'He was concerned to move, to stir, and to haunt his audience, not to please it, but in many of the plays presented there was too much hectoring on the part of the author to achieve this object.'<sup>20</sup> In retrospect, it is audience reactions, enthusiastic or hostile, that stand out as being of greatest social and cultural interest.

Contemporary settings were not indispensable, as reactions to plays put on outside the *Wednesday Play* series showed. When, for example, Shakespeare's *Henry VI* was broadcast in April 1965 as part of *The Wars of the Roses* cycle—and was seen by around 10 per cent of the population—some of those who saw it compared it with a gangster thriller. Others called it a 'power game'. It brought the Wars of the Roses to life, capturing the flavour of a period that seemed to

<sup>18</sup> Many of the plays were brilliantly criticized by T. C. Worsley, whose criticisms were subsequently collected in *Television, the Ephemeral Art* (1970). Formerly a theatre critic, Worsley believed that since a play by Mercer or a film by Ken Russell 'aimed very high', and their equivalent in the theatre or the cinema would receive full-length treatment, he would pay them 'an equivalent respect' (op. cit., p. 11). For Mrs Whitehouse's views on the Wednesday Plays, see M. Whitehouse, *Mary Whitehouse, a Most Dangerous Woman?* (1982), pp. 56–8. Two relevant letters survive in the BBC files. A letter from \*Mrs Whitehouse to Newman, 25 Aug. 1966 (T16/585), complaining about *A Man on Her Back*, asked for plays which 'would deal realistically with human behaviour, and yet encourage the spirit of self control and social responsibility'. A thoughtful and friendly reply from Newman to Mrs Whitehouse (5 Sept. 1966) made the point that *A Man on Her Back* is a play of which he thought she would in general have approved. He drew a distinction between plays which present ideal behaviour in the belief that audiences emulate what they see on the screen and plays that, in the words of *Hamlet*, 'hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature'. The *Wednesday Play* policy was to apply the Shakespeare test.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in \*Board of Governors, Papers, 'The Wednesday Play', 17 June 1966.

<sup>20</sup> See S. Sutton, *The Largest Theatre in the World: Thirty Years of Television Drama* (1982), pp. 17 ff. See also his *BBC Lunch-Time Lecture*, 8th ser., 'The Theatre in the Living Room', 30 Oct. 1969; and G. W. Brandt (ed.), *British Television Drama* (1981), pp. 15–18.

have something in common with the present.<sup>21</sup> *Henry VI*, like other plays in the cycle, was a recording of the original stage production by the Royal Shakespeare Company. The television producer was Newman's predecessor, Michael Barry.<sup>22</sup>

The Potter plays got off to an unimpressive start in February 1965 with *The Confidence Course* being 'actively disliked' by a large proportion of the Audience Research sample. There were complaints that it had no plot, and that the characters in it were caricatures.<sup>23</sup> *Alice*, however, which was broadcast in October 1965, was well received by a significant section of its audience, 21 per cent rating it A+ and 31 per cent A. The unappreciative looked back to the *Alice* they knew as a 'childhood favourite', and did not want to have their illusions spoilt.<sup>24</sup> *Stand Up, Nigel Barton* was felt to be 'very true to life',<sup>25</sup> while *Vote, Vote, Vote for Nigel Barton* provoked a row not with the audience but with Potter. Its performance, planned for 23 June 1965, was deferred until 15 December 1965, when changes had been made in the script. Paul Fox, who saw the script in June, felt that both the Conservative and Labour Parties would complain.

<sup>21</sup> \*BBC Audience Research Report VR/65/188, 3 May 1965.

<sup>22</sup> *Radio Times*, 1 April 1965. 'Moral' critiques of plays were not unusual in Barry's time as Head (see above, p. 193). Thus an Audience Research Report on Graham Greene's *The Compliant Lover* (\*VR/61/561, 7 Nov. 1961) pointed to a sharply divided audience. 'Unadulterated filth! Not subtle even!', said one housewife. 'There was too much sex in it' was another comment.

<sup>23</sup> \*VR/65/102, 15 March 1965. There was praise for the actors, who included Dennis Price and Stanley Baxter. Potter himself, born in 1935, the son of a coal-miner, had stood in the general election of 1964 as a Labour candidate in the safe Conservative seat of Hertfordshire. He worked with BBC Television Current Affairs from 1959 to 1961. His play focused on advertisements on the London Underground. Unfortunately the tapes were not kept, an archival failure.

<sup>24</sup> \*VR/65/570, 11 Nov. 1965. Jonathan Miller's *Alice in Wonderland*, broadcast on 28 Dec. 1966—with Malcolm Muggeridge taking the part of the Gryphon—was voted A+ by 19% of its audience and A by 28%, but it provoked far more 'antis'. The pattern, in the language of Audience Research, was 'bi-modal', with two peaks at A and C. None the less, it had a larger audience (24.9% of the population) than any *Wednesday Play* in 1966, including *Cathy Come Home* (23.6%) (\*VR/66/727, 12 Jan. 1967). *The Times*, 29 Dec. 1966, said that it had 'moments of rare beauty'. Muggeridge wrote a critique before it was publicly shown, in the *New Statesman*, 23 Dec. 1966, 'Alice, Where Art Thou?' Marsland Gander called it 'a reflection of our time' (*Daily Telegraph*, 16 Dec. 1966).

<sup>25</sup> \*VR/65/689, 20 Jan. 1966. The school scenes in *Stand Up, Nigel Barton*, showing a primary school class with young men and women dressed in children's clothes, were thought to be 'hilarious' by one housewife viewer who was quoted. The reaction index (60) was as favourable as it was for the last episode of Francis Durbridge's *A Game of Murder* (\*VR/66/180, 10 May 1966). David Mercer's *In Two Minds*, which dealt with mental illness, had a higher reaction index (66) than either; so, too, did Arnold Wesker's *Roots* (72) (\*VR/67/142, 29 March 1967; VR/66/73, 25 Feb. 1966). Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* was far less appreciated, with an index of 51 (\*VR/66/282, 27 June 1966).



As it happened, when *Vote, Vote* went out, it followed immediately after a Conservative Party Political Broadcast.

*Up The Junction*, directed by Ken Loach and broadcast in November 1965, which was based on a book that was in its turn based on articles in the *New Statesman*, included an abortion scene, which sharply divided its audience, an audience almost twice as big as that for *Henry VI*.<sup>26</sup> 'Powerful and exciting' was one reaction: 'too coarse' was another. Yet more than half the audience found it 'compulsive viewing'. 'A pity this young woman could not have used her talent for writing on less sordid matters' was the verdict of a probation officer, while a receptionist described it as 'a play to make you think', adding that 'it certainly succeeded in startling me out of my smug, snug middle-class wits'. No fewer than 460 telephone calls were received after it had been broadcast, of which only twenty-five were appreciative.<sup>27</sup> Its rating was below the average for the series, and there were enough complaints about its presentation, as well as about its content—too many close-ups and too much loud background noise—to suggest that if the play had been offered as 'a dramatized documentary', the response might have been more favourable.<sup>28</sup>

The script of the play *Cathy Come Home*, broadcast on 16 November 1966, which had a strong documentary flavour, had been put forward in October 1965, and was accepted in January 1966. Jeremy Sandford was its author—he had one stage play to his credit—and Loach was chosen as its director. *Cathy* was to be played by Carol White. The play, which dealt with homelessness, traced the sad, downhill journey of a young couple, victims of society, who were plunged from hope to despair. The welfare state had been of no help to them. Filmed mostly in the studio and not in the streets, where Loach would have preferred to work, it had an immediate impact, encouraging the setting up of a new voluntary organization, Shelter, and even persuading Ministers and permanent officials to see it. On 26 January 1967 Edward Heath, who had missed the first broadcast and its repeat, asked to see it on his own. At the time of the repeat

<sup>26</sup> Nell Dunn's novel was adapted by Kenith Trodd.

<sup>27</sup> \*VR/65/619, 7 Dec. 1965; Duty Officer's Log, 3 Nov. 1965. The Vicar of Battersea was one of the appreciative viewers. He was Chairman of a Committee which helped unmarried mothers. A policeman liked it. 'We know it's no good pretending it doesn't exist. It's life' (quoted in \*Newman to Wheldon, 'The Wednesday Play', 15 June 1966 (T5 Wednesday Play—General 1966)).

<sup>28</sup> \*VR/65/619. The *Daily Mirror*, 4 Nov. 1965, said it was 'like the best of TV's real life documentaries'.

on 11 January 1967, Shelter ran an advertising campaign based on it.<sup>29</sup>

When plays like *Cathy Come Home* were being planned and produced, Wheldon, who had been catapulted into the chair of the Controller, Programmes, Television, in February 1965, had to act—unwillingly—as an intermediary between Newman and his staff and the Governors.<sup>30</sup> Repeats could be as difficult as first performances. Thus, after Wheldon and Peacock, then Controller of BBC-1, had agreed to a suggestion that *Up the Junction* should be repeated in the summer of 1965, it was Wheldon who had to confront the Governors when they insisted that it should not.<sup>31</sup> He admitted that he could view only a selection of the plays being produced, but he stated firmly that he believed *Up the Junction* was a ‘good, moral, vigorous, technically brand-new, accurate, play’.

When the Governors proved adamant—they felt the play had given ‘great offence’ at its first showing<sup>32</sup>—Wheldon did not hesitate to defend his own judgement and the interests of those who worked with him. *Up the Junction*, he declared, had been considered in the

<sup>29</sup> The script was first called ‘The Abyss’, and later ‘Cathy Come Home’. Sandford tried in vain to interest the *Sunday Times* and *Observer* magazines to run special articles on housing to coincide with the broadcast, which won considerable Press comment. On 17 Nov. 1966 Pat Beech, Controller, Midlands, wrote to Newman, describing it as ‘magnificent’: ‘I am proud to be a colleague of the people who made it.’ He observed that since part of the play was set in the Midlands, there had been ‘some preliminary trumpeting’ about it by the leader of the Council and ‘the ubiquitous Mrs. Whitehouse’ (\*TS/965/1). The audience reaction index was very high—78, with 43% of the audience rating it A+, and, unlike many of the Wednesday Plays, few of the audience sample employed were indifferent to, or out of sympathy with, it (\*VR/66/629, 6 Dec. 1966). The play was subsequently repeated in March 1993. See S. Pile, ‘Fall and Rise of a Radical Filmmaker’, *Weekend Telegraph*, 27 March 1993, and P. Purser, *Telegraph Radio and TV*, 27 March 1993. Purser repeated his criticism of 1966, which he said that he still stood by. ‘I am sure the play did a great service to social education. I’m certain it did a terrible disservice to television drama.’

<sup>30</sup> See above, p. 391. Wheldon had been Head of Documentary and Music Programmes from 1963 to 1965. His place as Head of Music and Arts was taken by Humphrey Burton. Cawston took his place as Head of Documentaries.

<sup>31</sup> The proposal first appeared in a \*Note from Gerald Savory, Head of Plays, Drama, Television, ‘Wednesday Play Repeats: July/September’, 17 May 1966 (TS Wednesday Play—General 1966). It was to be one of a season of repeats, including *Horror of Darkness* and the two *Nigel Barton* plays.

<sup>32</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, ‘The Wednesday Play’, 17 June 1966; *Minutes*, 23 June 1966. None the less, he added, he had criticized aspects of *Up the Junction* at the Television Weekly Programme Review (\*Minutes, 10 Nov. 1965). He had complained earlier of a play that created less controversy, *For the West* by Michael Hastings, a play about mercenaries in Africa (\*ibid., 2 June 1965), and had said that ‘there was a straightforward duty of censorship which laid upon departmental heads, and there was no point in being mealy-mouthed about it’.

Television Service to be the best of the *Wednesday Play* series. Author's rights had to be taken into account also. The process of editorial control, which could work well in Current Affairs because the script was the property of the BBC, was more difficult in Drama, because of the rights of the outside author. Wheldon could say this



“CURIOSER AND CURIOSER!”

12. ‘Curiouser and curiouser!’, Garland in *Daily Telegraph*, 25 Nov. 1966.

with confidence, since he had involved himself with unremitting zeal in the task of judging the merits of *Up the Junction* even before production started. He had no doubt that his judgement was sound.

The Governors’ discussion of *Up the Junction* was long and difficult. Dame Anne Godwin, who had first raised the matter on 9 June, began it by saying that while ‘the BBC should not allow itself to be forced for the sake of safety into the position of showing only what was pleasant in life’, there was ‘too great a tendency in her view to concentrate on the “sick” elements in society as sources from which to illustrate contemporary problems’.<sup>33</sup> Normanbrook was upset be-

<sup>33</sup> She made it clear that, like all other Governors save one, Gerald Coke, she had not seen the play.

cause the play 'had started a wave of disapproval of the *Wednesday Play* series as whole which, up to that time, had not been the subject of special criticism'.<sup>34</sup> He cannot have been pleased when Wheldon replied at once that the play had also given rise to 'a current of approval in some quarters'.<sup>35</sup>

*Up the Junction* was not repeated. It did not seem a coincidence that this discussion had been preceded—before any question of any repeat arose—at the Governors' meeting in May 1966 by a discussion of how to deal with a letter from Mrs Whitehouse asking for a BBC statement on its attitude to 'Christian values'.<sup>36</sup>

Wheldon, in defending BBC Drama, made it clear to the Governors, as Newman always did to the Press, that *Wednesday Plays* constituted less than one hour in sixteen of radio drama. *Play of the Month*, for example, was seldom controversial, and there had been very favourable reactions both to John Osborne's *Luther* and E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*, adapted from the novel by Santha Rama Rau.<sup>37</sup> Wheldon knew, too, but did not tell the Governors, that John Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga* was also in the pipeline. It was being produced by Donald Wilson, who also wrote some of the scripts. The large cast included Kenneth More as Young Jolyon, Eric Porter as Soames, Nyree Dawn Porter as Irene, and Susan Hampshire as Fleur.<sup>38</sup> It was to prove one of the BBC's greatest successes.

MGM had been impressed by the BBC's record in making successful serial productions, and the record was maintained and extended during the Newman years. His range of responsibilities included *Dr. Finlay's Casebook*, as well as *Z Cars*, and *A Tale of Two Cities*, as well as *Dr. Who*. *Z Cars*, however, had had problems of its own,

<sup>34</sup> None the less, at a previous meeting of the Board, Richard Pim and Dame Anne Godwin had attacked *Toddler on the Run*, described by Pim as 'an incomprehensible mixture of sex, suicide, murder and crime', and Normanbrook, agreeing, had asked Kenneth Adam to prepare a paper on the series as a whole (\*Minutes, 26 May 1966).

<sup>35</sup> \*Ibid., 23 June 1966.

<sup>36</sup> \*Ibid., 26 May 1966.

<sup>37</sup> In the same BBC year, 1965–6, there was also a version by Elizabeth Hart of Forster's *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. *Theatre 625* presented two or three plays by the same writers or with common elements. T. S. Eliot's *The Family Reunion* and a version of Evelyn Waugh's *Sword of Honour* were broadcast in 1966.

<sup>38</sup> As early as 1959 the BBC had set up a project for a fifteen-episode adaptation, with Wilson as producer. The scripts were written by Constance Cox. There were problems about television rights, however, since film rights were held by MGM. Six years later, Wilson met Lawrence Bachman, Head of MGM in Britain, and eventually a deal was struck through Denis Scuse, Manager of BBC Enterprises and the BBC Copyright Department. MGM retained selling rights world-wide, with the exception of the Commonwealth (excluding Canada).

which did not reach the Governors in 1965, the year that Sergeant Flint—but not Dixon himself—retired from *Dixon of Dock Green*.<sup>39</sup> They were very different problems, however, from those posed by the *Wednesday Play*, for critics were complaining not about its content but its quality. ‘Isn’t it sad to see this once brilliant series teetering out in fumbling ineptitude?’, asked T. C. Worsley, in the *Financial Times* in January 1965.<sup>40</sup>

The BBC answered this particular question very quickly, with no debate. Already, during the previous autumn, there had been talk of a new police series dealing with a different range of crimes and possibly a different location, and Elwyn Jones, who, under Newman, was now Head of Series, Drama, Television, had told the BBC Representative in the North-West that ‘if we can keep *Z Cars* swinging [the good 1960s word] until the summer of ‘65 we might well do a Crime Squad series as a spin-off with some of the characters, as early as the autumn of next year’.<sup>41</sup>

An announcement that *Z Cars* would come to an end in December 1965 was duly made in a Press Statement in March,<sup>42</sup> and within a fortnight of its ending it had been replaced by *Softly, Softly*, a twice-weekly series of twenty-five-minute episodes, which soon established itself as it started on a ten-year run. In fact, there was to be continuity rather than break, for Barlow, Watt, and Blackitt survived as characters, and Alan Plater, who had written the last *Z Cars* script, ‘That’s the Way It Is’, in December 1965 was among the first script-writers of the new programme. That, however, was not the end of the story. The name *Z Cars*—which meant more to the public than to the critics—was itself revived in March 1967, even though its producer, Ronald Travers, noted that the Press had compared it unfavourably with the old ‘prize winner’,<sup>43</sup> and it continued to be broadcast until September 1978.

*Dixon of Dock Green*, given an award by Mary Whitehouse in 1967 as the best programme for family viewing,<sup>44</sup> was to survive until

<sup>39</sup> Tom Sloan hoped that Dixon would retire too. In an episode on 12 Feb. 1966 he was shot, but lovers of the programme had to be quickly reassured that though critically ill he would soon return to duty (*Radio Times*, 13–19 March 1976).

<sup>40</sup> *Financial Times*, 20 Jan. 1965.

<sup>41</sup> \*Jones to R. Jordan, BBC North-West Representative, ‘Suggestion for New Crime Series’, 8 Oct. 1964, replying to a letter of 24 Sept. 1964 (TS/2506/4).

<sup>42</sup> \*BBC Press Statement, 30 March 1965 (TS/710/1).

<sup>43</sup> \*Travers, Note to the Staff, 17 July 1967 (TS/710/2).

<sup>44</sup> Warner and Ronald Marsh, the producer, were invited to a National Viewers’ and Listeners’ Association lunch to receive it. Marsh left the programme at the end of 1968, when the audience was still 10m.

1976, when Jack Warner, still greatly admired by his own faithful audience, had reached the age of 80, long, long past any police retirement age. Willis had ceased writing scripts in 1965, and in October 1967 the harmonica lead was dropped in a new orchestration of the familiar signature tune. In October 1968 an episode of *Dixon* was sent to the National Film Archive for comparison with the first episode, which had already been placed there.

By then, however, serious competition had emerged in situation comedy—with a series that was far more controversial than *Z Cars* and that stirred even stronger feelings, not least in the governing body. *Till Death Us Do Part*, with scripts written by Johnny Speight, was first tried out, as *Steptoe and Son* had been, in Comedy Playhouse—on 22 July 1965. Speight had written sketches for Frankie Howerd, Peter Sellers, Morecambe and Wise, and Arthur Haynes, the last of whom allowed him to write in his own style; and when Haynes died, he felt free to move from ITV to the BBC and to invent a new set of characters who would alternately win and lose the sympathy of the people who watched them, as it were, home-to-home.<sup>45</sup> Independent-minded and a shrewd observer both of talk and of behaviour, Speight prepared six pages of family dialogue which he showed to Dennis Main Wilson, who was to be his BBC producer, and it was on the basis of this script that his programme was commissioned. Elaborate props were not needed to show how horrible—yet also how horribly funny—‘real life’ could be.

*Till Death Us Do Part* was well received, and the title, taken from the marriage service, was retained for a new series.<sup>46</sup> Only the name of the family changed. The Garnetts were originally the Ramseys. Whatever their family name—and the name may have been changed to avoid confusion between Alf and England’s football manager, not yet ‘Sir Alf’—the family as presented on the screen immediately won the attention of 8½ million viewers, who gave the play an Audience Research Reaction Index of 67, second only in the history of Comedy Playhouse to that achieved by *Steptoe and Son*.<sup>47</sup>

From the start, Alf was played superbly by Warren Mitchell; Mike, his Liverpoolian son-in-law, by Anthony Booth; and Rita, his daughter, by Una Stubbs. The part of ‘that silly old moo’, Alf’s wife,

<sup>45</sup> See J. Speight, *It Stands to Reason: A Kind of Autobiography* (1973).

<sup>46</sup> Ironically, the discussion about marriage from which the title was taken was cut out before the pilot programme was transmitted. It had overrun its time. For the origins of the programme see *News of the World*, 15 Jan. 1967.

<sup>47</sup> \*Audience Research Report VR/65/397.



passed however, from Gretchen Franklin, who had played it in the 'pilot', to Dandy Nichols, who played it in the series. Together, these accomplished actors, at all times believable, gave life to the plots which, like all Speight's work, were genuinely original. Most of the episodes had a nightmarish quality. They reflected a 1960s society, however, which, for all the talk of ideas, was still propped up by prejudices. The irony in the scripts reflected facets of the 1960s that had never been fully brought out in the satire of the early 1960s.

Whatever Speight's own ideas—and they were radical<sup>48</sup>—his characters were not straw figures. They were always believable working-class Cockneys, and the setting was believable too—pre-Murdoch Wapping.<sup>49</sup> That Alf Garnetts were actually there in London during the late 1960s, coexisting with respectable and scandalous MPs, pop stars, black and brown immigrants, student radicals, nuclear disarmers, militant trade unionists, devout Evangelicals, anatomists of Britain, and television producers can be fully demonstrated from various BBC archives. They were all part of the London scene during the Greene years at the BBC, a London big enough and busy enough for no single individual, including Greene, to know fully at first hand. Such a London, like Ben Jonson's London in the early seventeenth century, was a city which might have been deliberately contrived for satire.

Placed competitively as a series on Monday evening at 7.30 p.m. against *Coronation Street*, *Till Death Us Do Part* was Cockney through and through.<sup>50</sup> 'Pride and Prejudice' might have been its subtitle. Another might have been 'Courage and Cowardice'. Much of its dialogue could have gone straight into a Book of Insults. Yet just because of its closeness to Cockney working-class life—and the brilliance of the character acting—it soon acquired critics as well as admirers.<sup>51</sup> 'I have always thought this programme rather coarse,' one of them wrote after the first programme in the second series, transmitted on Boxing Day 1966, 'but this was the worst of the lot. It's a pity that to get a laugh from the riff-raff of the country, religion and royalty have to come into it.'<sup>52</sup> The criticism, forcefully expressed

<sup>48</sup> See his revised autobiography, *For Richer, for Poorer* (1991).

<sup>49</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 3 June 1968.

<sup>50</sup> The last episode of the first series attracted an audience of 9m. against 11m. for *Coronation Street* (\*Audience Research Report VR/66/412).

<sup>51</sup> An early admirer was T. C. Worsley, who described Alf Garnett as 'the finest flower of Mr. Speight's invention so far', and praised the programme as a whole for 'cleansing the Augean stable of our national vices of mind' (*Financial Times*, 18 Jan. 1967).

<sup>52</sup> \*VR/66/719.

in 130 letters of complaint, did not prevent the BBC from choosing this particular show as its comedy entry for the 1967 Golden Rose of Montreux competition. It did not win.

The next programme, broadcast on 2 January 1967, drew the sharp fire, not for the last time, of Mary Whitehouse, operating at that time on every front. The familiar sounding title of the programme, 'Sex Before Marriage', had suggested the worst, and this time there were 400 letters of complaint. Mrs Whitehouse chose not to write a letter, but instead sent a telegram of protest to the Prime Minister, Wilson, which was widely reported in the Press. Despite or because of it, the audience for the next few programmes increased. That for the programme of 6 February 1967 amounted to 16.3 million. By the end of the second series on 27 March 1968 the figure was to rise to 18 million.

'One of the funniest shows since Steptoe' was one viewer's contented comment on the first series: he was a sheet metal worker. 'I laughed and laughed,' wrote another, an electrical engineer; 'yet in many ways it was all quite true.'<sup>53</sup> There were some complaints about 'bad language', as there were to be after the programme had turned into a series, beginning on 6 June 1966, but there were no complaints about content.<sup>54</sup> These were to come later, particularly in relation to the second series which began on 26 December 1966.

One of the complaints made about *Up the Junction* (and other *Wednesday Plays*) focused on the bad language in them; and it was bad language too, this time outside Newman's hearing, that figured in one of the most remarkable incidents of 1965. In an appearance in the late night satirical show *BBC-3* on 13 November 1965, Ken Tynan uttered the word 'fuck'. This was the first time that the word had been used on television, at least audibly, and in a decade when 'bad language' on the air was a regular target of BBC critics, what the French called *l'affaire du mot* generated an immediate outcry. 'Is this moral?', 'Insult to Womanhood', 'The War on BBCrudity', 'Sack 4-letter Tynan' were some of the headlines. For William Barkley in the *Daily Express*, Tynan had perpetrated 'the bloodiest outrage' he had 'ever known'. Tynan had his defenders, however. Stanley Reynolds in the *Guardian* asked why one single word of four letters could

<sup>53</sup> \*VR/65/397.

<sup>54</sup> 'There are some things one just DOESN'T say, even on television,' Richard Sear wrote in the *Daily Mirror* on 10 Sept. 1966, 'but Alf Garnett does.' See also the *News of the World*, 15 Jan. 1967, 'The TV Show that Shocks the Nation'. 'Oi, Alf', James Thomas headed an article in the *Daily Express*, 14 Jan. 1967. 'Why spoil a good show with bad language?'

'provoke a greater reaction inside us than long and complex words like apartheid, rebellion, illegal, police state, and treason'.<sup>55</sup>

This was one of the rows that reached the House of Commons. Five motions attacking both Tynan and the BBC were set down on the order paper, supported by 133 back-benchers from both sides of the House. One of them called for the dismissal of Greene. The Prime Minister, Wilson, showed on this occasion that he was as capable of dealing with such reactions as Macmillan. He promised jocularly never to use the four-letter word in any of his own television performances.

Tynan's use of the word was not satirical. He employed it, he stated, 'in a completely neutral way to illustrate a serious point'. Yet the kind of opposition his gesture generated was the same as the opposition to satire, and some of the comments he made during the programme and later were picked up by critics, as much as his use of the word itself. Two were highly contentious: 'I think that anything that can be printed or said can also be seen.' 'The only generalisation that I would ever permit myself is that all acts one wants to perform one ought to perform, so long as they do not involve injury to others.' In this connection, however, Tynan spared his critics one final indignity. He did not use the long word 'permissiveness', a noun that roused as many feelings as the questionable four-letter word.

The motion censuring Greene was evidence that he himself was becoming as much of a target as those people who, in Donald McLachlan's phrase, were operating inside the BBC 'at a different level'. His vulnerability was plain also in a Commons debate of December 1965, when Victor Yates, Labour MP for Birmingham, Ladywood, drew the attention of the House to what he called 'the widespread dissatisfaction about the present standards of television programmes'. Like McLachlan, in his speech to the BBC General Advisory Council in April 1963,<sup>56</sup> Yates presented a far broader critique of BBC policies than an attack on *BBC-3* or Ken Tynan's appearance. 'We are bound to recognise that the BBC has been obliged on about six occasions in the last seven weeks to apologise', he said. 'This shows that there is something wrong.'<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> *Daily Express*, 16 Nov. 1965; *Guardian*, 17 Nov. 1965. See K. Tynan, *op. cit.*, ch. 24. Mrs Whitehouse wrote to the Queen asking her to use her influence with the Governors of the BBC. The Queen passed on the letter to the Postmaster-General.

<sup>56</sup> See above, p. 365.

<sup>57</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 722, col. 2190, 22 Dec. 1965.

Yates quoted a letter of 19 June 1964 to the Postmaster-General from the Chairman of the BBC, who had stated, in what amounted to a directive, that 'the Board accept that so far as possible the programmes for which they are responsible should not offend against good taste or decency or be likely to encourage crime and disorder or be offensive to public feeling. In judging what is suitable for inclusion in programmes, they will pay special regard to the need to ensure that broadcasts designed to stimulate thought do not so far depart from their intentions as to give general offence.' Was this policy being followed?, Yates asked. In the same speech he revealed how some people's views had shifted since Pilkington. 'The ITA', he remarked, quoting a leader in the *Guardian*, 'appear to be much more efficient in the control of their programmes than the BBC.'<sup>58</sup> Dance too returned to the fray, quoting Mrs Whitehouse and stressing that 'the BBC is, or should be, a public service. That being so, it has all the greater bounden duty to listen to outside criticism—possibly even more so than the commercials, which are under the guidance of the ITA.'<sup>59</sup>

The debate petered out without opponents of Yates and Dance being given the chance to state their views. There was a philosophical statement, however, from Benn, the Postmaster-General, which ended with his refusing to interfere with either the BBC or the ITA. The views he was expressing behind the scenes, about both Normanbrook and Greene,<sup>60</sup> lead into a different area of BBC history.

One programme of this period that was not shown has attracted as much interest as the programmes that were, and on this occasion it was Normanbrook, not Greene, who was at the centre of the stage. *The War Game*, described by Normanbrook as an 'impressive documentary', had been made by Peter Watkins, a Production Assistant on Programme Contract, whose earlier programme *Culloden*, broadcast in December 1964, had been judged one of the most brilliant, if also one of the most controversial, televised depictions of a battle which stood out as a terrifying event in British history.<sup>61</sup> Watkins,

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 2192.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 2194.

<sup>60</sup> See below, p. 539.

<sup>61</sup> It was controversial not only because of the violence that it depicted, but because of its avowed 'partiality'. See S. M. J. Arrowsmith, 'Peter Watkins', in G. W. Brandt (ed.), *British Television Drama* (1981), pp. 217–39. Its brilliance was indisputable. A BBC Audience Research Report, \*VR/64/669, 15 Dec. 1964, showed that 28% of the sample gave it A+ and 36% A. It was felt to have had a 'tremendous anti-war impact'.

still in his twenties, used 'ordinary people' and hand-held cameras for his battle scene. Philip Purser in the *Daily Telegraph* claimed that he had reached 'instant stardom', while from inside the BBC Cawston judged that he had the talent 'to make films in the same sort of way that Mozart could compose music when he was four'.<sup>62</sup>

*The War Game*, which starkly depicted nuclear devastation in the future, had been prepared by Watkins as meticulously as *Culloden* and with as much detailed attention to research. Its first suggested title was 'After the Bomb', and it was known from the start that its impact would be 'horrifying'.<sup>63</sup> It was appreciated, too, that there might be difficulties with Civil Defence;<sup>64</sup> and if only for this reason, it was arranged that Greene himself should follow the progress of the venture, and that both he and Normanbrook should read the script.<sup>65</sup> With some difficulty, Wheldon succeeded in arranging for Watkins to begin filming in Kent in April 1965, and after the Press had begun to take an interest in the project, he himself saw two versions of the film in June and July.<sup>66</sup> Normanbrook and Greene saw the second version on 2 September, along with Charles Curran, then Secretary

<sup>62</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 20 Dec. 1964; Cawston, quoted in P. Ferris, *Sir Huger: The Life of Huw Wheldon* (1990), p. 182. Watkins had produced a film *Forgotten Faces* about the Hungarian rising of 1956. It was shown to Granada, but not accepted. Later the BBC used it in a programme about amateur film-makers. See the important chapter 'The Half-Truth Machine' in M. Shulman, *The Ravenous Eye* (1973), pp. 242 ff.

<sup>63</sup> Watkins had made his proposal for a film tracing the consequences of a nuclear attack on Britain on 7 Aug. 1963, before *Culloden* was broadcast (\*Watkins to Wheldon, Head of Documentary and Music Programmes, Television (through Stephen Hearst), 'Proposed Documentary on Consequences of Nuclear Warfare', 7 Aug. 1963 (T16/679)). After *Culloden* Wheldon, 'anxious to keep Watkins', commended the programme to Adam (\*Wheldon to Adam, 'Peter Watkins: "After the Bomb"', 31 Dec. 1964 (T16/679)). Stephen Hearst, who wrote to Wheldon about Watkins's idea, described it 'in terms of content and approach' as 'a completely novel and path-finding imaginative documentary'. He saw it also as 'a committed film', which, 'if done by the BBC at all', might be best incorporated within a 'nuclear evening' frame, 'so that the film might... be followed by comment which includes differing opinions on the subject' (\*Hearst to Wheldon, 'Programme Proposal from Peter Watkins', 7 Aug. 1964 (T16/679)).

<sup>64</sup> Watkins in the course of his researches went to see Peter Thorneycroft, then Shadow Minister of Defence, who told Greene that while he was impressed by Watkins's enthusiasm and ability, he had doubts about the film. He suggested that Greene should keep a close eye on it (\*Thorneycroft to Greene, 18 Jan. 1965 (Man. Reg. file C131)). The Home Office, which was restrictive in its approach to broadcasting on nuclear issues, also expressed the same view (\*H. D. Winther to Arkell, 'Television Documentary on Nuclear Warfare', 22 Jan. 1965 (T16/679)) and did not co-operate with Watkins. The BBC itself had co-operated closely with Civil Defence during the 1950s.

<sup>65</sup> \*Wheldon to Adam, 'Documentary on Nuclear Warfare', 22 Feb. 1965 (T16/679).

<sup>66</sup> Some Press comment is given in Ferris, op. cit., p. 184. 'The War Comes to Gravesend' was one headline. Another was 'Will It Be Too Frightening?' Manchester was the nuclear target in the film. The process of filming was chronicled at every stage by Gilbert Phelps, a former BBC radio producer, with a view to producing a dossier.

of the BBC, while Adam, Wheldon, and Cawston waited in a nearby room and were summoned later.

*The War Game*, acknowledged by all who saw it on 2 September to be an extremely impressive film, was not to be seen by BBC viewers until 1985. Both Normanbrook and Greene—and they kept in step throughout—felt that responsibility for its public showing should not be the BBC's alone. Having seen it, Normanbrook proposed 'to take soundings in Whitehall', the place that he knew best.<sup>67</sup> His first letter, indeed, was to his civil service successor, Sir Burke (later Lord) Trend. The film, Normanbrook told Trend, had been produced 'with considerable restraint', but its subject was 'necessarily alarming'.<sup>68</sup> A second private showing was arranged, therefore, on 24 September 1965, at which representatives of the Home Office, the Ministry of Defence, the Chiefs of Staff, and the Post Office were present, as well as Normanbrook himself; J. H. Arkell, Director of Administration, Oliver Whitley, and Robert Lusty, representing the BBC.

The Governors had not discussed *The War Game* until the day before this showing, although by that time it had been discussed more than once in the national as well as the local Press. They expressed no opinion in their Minutes, despite Normanbrook having reported to them that it was known that Ministers themselves were not anxious to assume the responsibility for deciding that the film should not be shown.<sup>69</sup> Normanbrook made a note, too, after the film had been seen by its privileged audience on 24 September, that officials were not anxious to decide either. Some detected 'inaccuracies'; others thought that the last words in the script were tendentious.<sup>70</sup> All wished to reserve judgement.

Normanbrook himself behaved less like a decision-maker than a Government official. He put the pros and cons of showing and not showing, before making it clear that he was not arguing that 'the film should be shown either now or at some future date'.<sup>71</sup> Lusty was equally cautious after seeing the film, although he ended his note with a flourish. 'My view', he concluded, 'is that we should not show

<sup>67</sup> \*Television Controllers' Meeting, *Minutes*, 6 Sept. 1965.

<sup>68</sup> \*Normanbrook to Trend, 7 Sept. 1965 (Man. Reg. file C131). Meanwhile, Mrs Whitehouse had written to the Prime Minister on 6 Sept. asking for the film not to be shown.

<sup>69</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 23 Sept. 1965.

<sup>70</sup> Changes had been made to the beginning of the film in the second version which Wheldon had seen in July. An opening statement was inserted, referring to the pros and cons of the nuclear deterrent (Ferris, *op. cit.*, p. 183).

<sup>71</sup> \*Normanbrook, 'The War Game', 27 Sept. 1965 (Man. Reg. file C131).



it unless pressed to do so (which seems unlikely) and can credit a wide variety of official sources for help.' The flourish was that he wondered what would have been the fate of Christianity if 'our producer had shown in advance to the followers of Jesus a documentary showing the details of his inevitable crucifixion!'<sup>72</sup>

Only Whitley was of the opinion that the film, subject to minor changes, should be shown to all viewers and not to selected audiences. 'Peter Watkins', he wrote, 'made the programme . . . because he felt deeply that people who live, as we do, under the shadow or under the protection—however you prefer to put it—of the nuclear bomb, should have a realistic idea of the probable effect of such a bomb in the neighbourhood. The BBC allowed him to make this film. On what basis could it be said that it is wrong even to attempt to make a film with this aim?'<sup>73</sup>

The officials had reported to their Ministers, and the Ministers had decided to leave the decision to the BBC.<sup>74</sup> On 26 November 1965, therefore, without the Governors discussing the matter again, a Press Announcement was issued, stating that 'after a good deal of thought and discussion' *The War Game* would not be shown. It was judged 'too horrifying for the medium of broadcasting', although it was to be made available for invited audiences. It was after this statement had been made that the Governors endorsed the Chairman's decision.<sup>75</sup> Reflecting with hindsight, Normanbrook himself regretted that he had not been firmer much earlier. After seeing the script, he should have said that the programme could not go ahead. 'If I had taken this line firmly at that stage,' he told Greene, 'the Corporation would have been spared a lot of embarrassment.' Greene concurred. His own thinking had led him 'to very much the same conclusions'.<sup>76</sup>

Greene had been attending a conference in Africa when Normanbrook made his decision, but he stood by it.<sup>77</sup> Wheldon too accepted

<sup>72</sup> \*Lusty to Normanbrook, 28 Sept. 1965 (same file).

<sup>73</sup> \*Whitley to Normanbrook, 'The War Game', 4 Oct. 1965 (same file).

<sup>74</sup> \*Normanbrook to Greene, 'The War Game', 5 Nov. 1965 (same file). Criticisms by the officials were general rather than specific, although the personal attitude of the American President was said to have been presented as very unsympathetic, and some of the detailed comment on Civil Defence precautions seemed excessively sharp and cynical.

<sup>75</sup> \*Press Statement, 26 Nov. 1965 (same file); Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 2 Dec. 1965.

<sup>76</sup> \*Normanbrook to Greene, 'The War Game', 28 Feb. 1966; Greene to Normanbrook, 'The War Game', 2 March 1966 (same file).

<sup>77</sup> M. Tracey, *A Variety of Lives* (1983), p. 253. Tracey does not mention Greene's absence at the time, and implies that Greene fell in with the decision to avoid a damaging argument with Normanbrook and the Governors.

the decision. He had written earlier to Watkins, who had threatened to resign when the decision to 'take soundings' had been made, telling him that 'the BBC's decision to consult further on this important and powerful documentary arises solely from its responsibility which must override all other considerations, to act in the public interest'.<sup>78</sup> The question was, of course, what was the public interest? Watkins and Normanbrook had diametrically opposed views but it was Normanbrook, not Watkins, who by virtue of his position as a Governor was called upon to define what 'public interest' meant and to act on it. Another question was 'What made public interest change?' Twenty years later, in July 1985, the BBC was at last to broadcast *The War Game*, just before the fortieth anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

*The War Game* was not the only programme that raised the question of violence on the screen. Yet few of the other programmes posed such disturbing dilemmas. Few too had such an obvious political angle. Normanbrook, however, told the Governors in September 1965 that a proposed programme on bullfighting, *Matador*, to be produced by Kevin Billington with Alan Whicker as commentator, created a 'somewhat similar situation'.<sup>79</sup> This time, one of the Governors, Sir Ashley Clarke, had such strong opinions about the showing of cruelty on the screen that he pressed the matter to a rare vote, not recorded in the Minutes, and the programme went ahead, as later revealed, by only five votes to four.<sup>80</sup> Another Governor, Sir Richard Pim, felt that camera teams were being employed on projects which had not been 'fully considered in their policy aspects', and that 'the machinery for controlling the activities of film crews working abroad should be examined'.<sup>81</sup>

The programme was broadcast on 29 July 1966 to an audience of 8 million people, and the reaction index of 70 showed that it had created little offence.<sup>82</sup> Yet Normanbrook told the Board that in this case also he would have preferred that the film had not been made. He also suggested to the Governors that if the project had been referred to them in the first instance, they would have 'withheld

<sup>78</sup> Wheldon to Watkins, 15 Sept. 1965 (Huw Wheldon Papers, quoted in Ferris, op. cit., p. 186).

<sup>79</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 23 Sept. 1965. Both *The War Game* and *Matador* are dealt with briefly in Briggs, *Governing the BBC* (1979), pp. 120–4.

<sup>80</sup> Clarke to Sir Michael Swann, 11 Feb. 1980. The item figured at length in the Governors' Minutes in April and May 1966.

<sup>81</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 23 Sept. 1965.

<sup>82</sup> \*VR/66/406.

permission'.<sup>83</sup> A Press Announcement described it as a film 'made with great care and objectivity', which 'does not whitewash bull fighting nor . . . ignore the cruelty'.<sup>84</sup> It left viewers free to form their own views, a privilege not given to them in the case of *The War Game*.

There is a curious sequel to this story. At the Governors' meeting immediately following the one at which Normanbrook made his statement, Vietnam figured on the agenda. Clarke raised it. Having heard that *Panorama* was proposing to prepare a report on Vietnam, he urged that, since the position there was very 'delicate', the makers should be sure to deal with it in a 'balanced' way. 'He was particularly anxious that the assumption should not be made that telling pictures from Vietnam could be balanced by discussion in the studio.' Greene characteristically remarked that the item would be 'handled with care', but that 'a subject as controversial as this was bound to provoke objections from one quarter or another'. Normanbrook had the last word. 'For him the reiteration in *24 Hours* of pictures of jungle fighting which changed little from one programme to another was not of great interest.'<sup>85</sup>

While the Governors of the BBC were concerned during 1965 and 1966 with many complex questions, many of them dealing with life and death,<sup>86</sup> one other major question of a very different kind seemed at times to dominate all else; 'BBC Finances' as they were called in the Governors' *Minutes*. It was on their agenda at almost every meeting between the elections of 1964 and 1966, and it remained on the agenda after Benn had announced the limited

<sup>83</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 14 April 1966.

<sup>84</sup> Press Announcement drafted by Curran, 5 May 1966. Curran had prepared a note on 1 April 1966, stating opposition to the idea of such a film voiced by the National Equine Defence League, the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare, and other bodies, and in many sections of the Press.

<sup>85</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 12 May 1966. He agreed, however, that 'the Viet Nam problem could not be ignored by Television Current Affairs'. A BBC *24 Hours* team had been in Vietnam for several weeks.

<sup>86</sup> In 1966 the BBC had to deal with the Aberfan colliery disaster, when they rejected the advice of Lord Robens, Chairman of the Coal Board, that there should be no live coverage of great disasters, and that all reports should be edited before transmission. The Governors unanimously agreed with the Welsh National Governor, Professor Glanmor Williams, that the coverage, both in English and in Welsh, had been of 'a high order of responsibility and sensitivity' (\*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 3 Nov. 1966). Glanmor Williams quoted a letter to the *Guardian* praising the reporting of Andrew Davies, a former Director of Education from Merthyr Tydfil. The Board sent a message of appreciation to the staff, including engineers—riggers and lighting staff—who had worked in extremely difficult conditions.

increase in licence fees in April 1965.<sup>87</sup> This was because Benn, who clearly realized that the BBC was underfunded, had concluded that the only way to save public service broadcasting and avoid 'a capitulation in favour of commercial sound broadcasting' was to give it some form of revenue which would grow with it.<sup>88</sup> Advertising on the Light Programme seemed a possibility, in order to finance an expansion of pop music that would kill the pirates stone dead. Once the word 'advertising' was raised, however, there were bound to be resistances, not least in his own party. They were bound to be strongest too, of course, in Broadcasting House.

When the BBC's acting Chairman, Sir James Duff, was told by Benn about the rise in April 1965, before Benn made his announcement in the Commons, all that he found it possible to say was that he was grateful for small mercies.<sup>89</sup> Nor did there seem to be any comfort in Benn's promise of a full review before the summer recess.<sup>90</sup> Already by the end of April 1965 rumours were widespread that such an inquiry would inevitably culminate in a proposal that the BBC take advertising.<sup>91</sup> There was private talk even at this stage of the Governors collectively resigning in protest.<sup>92</sup>

Benn, who had other Post Office matters on his mind, including labour relations in the Post Office, the design of stamps, and even a shortage of them, was happy with the way that the review started, and after a meeting of the Ministerial Committee on Broadcasting on 11 May wrote in his diary that he had won its approval for the acceptance of a memorandum of his own, not spelt out in the published version of his diary, which, in his view, would mark the first stage towards 'fundamental changes in broadcasting policy'. It would include the ending of the BBC sound monopoly, the introduction of mixed revenue into the BBC, and the development of 'genuinely local and regional radio and TV'.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>87</sup> See above, 502.

<sup>88</sup> Benn, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 245, entry for 13 April 1965.

<sup>90</sup> An interdepartmental committee of officials, which met for the first time in May, prepared the way for the inquiry (\*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 13, 27 May 1965). The uneasiness of the Governors is shown in their deciding that any Press Statement made should note that the proposed increase would not be enough to pay for developments already authorized, and should emphasize that more borrowing would be necessary (\**ibid.*, 14 April 1965).

<sup>91</sup> Robert Lusty at a Board meeting reported (\**Minutes*, 29 April 1965) that Lord Longford had stated that the BBC would be compelled to accept advertising revenue within the next five years.

<sup>92</sup> Dame Anne Godwin counselled caution in lodging any such threat.

<sup>93</sup> Benn, *op. cit.*, p. 257, entry for 11 May 1965.

The meeting of the Committee was the prelude to a major debate on broadcasting in the House of Commons on 13 May, a debate which Benn found 'quiet and dull', but which ranged widely over a variety of issues, of which the pirates were only one.<sup>94</sup> In the course of it, Sir Peter Rawlinson claimed that since Radio Caroline showed that there was a liking for 'this kind of music', local stations 'which would not be a burden on the licence holders' should be set up to provide it. Benn himself conceded that there was a genuine demand for such music, which he suspected had always existed.

Benn ended, as he was bound to do, with the bigger issue of BBC finance. If the Government had been willing to raise the combined licence fee to £6, what the BBC had asked for,<sup>95</sup> this would have covered expenditure until the late 1960s: if it had decided to keep it at £4, it would have been necessary for the BBC to make drastic cuts, including the virtual destruction of BBC-2. The new £5 fee would 'hold the present position and keep the BBC within its present borrowing limits'. Meanwhile, the review that he proposed would look into the future; for 'we have reached the point where there is virtually complete coverage [and] the BBC can no longer rely . . . on increased revenue from new licence holders'.<sup>96</sup>

Benn's diaries set out many ideas about securing extra revenue, most of which, as he knew himself, would be unlikely ever to be converted into legislation. They were ideas that raised many issues besides finance, and they were ideas that could alienate his own officials, among them Dennis Lawrence, the former Secretary of the Pilkington Committee. Lawrence was 'furious', for example, in November 1965 when the Postmaster-General 'aired' the view that a

<sup>94</sup> In the debate in the House of Lords on 20 Jan. 1965 on a motion by Lord Willis (see above, p. 430), several speakers pressed for an increase of the licence fee to £6. 'One gratifying feature', Normanbrook told the Governors, was 'the general satisfaction with the standard of broadcasting in this country' (\*Board of Governors, Minutes, 21 Jan. 1965). On 12 May questions were raised in the Commons about the pirates. One MP, Sir Richard Thompson, asked Benn 'firmly [to] resist all pressure from vested interests to deprive the British public of a very good and amusing programme. Would he regard it as a spur to "gee-up" the BBC to provide something like it?' Benn replied: 'No, Sir, I shall not keep that particular consideration in mind' (*Hansard*, vol. 712, cols. 508-9, 12 May 1965).

<sup>95</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 4 March 1965. Normanbrook reported then that 'he had reminded the Treasury that the BBC would begin to run into debt in this month and that the cost of servicing the debt, with Bank Rate at 7 per cent, would be heavy'. On 18 March 1965 he reported that the Department of Economic Affairs was opposing an increase. In the same month Greene attended a meeting of the Parliamentary Labour Party Committee on Broadcasting. They were, he said, sympathetic to an increase in the licence fee (\**ibid.*, 18 March 1965).

<sup>96</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 712, col. 744, 13 May 1965.

bargain should be struck with the ITA whereby it would be granted unlimited broadcasting hours in return for four hours a day of educational broadcasting, plus the money to finance it.<sup>97</sup>

Around this time, the question of how best to deal with education was as prominent in Benn's diaries as the question of how best to deal with 'piracy'. He felt that he knew the inadequacies of the educational system, and he was anxious to broaden access. He also appreciated that there was a new convergence between developments in communication. Indeed, he told Parliament at the end of an often heated debate in December 1965 that he believed that television ranked equally with formal education in the shaping of a new generation.<sup>98</sup> None the less, he refused to trust the BBC. Within the educational context, 'the vital thing', he insisted more than once, was 'to stop the BBC running the University of the Air which would be disastrous'.<sup>99</sup>

The ideas that sprang up in Benn's fertile mind spread further still as he contemplated the whole span of broadcasting. Quoting Churchill, who had said with reference to the wartime destruction of the Commons Chamber in 1943, 'we shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us', he claimed that the remark now applied equally forcefully to television. 'It is our job as Parliament to shape broadcasting and television, but in doing so we must recognize that, afterwards, broadcasting and television will surely shape us.'<sup>100</sup> 'There may be a case', he once told himself, 'for taking BBC-2 away from the BBC and setting it up under a separate corporation.'<sup>101</sup> 'It would be better', he thought soon afterwards, to share the much discussed fourth television channel with ATV on a 60 : 40 basis, the 40 per cent going to the Post Office—this after talking to Lew Grade and Ted Willis—than giving it to the BBC, though such a solution would not be 'as good as setting up another public corporation'.<sup>102</sup> A proposal from the Lord Mayor of Manchester to set up a local

<sup>97</sup> Benn, *op. cit.*, p. 352, entry for 19 Nov. 1965.

<sup>98</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 722, col. 2196, 22 Dec. 1965.

<sup>99</sup> Benn, *op. cit.*, p. 194, entry for 27 Nov. 1964. Cf. p. 205: 'I am passionately keen that the BBC should not gain control of the University of the Air.' This comment followed a meeting on 14 Jan. 1965 with Prentice, who had been planning to allow four extra hours of education on BBC-2. See above, p. 495.

<sup>100</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 722, col. 2202, 22 Dec. 1965.

<sup>101</sup> Benn, *op. cit.*, p. 228, entry for 2 March 1965. Benn rightly noted (*ibid.*, pp. 234-5) that 'any radical attitude towards BBC-2 would probably lead to resignations from the BBC Board of Governors' (15 March 1965).

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239, entry for 29 March 1965.



Manchester radio station Benn considered 'interesting'; he did not want it to be 'under the BBC'.<sup>103</sup>

On piracy, Benn knew that the question of whether Radio Caroline and the other pirate ships should be banned by legislation continued to divide Labour MPs, some of whom were willing, despite the political situation, to increase the BBC's licence fee to £6.<sup>104</sup> Thus, Benn's colleague Richard Crossman, who in talking to Benn called himself 'an old-fashioned Reith man who thought the BBC ought to be a public service without making concessions to the desires of the viewers', had objected early in 1965 to the continued preparation of the 'Suppression of Marine etc. Broadcasting Bill'. By then, this was a massive document with a name that was as intimidating as the names of the pirate ships and their locations were romantic.<sup>105</sup> 'I was decisively against him on Radio Caroline,' Crossman wrote in his own equally famous diary, 'because I didn't see any point in losing the votes of young people before the BBC had any real alternative to it.'<sup>106</sup>

In the course of his meditations, Benn had himself noted that the pirates were 'establishing themselves firmly in public favour and if we killed them it would be extremely unpopular'.<sup>107</sup> Yet he was bound to note also—and, indeed, to draw Parliamentary attention to it—that in January 1965 a 'European Agreement' had been reached at Strasbourg, through the Council of Europe, for 'the Prevention of Broadcasts Transmitted from Stations Outside National Territories', and that ten countries had signed it. The main point made in the Agreement was that such broadcasting contravened the Copenhagen Convention of 1948 allocating wavelengths and subsequent similar agreements.<sup>108</sup> Britain accepted this Agreement early in 1965,<sup>109</sup> and

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 259, entry for 17 May 1965.

<sup>104</sup> For Labour nervousness about licence fees, see above, p. 502.

<sup>105</sup> Benn, *op. cit.*, pp. 224–5, 22 Feb. 1965. Benn also commented that 'Crossman's main desire seemed to be to get rid of Hugh Greene'.

<sup>106</sup> R. H. S. Crossman, *The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister*, vol. 1 (1975), p. 227 (entry for 24 May 1965). Benn told Parliament in Dec. 1965 that he had no intention of licensing the pirate ships (*Hansard*, vol. 722, col. 424, 8 Dec. 1965); see also *Observer*, 5 Dec. 1965.

<sup>107</sup> Benn, *op. cit.*, p. 212, entry for 27 Jan. 1965.

<sup>108</sup> He had told Parliament of the role of the Council of Europe in these discussions in Nov. 1964 (*Hansard*, vol. 702, written answers, col. 24, 17 Nov. 1964). Pirates counter-claimed that 500 of the 898 radio stations in Europe, including Vatican Radio and the American Forces station in Munich, broadcast on unauthorized frequencies.

<sup>109</sup> Statement by Benn in written answer (*ibid.*, vol. 705, col. 328, 4 Feb. 1965). In giving the reasons for accepting it, he referred to interference not only with home radio but to 'certain maritime radio communication services in this country and abroad'.

in the early summer of 1965 Benn told Parliament that legislation to deal with the pirates would be introduced 'as soon as practicable'.<sup>110</sup>

After all his earlier frustrations, Benn was cheered when, at what seemed to be a crucial meeting of the Ministerial Committee on Broadcasting on 22 November 1965, piracy was pushed on one side and it was agreed that a new and long-delayed White Paper on broadcasting should be prepared which would recommend advertising on the Light Programme, subject to 'an assurance to the BBC that any proposal they might make to advertise on the Light Programme would be acceptable to the Government under strictly controlled conditions'.<sup>111</sup> Such a White Paper, Benn believed, would lead to 'a reshaping of British broadcasting under public service conditions with some mixed revenue, with a real chance of establishing the fourth channel on entirely new lines'. Leaving the pirates entirely on one side, 'all that then remained', he concluded—and it was a sizeable 'all'—was 'colour, the fourth channel and how to handle the University of the Air'.<sup>112</sup>

When news of the contents of the proposed White Paper reached the Governors of the BBC early in February 1966, the Vice-Chairman, now Lord Fulton, in the absence of the Chairman, Normanbrook, who was ill, took the bold, if risky, step of writing direct to the Prime Minister telling him that the Governors regarded any suggestion of

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., vol. 715, written answers, col. 85, 30 June 1965. The BBC Governors were told in Sept. (\*Minutes, 23 Sept. 1965) that PPL expected that legislation against the pirates would be presented in the next session of Parliament.

<sup>111</sup> Benn, *op. cit.*, p. 353, entry for 22 Nov. 1965. He noted that there were only three possibilities; advertising, which he himself disliked; a tax subvention, which the Treasury totally rejected; and an increase in the licence fee at the end of 1966, which was 'impossible'. On 10/11 July (*ibid.*, pp. 288–9) Benn had complained that a meeting of the Committee had been 'rather unaccountably postponed'. At a meeting on 1 Nov. (*ibid.*, p. 342) it was agreed that Benn would go ahead with preparing plans for local radio based on a trust system and a National Broadcasting Advisory Council.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., p. 353, entry for 22 Nov. 1965. When he reported the scheme to the Post Office Director-General, Sir Ronald German, on 23 Nov., German warned him that advertising might lead to the resignation of the BBC Governors *en bloc*. 'This whole broadcasting argument with the department', Benn observed, 'is a classic example of Civil Service fighting a rearguard action against determined ministerial policy making' (*ibid.*, p. 354). The following day J. G. L. Francis, Controller, Finance, presented to the Governors 'a limited budget review' (\*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 23 Sept. 1965). In 1959 Francis had succeeded Thomas Lochhead, who had been Controller since 1925. He himself was to be succeeded in 1971 by Paul Hughes. For the BBC's financial procedures and the development of 'management information', see E. B. Thorne, 'The BBC's Finances and Cost Control', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 8th ser., 22 Jan. 1970. Greene told the Governors (\*Minutes, 21 Oct. 1965) that the Government's Official Committee on Broadcasting Finance had made a firm recommendation that the licence fee system should be continued, and that 'no decision, other than one of principle, could be expected from Ministers before a general election'.

the BBC taking advertising revenue 'as being fundamentally [another use of the word] in conflict with the purposes of public broadcasting'. Fulton also warned against 'a most serious crisis of confidence between the Board and the Government'.<sup>113</sup>

Fulton had worked with Wilson in the civil service during the War, and had invited him down to speak at the University of Sussex just before the general election of 1964. He was clearly in a position to exert personal influence, therefore, although he had little idea of just how critical of the BBC Wilson was at that time. Benn's diaries would have told him. So, too, would officials in the Post Office, whom Benn found 'sceptical and negative'.<sup>114</sup> Fulton's letter was, nevertheless, extremely well timed. Benn saw it on 14 February on the eve of a Cabinet meeting at which broadcasting finance and related matters were to be discussed, and realized at once that it could lead to difficulties, given that there were known divisions in the Cabinet itself.

After talking to the Lord President of the Council, Herbert Bowden, who strongly supported the idea of limited BBC advertising, the two of them went on to see Wilson, who at first they considered likely to 'stand firm', as he did at the Cabinet meeting the following day when, according to Benn's account, at least three members—Crosland, Douglas (later Lord) Houghton, and Frank Cousins—were 'wholly opposed' to any BBC advertising.<sup>115</sup> When Wilson met Fulton and Greene at 10 Downing Street on 16 February, however, there had been a change. In the presence of Benn and Bowden, the Prime Minister, in Benn's opinion, had been 'very gentle' in the way that he discussed BBC issues. Indeed, he had gone so far as to say that 'he well understood the BBC's view'. No decision had yet been taken on advertising, he had told Fulton and Greene, although he added that it remained one of the options. Meanwhile, the BBC would have to prune its expenditure drastically.

<sup>113</sup> \*Fulton to Wilson, 11 Feb. 1966 (R78/3/1); Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 17 Feb. 1966; Briggs, *Governing the BBC*, pp. 126–7. Fulton took the chair at the Governors' meeting on 17 Feb.

<sup>114</sup> Benn, *op. cit.*, p. 201, entry for 7 Jan. 1965. The Director-General of the Post Office was included in this judgement, as well as Lillicrap.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 388. Benn stated that those now in favour included Crossman, Barbara Castle, Bowden, and 'one or two others'. Bowden, who had become Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons in 1964, was to succeed Hill as Chairman of the ITA in 1967, when he also became a life peer, Lord Aylestone. Barbara Castle (*The Castle Diaries, 1964–70* (1984), p. 108) said she was prepared to go along with advertising, provided that it was restricted to the Light Programme. She reports also that the Cabinet approved of 'a blitz on licence evasion'.

While Benn continued to ponder on options, reiterating in writing to the Prime Minister his views in favour of an element of advertising to finance the BBC,<sup>116</sup> Wilson held back, knowing that the Party was divided, as well as the Cabinet. Many options were discussed later on 16 February, at a Labour Party meeting of MPs who belonged to its Communications Group. Some MPs supported advertising 'so that the public sector would not be starved of resources'. One favoured using the ITV Levy to finance a fourth channel. Another, Bernard Floud, said that the public was interested only in the pirates and in keeping the licence fee down: 'he thought there would be a big row if the pirates were squashed.'<sup>117</sup> Most MPs felt that there should be no White Paper at all, leading Benn to conclude: 'This is impossible and I could not accept it.'<sup>118</sup>

The impossibility materialized. No White Paper was published before the next general election, even though, in a protracted debate on the adjournment in the Commons on 3 March, initiated by the Opposition, there were complaints about the failure to reach decisions. 'Although we have the first Postmaster-General with a broadcasting background,' Paul Bryan, leading for the Opposition, began, 'he appears to have no influence on broadcasting. Every matter for decision has been given, for some reason, to a committee.'<sup>119</sup> Matters discussed in the lengthy debate included both the University of the Air, criticized by the Opposition, and piracy, which W. F. Deedes rightly thought had made Governments in general 'look an ass'.<sup>120</sup> Advertising was mentioned also by several speakers, although Benn said little about it in his summing up.

He was wise to be reticent, for the BBC had already effectively sidelined the decisions that Benn had wanted to make by telling him on 25 February—to his genuine 'amazement'—that it could manage after all without any increase in the licence fee for two or three years.<sup>121</sup> The licence fee could be held stable. The BBC would make substantial economies—later assessed by the BBC at around £12½ million—and would expect the Government to introduce legislation to reduce licence evasion.<sup>122</sup> Fulton wrote to this effect to Wilson

<sup>116</sup> Greene reported this to the BBC Governors in his account of the meeting (\*Minutes, 17 Feb. 1966).

<sup>117</sup> Benn, *op. cit.*, p. 389, entry for 16 Feb. 1966.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 390.

<sup>119</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 725, col. 1510, 3 March 1966.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1526. Local radio was also raised. See below, p. 619.

<sup>121</sup> Benn, *op. cit.*, p. 393, entry for 25 Feb. 1966.

<sup>122</sup> \*Francis to Normanbrook, 'BBC Finances', 10 May 1966 (R78/3/1).

three days later;<sup>123</sup> and at a Cabinet meeting on 1 March, two days before the Commons debate, Benn was asked by Wilson to negotiate further with the Corporation.

The minutes of the Governors set out clearly BBC actions and reactions between the meeting at 10 Downing Street on 16 February and Fulton's letter at the end of the month. When the Governors met on 17 February, both Fulton and Greene referred to ambiguities in the Prime Minister's statements. Yet there had been shifts in the BBC's own calculations, and Fulton, in particular, believed that the Prime Minister appreciated that advertising would be 'a dangerous legacy to impose on the BBC'.<sup>124</sup> Characteristically he had stayed behind to talk to Wilson on his own on one side after the meeting ended. The air was cleared, or partially cleared, by the time the Governors held their next meeting on 2 March, and they were told by Greene that while no White Paper on broadcasting was now expected, even had such a Paper been published, there would have been no references to BBC advertising in it.<sup>125</sup>

The Governors themselves offered somewhat diverse comments on 17 February, but it was Greene who had almost the last word—and it was an extremely important word—when he told them, as he was to tell Benn, that the BBC's financial position was much better than at one time could have been foreseen. 'Borrowing would not be necessary in the current financial year, since the BBC was about £8 million better off than expected, and even by March 1967 it would not be necessary to borrow more than about £2 million.'

Given the general view, as Dame Anne Godwin put it, that 'advertising was the supremely bad thing', and given the unwillingness of the Government to raise the licence fee, there now seemed to be need for 'economies', while in the longer run, it was agreed, a review, possibly 'a Treasury O & M investigation', might offer a way

<sup>123</sup> \*Fulton to Wilson, 28 Feb. 1966 (R78/3/1).

<sup>124</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 17 Feb. 1966.

<sup>125</sup> \**Ibid.*, 2 March 1966. The BBC had made the most of the 'dangerous footholds' argument. Advertising restricted to the Light Programme or on BBC-2 would not be confined to these channels. 'How long would it be before the commercials made [the short] journey from Light to Home, Home to Third, and BBC-2 to BBC-1 . . . If advertising is accepted in any part of the BBC's output the pressure will soon be overwhelming for it to be accepted in all.' In this same article, written by Curran and first published in *Ariel*, May 1966, an old argument was also used. 'The BBC exists to provide a service of broadcasting: commercial television exists primarily to make profits for its shareholders. Its programmes are the product which fills up the space between the commercials, the bait to catch the audience, not the food to satisfy it.' This did not do justice to ITV programmes (*BBC Record*, 42 (June 1966)).

out. Greene hoped, none the less, that it would not be necessary to contemplate actual cuts in programmes. There had been one other point of general agreement on 17 February, clearly stated by Fulton. 'In the negotiations the BBC should . . . insist upon quite explicit assurances that its rivals would not be allowed to benefit from the economies to which the BBC was being subjected', economies which Wilson had compared with the economies that the Government would have to enforce on the Defence and Welfare services.<sup>126</sup>

A further point was brought into the argument between 17 February and 25 February, when Fulton and Greene met Benn at the Post Office. 'It had been explained to the Post Office', Greene reported, 'that consultation with the Unions, in order to secure their co-operation, would be very desirable before any public disclosure of plans for economy.'<sup>127</sup> This was a point which was bound to impress Benn, who at the meeting on 25 February was asked to comment further on an idea that he had raised of introducing a pop music network separately organized from the BBC and incorporating advertisements.<sup>128</sup> What would the unions say about that?<sup>129</sup>

Benn ranged far more widely than that at this meeting, however, suggesting a transfer of school broadcasting to Network Three and of the spoken word content of the Light Programme to the Home Service, in Greene's view, 'without having considered the various objections'.<sup>130</sup> None the less, he did produce the one idea which was to alter the BBC's financial prospects more than anything else—a differential licence fee for viewers of colour television. This time, it was Greene who held back. While not ruling it out, he thought that it might be considered a marginal discouragement, and might be unpopular with the manufacturers.<sup>131</sup>

Greene and Fulton left the meeting feeling somewhat apprehensive that Benn might be 'tempted for electoral reasons to make a

<sup>126</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 17 Feb. 1966.

<sup>127</sup> \**Ibid.*, 2 March 1966.

<sup>128</sup> Benn described Fulton as being interested in his music network proposals, though Greene, 'who knew quite well what was in [his mind], raised all the standard objections against it' (op. cit., p. 394).

<sup>129</sup> Needletime was raised in this context, and the attitude of Hardie Ratcliffe and the Musicians' Union. Benn himself had seen Ratcliffe on 16 Feb. See also Benn, op. cit. p. 226. Sympathetic though he was, he none the less noted after meeting a deputation led by a Labour MP, Brian O'Malley, that they were 'very restrictive' (*ibid.*, p. 257, entry for 10 May 1965).

<sup>130</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 2 March 1966.

<sup>131</sup> \**Ibid.* See also below, pp. 848–63, for the development of colour.



public statement to the effect that there would be no increase in the BBC licence fee for the time being', and, having explained their fears to the Board, they went on to win the agreement of the Governors for the preparation of a brief about the BBC's situation for MPs of both parties, directing attention to the dangers of advertising. Some of the recipients, however, were not to be MPs for long, because three days after the Post Office meeting, Wilson, whose Parliamentary majority had by then fallen to one, decided to call for a new general election on 31 March 1966. It had been no coincidence that at the Governors' meetings on 17 February and 2 March 'election broadcasting' had been a major item of discussion.

## 6. The General Election of 1966

The general election of 1966 was interesting less for any new elements that it brought into election broadcasting than for its timing and for its political consequences.<sup>1</sup> On 4 March the Gallup Poll forecast an eleven-point Labour Party lead over the Conservatives. That would have given Wilson a Parliamentary majority of around 165 seats. In fact, he was to gain a comfortable majority of 97, and the Conservative Party did not win a single seat held by Labour. The Labour Party's main slogan was 'You Know Labour Government Works'. It proved highly effective.

During the campaign the *New Statesman* in a backward glance at Gladstone had called Wilson 'The People's Harold'. Before devoting most of the article to Wilson on the platform, its author, Matthew Coady, introduced him in the Newcastle studios of the BBC where, with Stanley Hyland as his host, he was watching television over 'a coffee, a cigar and a restorative glass of brandy'. Hyland was his trusted producer on the screen, and Wilson, who had known him since the time Hyland was a librarian at the House of Commons, had whimsically bestowed on him the title of 'Gold Microphone in

<sup>1</sup> As Anthony Howard recalled, it marked a temporary return to 'lay control' of the campaign. Advertising men were not employed as they had been and were to be ('The Parties, Elections and Television', *Sight and Sound*, Oct. 1978). The Labour Party manifesto, the first draft of which Benn thought 'first rate' (Benn, *op. cit.*, p. 387, entry for 13 Feb. 1966), scarcely mentioned the word 'socialism'. The Conservative Party manifesto, *Action Not Words*, made a categorical commitment to Britain joining the Common Market.

Waiting', a title that Malcolm Muggeridge had bestowed slightly on Richard Dimbleby after he had been stopped from appearing on *Panorama*.<sup>2</sup> What they were all watching at the time in Newcastle was a specially recorded version of a programme seen by the nation an hour earlier. Wilson 'savoured every minute of it', Coady went on. 'Indeed, he appears to have been hard put to it to conceal his sneaking admiration for its solo performer—the Leader of the Labour Party.'<sup>3</sup>

Wilson felt at home on television, but even before the general election was announced, he was feeling less at home in BBC studios. The role of the BBC during the course of the election, particularly during its last stages, profoundly irritated him. None the less, what at the time was called an 'extraordinary feud between the Labour leader and the Corporation' went back well before the election campaign began.<sup>4</sup> Stuart Hood, who had been an insider when plans for the previous election were prepared, traced the feud back to a traumatic evening when Robert McKenzie had asked Wilson in the course of a taped interview about the reasons for his opposition to Gaitskell and why he (Wilson) was seeking the party leadership. From that moment onwards, Hood claimed, the thread could be traced through 'incidents at party congresses' and 'complications over confrontations'.<sup>5</sup>

In fact, Wilson's uneasiness about BBC operations stretched back further still, into the radio age. In July 1958 he had argued, 'with the agreement of Mr. Gaitskell and the Opposition Chief Whip', that a statement about investment policy made by Peter Thorneycroft, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, and reported in a news bulletin should have been followed at once by a counter-statement made by himself. 'There is a difference between a ministerial announcement which

<sup>2</sup> J. Dimbleby, *Richard Dimbleby* (1975), p. 324. For Muggeridge see above, pp. 145–7.

<sup>3</sup> *New Statesman*, 18 March 1966.

<sup>4</sup> The first letter from Wilson to the BBC in the period covered in this volume was a complaint to Jacob about what he called 'tendentious news items' ('6 May 1955). Wilson said that he had written the letter after consulting Attlee and Morrison. After considering the complaint, A. E. Barker, then Deputy Editor, News, concluded that 'the broadcast news item was a fair rendering of all that had been provided by the agencies' ('Barker to Grisewood, Director of the Spoken Word, "The Attached Letter from Harold Wilson", 10 May 1955 (Man. Reg. file N449, pt. 1)).

<sup>5</sup> S. Hood, 'The Great Vendetta', *Spectator*, 8 April 1966. McKenzie was later attacked equally strongly on the Conservative side by Iain Macleod, whom John Grist reported 'had had a feeling for a long time that fundamentally the BBC is biased against the Conservative Party. This is personal, with reference to McKenzie in particular' ('Grist, Head of Current Affairs Group, Television, to Curran, Director-General, "Lunch with Iain Macleod", 19 March 1970 (RMC file A0573 Election 70: Speakers)).

need not in every case involve the Opposition's comments', he argued, 'and a ministerial expression of opinion which may be controversial and which in this case was taken out of its context.' Tahu Hole, then Editor, News, who prepared the draft reply for Jacob, agreed with this proposition, but added that he did not consider that there had been any 'lapse' in the BBC's handling of the announcement. 'As you probably know,' Jacob wrote to Wilson, 'in news bulletins, Parliamentary matters, like all other matters, are dealt with purely on their news value.'<sup>6</sup>

In the television age Wilson's attitudes to the BBC became far more critical, long before the general election of 1964. Indeed, within the broader context of national political history, how the BBC (and ITV) handled politics during that election has to be related to the way in which they had handled politics during the two years of the small Labour Party majority which many observers considered to be little more than a long lead-up period to a new election that could not long be deferred.

There was more broadcasting about politics during these years than there had ever been before. Part of the problem, therefore—and it was a new one—was that in an exceptionally difficult Parliamentary situation for a Prime Minister, where complete control was impossible, there was at the same time a major shift in broadcasting towards more 'current affairs', with a strong emphasis on British politics. Wilson, like several other political leaders later, did not like the lines on which political broadcasting was developing. He felt, indeed, that he was at a disadvantage when compared with previous Prime Ministers. In addition, he considered ITV to be more helpful to him personally than the BBC, despite the fact that he had got on well with Greene before 1964.<sup>7</sup> He knew also that ITV appealed to a larger proportion of the working-class public and of his own political supporters than the BBC did.

Wilson's irritation with the BBC had been most marked in relation to 'Ministerial broadcasts', the topic which he had raised in 1958 but which he now approached from a completely different angle. He believed that the Labour Government was being granted fewer Ministerial broadcasts than previous Conservative Governments had been granted, and he resented the BBC's ultimate power to arbitrate on the matter of whether or not the Opposition should have the

<sup>6</sup> \*Wilson to Jacob, 25 July 1958; Jacob to Wilson, 31 July 1958 (N449, pt. 1).

<sup>7</sup> For Greene's reactions in 1964, see above, pp. 447–8.

right of reply after a Ministerial broadcast that had been deemed controversial.<sup>8</sup> One particular case triggered his anger. When George Brown, Secretary of State for Economic Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister, wished to make a 'national' broadcast on a 'National Plan' in September 1965, the BBC refused to treat the broadcast as anything other than 'Ministerial'. The fact that Iain Macleod, who was given the right of reply on behalf of the Conservative Party, went on to make a sharply angled political broadcast compounded what Wilson regarded as yet another BBC error.

Wilson's own relations with Brown were not easy, but both he and Brown conceived of the Plan not as a partisan political exercise but as a necessary economic plan for the whole nation, to be implemented effectively in the long-term national interest. Explaining it was, in Wilson's considered opinion, an educational, not a political, responsibility. The Governors, however, endorsed the decision, which had already been taken by Greene and Normanbrook together, to allow Macleod to reply. Normanbrook, in particular, argued that it was correct to treat the National Plan as the Budget had been 'traditionally' treated. He saw the whole episode as 'an example of the invidious position in which the BBC was placed as an honest broker between the Parties'.<sup>9</sup>

There were other matters on which there were few differences. For example, Wilson's scepticism about party political broadcasts that were unconnected with general election campaigns was shared by John Grist, then Chief Assistant (Current Affairs), Television Talks Group. Both believed that they had outlived their day.<sup>10</sup> In 1963 Grist, then editing *Gallery*, a programme which to Wilson seemed 'biased' against him, had pointed out that such party political broadcasts had little impact and mattered far less than *Gallery* and *Panorama*.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> For the *aide-mémoire* governing practice, see above, p. 92.

<sup>9</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 23 Sept. 1965.

<sup>10</sup> \*Grist to Whitley, 'Political Broadcasting under the New Prime Minister', 27 Oct. 1964 (Man. Reg. file B415-1-1). At Wilson's invitation, Grist and Hyland had been invited to talk to Wilson and Edward Short, his new Chief Whip, at 10 Downing Street, after his first Ministerial broadcast in Oct. 1964. Grist reported all Wilson's views, including his complaint that the Labour Party's political broadcasts at the election had cost £10,000, an expense he did not wish to see repeated. He also drew attention to Wilson's confidence in the strength of what he was saying. He had 'a lively and united party' to back him. Grist found 10 Downing Street 'a pretty uninspiring building', but added that 'it is obviously of very considerable human interest to see where the Prime Minister lives and works'.

<sup>11</sup> \*Grist to Kenneth Lamb, Chief Assistant, Current Affairs, Television Talks, 'Party Political Broadcasts', 24 April 1963 (T16/147/4). *Gallery*, first broadcast on 9 Feb. 1961,

None the less, there was no agreement between the Labour Party and the Conservative Party about whether or not such broadcasts should be abolished, and a month later Adam reported to a TV Controllers' Meeting that 'present indications were that [such broadcasts] would continue, although their number and length might be reduced'.<sup>12</sup> This, in fact, was the outcome.

*Gallery* ran for four years before ending on 29 July 1965 with an interview with Wilson, who, like some of his colleagues, was disturbed that a number of young political journalists, among them Nigel Lawson from the *Spectator*, were used as interviewers. The others included Timothy (later Sir Timothy) Raison, then of *New Society*, and Michael Shanks of the *Financial Times*. Other members of Grist's team included Paul Bonner, later to be Controller of Programmes at Channel 4; Anthony Smith, later to move to *24 Hours*; Michael Bunce, who was to become Head of the Information Division of the BBC in 1982; and Phillip Whitehead, who was to serve on the Annan Committee. Benn had his own grievances against *Gallery*. After his father's, Lord Stansgate's, death, he had insisted that he should be billed and visually identified as Anthony Wedgwood Benn, MP,<sup>13</sup> and for this he had been violently attacked by Viscount Hailsham in a *Gallery* programme. Hailsham was to disclaim his own title in 1963, under the same legislation which eventually allowed Benn to return to the House of Commons.

From July 1965 onwards, the month *Gallery* ended, Wilson had been faced with a new—and younger—leader of the Conservative Party, Edward Heath, who had replaced Douglas-Home after a vote of all Conservative MPs, itself a new procedure, very different from that followed when Douglas-Home had been chosen in secret by a cabal.<sup>14</sup> Between then and March 1966 both leaders had appeared frequently on the television screen, with Hyland as Wilson's BBC producer. And this in itself was new. Yet Wilson did not wish the BBC or the public to treat them equally as party political rivals. He

was described by Hood as 'a weekly programme about people and politics, designed to show that politics cover more than the Party battle in Parliament' ('Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report by the Director of Television Broadcasting, Jan.–April 1961'). It derived from *In the News* and *Who Goes Home?*

<sup>12</sup> \*TV Controllers' Meeting, *Minutes*, 3 Nov. 1964.

<sup>13</sup> \*Miall to Kenneth Lamb, 'Anthony Wedgwood Benn', 16 March 1961 (T32/838/1).

<sup>14</sup> In Oct. 1965 Douglas-Home, waving his spectacles, told the Conservative Party Conference: 'What a total nonsense this business about an image is. Now I can put on my spectacles without being told I am going to lose the next election on television' (Cockerell, op. cit., p. 118).

wished to appear on the screen not as a party politician but as Prime Minister, talking the language of national leadership. He liked to be called Prime Minister, and he was always careful to refer to Heath not as Mr Heath but as the Leader of the Conservative Party. He knew that the Press, largely hostile both to him and to his party, presented an image of him which seldom helped him.

Both Wilson and Heath were sometimes misleadingly described as alike,<sup>15</sup> but Wilson felt that he had more similarities with Macmillan, who, like himself, relied on his political instincts and enjoyed political manoeuvring.<sup>16</sup> Both men, too, enjoyed making the utmost use of the camera. Heath, while appreciating how necessary it now was for any political leader to appear on television, was less interested in technique, although, like Wilson, he quickly learnt that television producers, anxious to display the skills of their profession, expected some of the appearances of party leaders on television to be informal. It was a sign of the times when, in August 1965, during the Parliamentary recess, Wilson was televised while on holiday in the Scilly Islands, wearing shorts and sandals and talking optimistically about the future of the economy, and when Heath quickly followed his example, appearing on the screens in a dinghy in the south of France.

Holidays over, the party conference season of 1965 brought leaders—and parties—into a different kind of public view. 'For the politicians', wrote *The Times*, television had become 'the principal electoral shop window', and the main display with which to dress the window was the party conference.<sup>17</sup> It was how the BBC and ITV chose to do the dressing that inevitably concerned them. The BBC journalists were by now a confident group, not without what Hood rightly called 'institutional arrogance',<sup>18</sup> and they had their own idea of how to report what was going on, whatever anyone said to them. As at election times, they wished to go far beyond reporting to discuss the political agenda, to probe and to press politicians, and to investigate what and why they did not choose to say. Sparing feelings had become irrelevant. The political challenge, William Hamilton, Labour MP for West Fife, complained in the House of

<sup>15</sup> *The Annual Register 1966*, p. 8, e.g., described Heath, 'who had been educated not at Eton but at a grammar school', as 'a Wilson-type leader'.

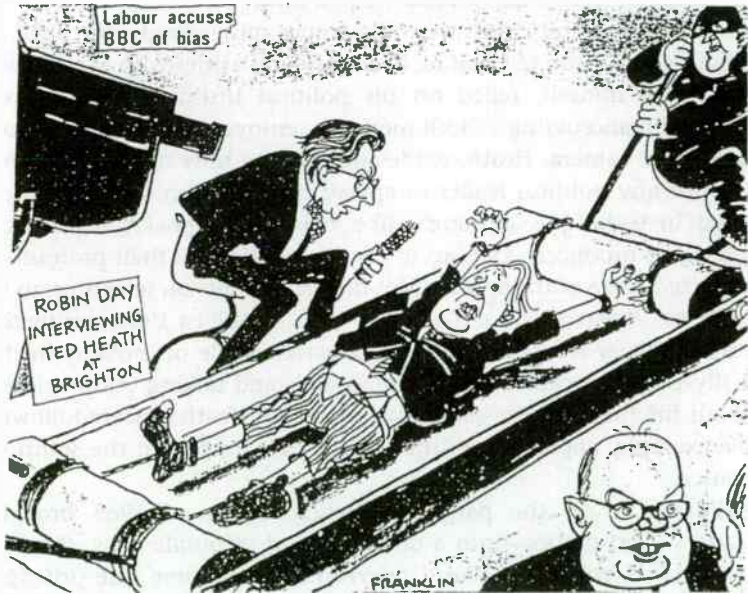
<sup>16</sup> The point, familiar to those who knew the three men, is well made by Ben Pimlott in *Harold Wilson* (1992), p. 299.

<sup>17</sup> *The Times*, 4 Oct. 1965.

<sup>18</sup> Hood, *Spectator*, 8 April 1966.



Commons, was now coming not from the Commons but 'from the TV interviewer and the journalist. They can question Ministers uninhibited by any restrictive terms of reference and in full view of millions of electors. I believe that Ministers are often more afraid of Mr. Robin Day than of any Member of the House.'<sup>19</sup>



13. 'We're trying to appease Wilson', Franklin in *Daily Mirror*, 5 Oct. 1965.

Inevitably, such an approach to political interviewing and broadcasting was more calculated to irritate a Prime Minister than a Leader of the Opposition, and there were two 'rows' during the Labour Party Conference at Blackpool in October 1965, which both political parties rightly thought of as the pre-general election conference. In the current affairs programme *24 Hours*, broadcast after what the leadership of the Labour Party had thought of as a well managed and highly successful Conference working day, none of its spokesmen had the opportunity to say so. Instead, Clive Jenkins, the leader of ASSET, a white-collar trade union, and a left-wing critic of Government policy, was chosen by the producer to give an interview on

<sup>19</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 718, col. 222, 27 Oct. 1965. The *Daily Telegraph*, 1 Oct. 1965, noted that 'the autonomy of BBC producers doomed from the start any hope Labour had of a "friendly understanding" at the top'.

what had happened during the day, a day when he himself had taken no part in the proceedings. It was a characteristic television choice, calculated to cause trouble, and, not surprisingly, Grist, the producer of the programme, was summoned to Wilson's suite and reproached for trying to 'stir things up'.<sup>20</sup>

Wilson was not alone in his wrath. Nor was the Jenkins broadcast the only matter of contention that was raised. 'Our complaints go much further than the Blackpool incidents', a Labour Party spokesman told the *Guardian*. 'The *Gallery* programme, for instance, has become nothing more than a party political broadcast for the Tories. Now that it is to become part of a nightly current affairs programme we cannot afford to let this state of affairs continue.'<sup>21</sup>

Three days later, Wilson complained again, this time in the BBC's hospitality room, after watching his deputy, George Brown, still, as always, a vulnerable target, being interviewed on television by Robin Day and being asked a question on immigration, a delicate subject at the best of times. Following Day's usual practice, the topic had not been broached before the interview began. The row that followed on this second occasion led Wilson to attack the whole way in which the reporting of the Labour Party Conference had been handled and to set up a special unit at Transport House to monitor what happened at the Conservative Party Conference which was soon to follow.

He did not need to use it, however, for on the eve of the Conference he was able to distract media attention from its proceedings by broadcasting an appeal to the Rhodesian Prime Minister, Ian Smith, whom he had met on 8 October and who on 11 November 1965 was unilaterally to declare Rhodesian independence. During the next few years, Smith was to figure almost as prominently in British as in African politics;<sup>22</sup> and Wilson, more agile than any BBC journalist, was able to ensure that his broadcast appeal to Smith not to take unilateral action was treated as the major news item on the day of the Conference by announcing that he was flying to Balmoral to see the Queen. As Gerald Kaufman claimed, not without a touch

<sup>20</sup> The episode is mentioned in a \*Memorandum prepared by Donald Edwards on the subject of Wilson's differences with the BBC, 7 April 1966 (N449, pt. 1). Wilson told the House of Commons that the episode, which was reported in the *Daily Mail*, had been exaggerated by the Press (*Hansard*, vol. 721, col. 751, 25 Nov. 1965).

<sup>21</sup> *Guardian*, 4 Oct. 1965. Wilson objected to Grist about the use of Lawson, then Editor of *The Spectator*, Trethowan, and Robert McKenzie (\*Edwards, op. cit.)

<sup>22</sup> For the impact of the Rhodesian crisis on BBC external broadcasting, see below, pp. 694–6.

of exaggeration, no one thereafter was interested in what the Conservatives were going to say that week, 'they were interested [only] in what Harold said.'<sup>23</sup> Kaufman, ex-TW3 and present at the Conference as a reporter for the *New Statesman*, was to join Wilson later that year as his Parliamentary Press Liaison Officer. He had an important political career ahead of him.

Fascinated by the new power of television—and to a lesser extent by the advent of radio journalism—and convinced in the light of audience research how much more interested the public was in it than in political broadcasts put on by the parties themselves, both the BBC and ITA proposed in 1966 to cut party election broadcasts on television from thirteen (5 : 5 : 3 between the parties) to ten (4 : 4 : 2). They failed, however, to persuade the all important Meeting on Party Political Broadcasting which settled the rules. The furthest it would go was to cut by forty minutes the total time allotted to the party broadcasts.

There was agreement in the Meeting too—for the first time—that the Scottish and Welsh Nationalist Parties should be allotted five minutes on Regional radio and television if they contested a fifth of the seats in Scotland and Wales, as they did. Yet the agreement did not satisfy either party. Nor did the times which had been allocated to them for their broadcasts. The Communist Party, which put up more than the requisite fifty candidates, had a further cause for complaint. It had announced its intention to do so in November 1965, and had been allotted one five-minute broadcast. The radio broadcast, which was given by John Gollan, was not mentioned in any daily newspaper except the *Daily Worker*.<sup>24</sup>

It was because party election broadcasts were still a main feature of the election that *The Economist*, exaggerating also, observed in March 1966 that nothing had happened to suggest that the election campaigns of the political parties on television would be 'anything other than the appalling bore' that they had been in 1964. The parties had made it clear yet again that they—and no one else—controlled British television.<sup>25</sup> Bookings of people appearing as party spokesmen were to be made only through central party headquarters, and there had to be consultation about which constituencies would be sur-

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Cockerell, op. cit., p. 123. None the less, the subsequent shifts in the Rhodesian situation added to Wilson's problems.

<sup>24</sup> M. Harrison, 'Television and Radio', in D. Butler and A. King, *The British General Election of 1966* (1966), p. 126.

<sup>25</sup> *The Economist*, 5 March 1966.

veyed and which programmes should have live audiences. There was to be no political broadcasting on Sundays.

There was also to be no direct encounter of the party leaders with each other on the screen, although Heath suggested to Wilson that a confrontation would be better than a couple of party election broadcasts; and the confrontation issue and how the BBC had dealt with it remained a grievance with Wilson after the election.<sup>26</sup> Instead of confrontation, all three leaders were to take part in the BBC's *Election Forum*, answering questions submitted in advance, as they had done at the previous election. Goldie, who had devised the programme in 1964—she called it 'grass roots television'—had now retired from the BBC, and liberated, as Hood was, to report as an outsider, concluded that the questions raised 'from below' were 'a revelation of the public's cynicism about ordinary election speeches and about politicians in general'. She also, to her surprise, felt that in the 1966 session a 'tired' Wilson came off worst. Heath, she believed, had done his homework, and by comparison was 'sparkling'. Her main praise, however, was for Jo Grimond, the Liberal Party's leader. If it had been a personality contest, Grimond would have won hands down.<sup>27</sup>

Grimond was the only one of the three leaders to comment on the system. Not surprisingly, *Election Forum* appealed to him, although he asked also for new ways of using television at election times—for example, in 'teach-in programmes'. He did not like programmes that tried to divert as well as inform. Like *The Economist* and like academics at Oxford, he believed that the time had come when 'the public should rise in wrath and break the stranglehold politicians exert over all channels at the same time'.<sup>28</sup> He was, of course, a politician himself, and Hood observed perceptively that he could be 'gaily cavalier' in his own answers because he had no political responsibility: 'power and office are great fosterers of ambiguity'.<sup>29</sup>

Hood claimed before the poll that the BBC, which had planned its programmes with great care, had performed better than ITV in what

<sup>26</sup> *Financial Times*, 1 March 1966. Both leaders said that they would be willing to appear on the screen in the previous night's *This Week* programme. For the issue later, see below, pp. 559–61.

<sup>27</sup> *Sunday Telegraph*, 13 March 1966. Hood described Wilson as 'very much in his best suit, heavy with the cares of office, and handy with the teleprompter', while there was a 'brightness' in Heath's broadcast.

<sup>28</sup> *The Sun*, 10 March 1966. The article was called 'Why Smother TV Viewers in this Blanket?' See also above, pp. 242–6. After the election Grimond wrote to Greene congratulating him and the BBC on the handling of the election (\*Grimond to Greene, 7 April 1966 (Man. Reg. file B561–5–1966)).

<sup>29</sup> *Spectator*, 18 March 1966.

was increasingly a competitive affair. This was because it had been willing to deploy more resources.<sup>30</sup> Coverage in an expanded *24 Hours* programme, now lasting forty-five minutes, had been more lavish than ITV coverage in *Election 66. Campaign Report*, broadcast daily within *24 Hours*, had 'more liberal and elastic time' than any ITV programme.<sup>31</sup> The television results programme on election night was edited by Fox and Michael Peacock, with Cliff Michelmore as anchorman and Trethowan as presenter, supported by Day, McKenzie, and David Butler, and the master plan for radio, by now clearly the subordinate medium, was co-ordinated by Stephen Bonarjee as in 1964. The presenter of the results programme was Hardiman Scott, with comments by Anthony King, then Senior Lecturer in Government at the University of Essex, and Michael Shields, Chairman of National Opinion Polls.

Hood found the election 'terribly professional' and 'rather dull',<sup>32</sup> and even before the election Levin had anticipated this. 'I find absolutely beyond me', he wrote as the campaign began, 'the task of adequately conveying the depths of the disgust, derision and nerve-shredding tedium that the next twenty-seven days are going to produce in me.'<sup>33</sup> By contrast, Crossman found the election neither better nor worse than other elections, although he concluded that, because issues were 'bittily' dealt with on television, an impression was given of frivolity. 'One of the things we really ought to do when the campaign is over is to reflect seriously on the role which television ought to play.'<sup>34</sup>

Wilson's own conception of the election was quite different, and it was well described by his private and political secretary, Marcia Williams. 'The whole thing', she recalled,

was run from No. 10 and we had little contact with our colleagues at Transport House. We made our separate arrangements and sorties into the countryside almost as totally separate organizations. There was daily liaison, but not the closely organized affair of 1964 . . . For all of us there seemed to be two campaigns going on, our own personal one from No. 10 and the one being waged by the Party itself. It was not that it was a deliberate Presidential

<sup>30</sup> For the plans, see Press Release, 'BBC Plans for the Election', 1 March 1966 (T16/S14/2). It referred to 'computer aids and other devices'.

<sup>31</sup> Harrison, 'Television and Radio', in Butler and King, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

<sup>32</sup> *Spectator*, 25 March 1966, 'De Arte Rhetorica'. So, too, did Barbara Castle. She called it 'one of the most boring election campaigns I have ever contested' (*op. cit.*, p. 112).

<sup>33</sup> Levin, quoted in *Spectator*, 18 March 1966.

<sup>34</sup> Crossman, *op. cit.*, p. 486, entry for 27 March 1966.

campaign, it was just that the very nature of running it from No. 10 made it separate.<sup>35</sup>

In his final party election broadcast Wilson, speaking straight to camera, suggested that inter-party squabbles were dangerous for the country. 'This is your country,' he ended; 'now let us join together and work for it.'<sup>36</sup> The electors responded as he hoped. Some Labour victories recalled those of 1945: some seats never held before by Labour were now won. What pleased Wilson most was the recapture of Smethwick, the seat Gordon Walker had lost.<sup>37</sup> Not surprisingly, Crossman now called Wilson 'super-Harold', and described the election as a '1959 in reverse'.<sup>38</sup>

There had been a further disturbing election episode, however, in Wilson's difficult relationship with the BBC. On the morning after the election he refused to take part in a BBC interview on the express train that was bringing him back to London from his constituency. This would have been the first live interview from a train, and everything had been carefully prepared for it, including the furnishing of an electronic studio in one of the carriages and the identification of the best spot on the line where, for technical reasons, the interview would have to take place. It proved to be near Bletchley, a well-known communications centre. Hyland could not succeed, however, in getting the Prime Minister to participate. Instead, Wilson readily gave an ITN interview to John Whale. ITN had no electronic carriage on the same train, and the recording of the Whale interview had to be taken off the coach at Crewe, and its contents telephoned to London. Half an hour later, almost by miracle, it was on the air.

ITV had won that battle.<sup>39</sup> It was the BBC, however, that had won the battle earlier during the night. It had secured the greater share of the audience during its results programmes, when Michelmores was pitted against Alastair Burnet.<sup>40</sup> The computer was now a busy

<sup>35</sup> M. Williams, op. cit., p. 95.

<sup>36</sup> *The Times*, 30 March 1966.

<sup>37</sup> See above, p. 516. H. Wilson, *The Labour Government 1964-1970: A Personal Record* (1971), p. 218.

<sup>38</sup> Crossman, op. cit., p. 482, entry for 20 March 1966.

<sup>39</sup> In *See It Happen* (1983), pp. 181-2, Sir Geoffrey Cox, Editor of ITN from 1956 to 1968, recalled the incident. 'We wanted any scoops we could get against the BBC, but we wanted them to be on a free-for-all basis. As it was, John Whale's interview would have stood up to any competition.'

<sup>40</sup> The ploy was described in detail in advance in the *Radio Times*, 26 March-1 April 1966.



contestant. When at 10.10 p.m. it predicted a Labour majority of eighty, David Butler, the familiar human contestant, intervened to call out: 'There's obviously a mistake, it must be about 20.'<sup>41</sup> Cameras were a part of the results contest also. The BBC employed sixty-nine outside broadcast cameras, ITV fifty.<sup>42</sup> There was a substantial price to pay. Televising the 1964 election had cost the BBC £77,188 (including all overheads, including salaries); televising the 1966 election cost £114,600.<sup>43</sup>

## 7. After the Election

Although the second Wilson Government was backed by a secure majority, it ran into difficulties almost at once after the general election. The Labour back-benchers—and there were now far more of them—were more 'truculent' than they had been in the previous Parliament, while some of the Ministers, including senior Ministers, were uneasy from the start about the direction of policy. They did not like, for example, the statement in the Queen's speech that Britain would enter the European Economic Community if British and Commonwealth interests were safeguarded.<sup>1</sup> It was an immediate financial issue, however, which provoked what was described rightly as a 'crisis' in July 1966. A bitter seamen's dispute, which did not end until 1 July, was followed by a run on sterling.

The immediate political consequence of Wilson's actions (and statements) during the strike was the resignation of Cousins, the Minister of Technology, and his replacement by Benn, now removed by a promotion from the making of broadcasting policy.<sup>2</sup> Edward Short, formerly Chief Whip, took Benn's place. The almost immedi-

<sup>41</sup> *Daily Mail*, 1 April 1966

<sup>42</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 31 March 1966.

<sup>43</sup> \*Francis to J. H. Arkell, Director, Administration, 'General Election Costs', 24 March 1966 (Man. Reg. file B561-5-1966).

<sup>1</sup> Castle, op. cit., p. 116, entry for 21 April 1966.

<sup>2</sup> In his *Out of the Wilderness* Benn heads the chapter on the period from Sept. 1965 to June 1966, which ends with his move from the Post Office, 'From Office to Power'. His next and last chapter, which includes only two references to the BBC, is called 'White Heat'. One of the two references, p. 446, entry for 6 July 1966, refers to an idea he had of taking two hours a week of broadcasting from the BBC and handing it over to Neddy, the National Economic Development Council. For his later interest in broadcasting see below, p. 787. Greene's interpretation of events was significantly different. 'The greatest service to the BBC was the resignation of Frank Cousins and the chain reaction of Cabinet changes that followed' (quoted in Tracey, op. cit., p. 276).

ate consequence of the run on sterling was a division within the Cabinet on whether to devalue and subsequently float the pound—a division which in a conspiratorial atmosphere was bitter enough to lead to talk of plots against the Prime Minister himself.

The anti-devaluationists won, but the price of their victory was a deflationary austerity package, put to the nation by Wilson in a broadcast of 20 July which followed a statement in Parliament made in the conspicuous absence of George Brown. In the event, Brown did not resign, but party morale was so low that there was talk of the crisis being 'Labour's Suez'.<sup>3</sup> Within a few months of the general election the political situation had completely changed.<sup>4</sup> The internal economic situation completely changed also with a six-month price and wage freeze and the passing of a Prices and Incomes Act.

Neither the political nor the economic situation was conducive to any easy solution of the BBC's deep concerns about its future finance. Nor was either of them conducive to any improvement in the BBC's relations with Wilson. This became clear very soon after the election when Normanbrook learned through Derek Mitchell, his principal Private Secretary, that Wilson wanted to have a private meeting with him 'to discuss the causes of his dissatisfaction'. Wilson had recalled, Mitchell reported, that he had been consulted about his (Normanbrook's) appointment and had concurred with it. The meeting became a meeting *à trois* after Wilson told Greene that he would like to talk over matters with him too, although in this case the initiative would have to come from the Director-General.

At the Prime Minister's request, the meeting arranged for 15 April was very private indeed. Normanbrook and Greene were admitted to No. 10 not through the main door but through the Cabinet Office. Wilson was accompanied by Bowden, and no one else was present. Nor were any notes taken. Normanbrook's own notes, written afterwards and carefully corrected in ink—he called them a 'rough

<sup>3</sup> *Sunday Times*, 31 July 1966; Pimlott, op. cit., p. 428.

<sup>4</sup> The BBC Governors considered the handling of the economic crisis on 21 July 1966. They were concerned about the difficulty of presenting economic facts, and reference was made to the need to 'humanise' them as 'farming facts' were in *The Archers*. Normanbrook reported that the *aide-mémoire* procedure had been followed when the Opposition asked for the right to reply to Wilson's broadcast on 20 July after the parties had disagreed. The request had not been granted since the Prime Minister's presentation had not been controversial. Two Governors, Fulton and Sir Ashley Clarke, strongly approved of this decision, arguing that an Opposition broadcast might have had an 'adverse effect on the fortunes of the country'. William (later Lord) Whitelaw, the Opposition Chief Whip, told Whitley that the Opposition regretted the BBC's decision (\*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 21 July 1966).

draft’—provide the only available record of a meeting that lasted for just under an hour. The atmosphere, Normanbrook stated, was ‘reasonably friendly’, but Wilson showed no readiness to withdraw any of his complaints. He stated specifically that he had had no grumbles about being interviewed either by McKenzie or by other interviewers. What he had objected to most strongly was the BBC’s persistence in trying to draw him into a television confrontation with Heath. It was what he called BBC ‘manœuvres’ that had led him to ‘break off relations with the BBC’ and to refuse to be interviewed on returning from his constituency to London on the train. There had been ‘a crisis of confidence’.

Greene denied any BBC plan to force a confrontation, although he conceded that ‘lower down the line among BBC producers there had been more enthusiasm for a “confrontation” programme’ and that producers might have pressed for it ‘due to an excess of professional zeal’. There had certainly been no Tory plot.<sup>5</sup> There was something of a change of tune at this point, and in a later informal meeting with Wilson, Normanbrook, having been well briefed, now admitted that a member of the Television Current Affairs staff had told Heath on 17 March that the BBC had a ‘confrontation’ plan. To try to rectify matters, Normanbrook also took the opportunity to inform Wilson that instructions had now been given within the BBC to ensure that in future all broadcasts by him were handled at the highest level—the Chairman, the Director-General, or Whitley.<sup>6</sup>

Almost immediately, a specific complaint came from Wilson via Trevor Lloyd-Hughes, his Press Secretary. A BBC reporter on the South and West programme *Spotlight* had stated that the Prime Minister was about to buy a bungalow in the Falmouth area. Lloyd-Hughes said he required an apology. He obtained one.<sup>7</sup> Wilson also sent on a long letter in March 1967 from one of his constituents, complaining that the BBC did not devote enough attention to the sport of angling.<sup>8</sup> All this was trivial, but at a deeper level relations

<sup>5</sup> \*Note by Normanbrook, 31 May 1966. An early rough draft was dated 21 May (Man. Reg. N449, pt. 1).

<sup>6</sup> \*Note by Normanbrook, 16 May 1966 (N449, pt. 1).

<sup>7</sup> \*T. Lloyd-Hughes to Greene (‘Dear Hugh’), 31 May 1966. A correction was broadcast in *Spotlight*. (\*Tony Dobson, Producer of the Programme to Donald Edwards, Editor, News and Current Affairs, ‘Prime Minister’s Home’, 1 June 1966; Edwards to Lloyd-Hughes (‘Dear Trevor’), 1 June 1966; Whitley to Wilson, 20 Sept. 1966; Wilson to Whitley, 21 Sept. 1966 (all correspondence in N449, pt. 1).)

<sup>8</sup> \*Marcia Williams to Greene, 17 Feb. 1967; Greene to Mrs Williams, 27 Feb. 1967 (N449, pt. 1).

were still strained. Little of importance was filed in 1967, although when on 20 September Wilson was asked whether he could take part in the motoring programme *Wheelbase* after visiting a Ford Engineering Centre in Essex he said no.<sup>9</sup>

Files tell only a small part of what was in fact a complex story, which, after the general election of 1966, still involved pirates, education, the licence fee, and a new White Paper on broadcasting. It was a story too that ultimately was to involve the future of Greene as Director-General. Throughout all its last chapters it continued to involve politicians, as it had done from the beginning, politicians of all parties. Greene himself, who was always interested in politics, complained as it was ending that there were always situations in which the BBC was bound to enrage either the government or the Opposition. On this occasion, in November 1967, it was the Opposition's turn. 'Ted Heath finally came through [on the telephone] and was kind enough to call me a liar among other things and talk about "breaking the tyranny of the BBC". As if that was the most important thing in the world.'<sup>10</sup>

There had been an illuminating incident in January 1967 when Greene had alienated the leaders of all three parties at the behind-closed-doors 'high-powered' Meeting on Party Political Broadcasting. The only item on the agenda was the timing of party political broadcasts between general elections, and Greene wished to have the time changed from 10.10 p.m., after the BBC Radio News Bulletin, to 10.30 p.m., after the *Ten o'Clock* programme was over. Reporting the incident in his diaries, Crossman, then Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons, noted how, in proposing the change, Greene had remarked that it would reduce the unpopularity that politicians incurred by 'being spatchcocked into the news programme', and that Heath had replied that the change was unacceptable, that Jeremy Thorpe, there for the first time as Liberal leader, had demurred also, and that he (Crossman) had decided not to reply but to retaliate. 'I think Hugh is a wonderful Director-General,' Crossman added, 'but he's certainly no negotiator. On Monday he united the opposition against him.'<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> \*Whitley to Lloyd-Hughes, 20 Sept. 1967; Lloyd Hughes to Whitley, 25 Sept. 1967 (N449, pt. 1).

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Tracey, *op. cit.*, p. 293.

<sup>11</sup> Crossman, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 206-7. Crossman retaliated by saying: 'You are revealing exactly why we have party politicals. It's because the BBC thinks it knows much better than we do how we should run our own propaganda.'

By then the question of how to deal with the pirates had been settled. Benn spent his last day in the Post Office on 1 July 1966, having raised again with Normanbrook in his last month there the idea of using the BBC's 247-metre medium wavelength to broadcast a programme of light music through 'a small public corporation' financed by advertising. He also raised again the idea of a National Broadcasting Commission to discuss all broadcasting issues.<sup>12</sup>

Short, his successor, proceeded on different lines, telling Normanbrook, whom he saw on 13 July, that the idea of a National Broadcasting Commission was dead, and that legislation to deal with the pirates was now ready.<sup>13</sup> The Marine Etc. Broadcasting (Offences) Bill now duly made its way to the House, and received its first reading on 26 July.<sup>14</sup> It had seemed urgent to reach this first stage, for on the eve of the Bill the pirates seemed more entrenched than ever, with *The Times* reporting on 24 June 1966 that 'big names' were now using the medium—among them Unilever, Beecham, Imperial Tobacco, and the Egg Marketing Board.<sup>15</sup> Short knew, however—and he was backed by many of the most influential critics of the pirates in the Labour Party—that legislation against the pirates would have to be accompanied by action to provide for the continuance in future in some 'legal way' of what the pirates had provided and were still providing—or at least some of it. As Hugh (later Lord) Jenkins, Chairman of the back-bench Labour Communications Committee, remarked in September 1966, 'we have come to realise that you can't take away the sugar without providing a little saccharine'.<sup>16</sup>

At that stage the composition of the sweetener had not been finally decided. The Post Office favoured a BBC 'sweetener'—what

<sup>12</sup> \*Benn to Normanbrook, 14 June 1966 (R78/3/1). The BBC produced its own plan claiming that a pop music programme was 'a service that could be more cheaply provided by the BBC than by any new body', along with a paper 'National Broadcasting Commission: Counter Arguments', 16 June 1966, and its case on both issues was outlined by Normanbrook at a meeting at the Post Office on 30 June (\*R78/3/1).

<sup>13</sup> \*Note by Normanbrook, 13 July 1966 (R78/3/1). Both Short and Normanbrook found the meeting helpful.

<sup>14</sup> In the House of Commons on 22 June 1966 Benn gave a written answer, an old answer, on the subject of pirates (*Hansard*, vol. 730, col. 88). It was the intention of the Government 'to introduce legislation against pirate radio stations as soon as practicable'. His last statement on the subject was on 1 July. He said that there were then ten pirate radio stations: two Radio Carolines, Radio London, Radio England, Britain Radio, Radio 270, Radio 90, Radio City, Radio Essex, and Radio Scotland.

<sup>15</sup> *The Times*, 24 June 1966, 'Are Pop Pirates on to a Bonanza?'

<sup>16</sup> *Sunday Times*, 26 Sept. 1966, 'Will Pop be Nationalized?' See also a note by Gillard and Curran for the Board of Governors, \*Papers, 'Suppression of the Pirates: Provision of an Alternative Service', 8 June 1966.

was described in neutral terms as a new 'alternative service' provided by the BBC—along lines that the BBC may have suggested to Benn before the election.<sup>17</sup> But Short hesitated, wishing to pursue further the idea of a separate public corporation before accepting the BBC proposal. This almost immediately ran into political opposition, both in the Cabinet and in the Party. Indeed, it faced far more difficulties in the Cabinet Committee on Broadcasting than it had done in the BBC's Board of Governors, where Fulton had eloquently defended a largely 'pop' service on the grounds that 'there was a public demand for programmes which responded to the new mood among young people [who were demanding] a service of music which broke through the class distinctions'.<sup>18</sup>

As late as October 1966, a 'clear majority' in the Cabinet Committee, following Benn, favoured the introduction of a new BBC pop music programme only in the short run pending the creation of a new radio corporation that would be financed in part by advertising. And that was not the whole of the proposed new deal. Piracy and education once more converged. The new corporation would also sustain the operation of the University of the Air.

Unfortunately, the diaries of Richard Crossman, who would dearly have liked to have been made Chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Broadcasting, are at present the only source for what happened at a difficult Cabinet meeting on 12 October when Short did not get his way, one of the few occasions, Crossman noted, when 'the Cabinet . . . refused to stomach a Minister's policy'. Moreover, according to Crossman, there was another 'clear majority' against Short's proposals eight days later.<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, Short—and the BBC—did get their way soon afterwards, as Greene had told Crossman they would. A campaign was mobilized, the kind of campaign behind the scenes which Greene had so successfully organized during the Pilkington Committee's

<sup>17</sup> Normanbrook reported in July that he had seen Benn, and had explained to him that the BBC plan was to 'serve as a partial substitute for the programmes offered by the pirate broadcasters' (\*Board of Governors, Minutes, 7 July 1966). The plan, which envisaged a divided network, one carrying 'pop', had its origins in a paper by Gillard presented to the Governors on 14 April 1965. See also \*Board of Management, Papers, 'Radio 247: Note by Director of Sound Broadcasting', 28 April 1966.

<sup>18</sup> Crossman, *op. cit.*, vol. 2 (1976), p. 71; \*Board of Governors, Minutes, 6 June 1966.

<sup>19</sup> Crossman, *op. cit.*, pp. 71–2. In the published version he calls the 'University of the Air' the 'Open University', a phrase which was not generally used at the time. Wilson took over the chairmanship of the Cabinet Committee on Broadcasting himself in place of Bowden. Short's autobiographical note *Whip to Wilson* (1989) ends (pp. 284–5) with his appointment as Postmaster-General.



deliberations, and Gillard was particularly active in advancing it. While MPs and members of the House of Lords were lobbied, Short himself was bombarded with protests against a new corporation financed by advertising, whatever its remit. He is said to have remarked after one meeting with protesters from universities that he had now heard from everyone except the two Archbishops, only to find on his return to his office that there was a letter from the two Archbishops awaiting him on his desk.

The Cabinet Committee on Broadcasting finally rejected Benn's idea on 8 December, and on 20 December 1966 the long awaited White Paper on broadcasting policy at last appeared.<sup>20</sup> It began with a statement of fact that no one could have disputed—"The Government have had under review various major aspects of broadcasting policy"—and went on to conclude (it provided no background), first, that there should be no change 'for the present in the arrangement whereby the BBC are financed through the licence fee system', and, second, that no further increase in the licence fee would be required before 1968. The BBC had reported, it stated, that 'by making special economies' they could—'on certain assumptions'—be able to do so until 1968 when they would need an increase of £1. On the positive side the White Paper authorized the BBC to start a 'new popular music programme' on 247 metres 'at an early date'.<sup>21</sup> This was a very different package from Benn's. In Crossman's opinion, 'the Government had been utterly defeated by the BBC'.<sup>22</sup>

One at first sight difficult issue—that of frequencies and coverage—had been settled during the summer in the protracted talks between

<sup>20</sup> Crossman, *op. cit.*, p. 184; Cmnd. 3169 (1966) *Broadcasting*. At the Governors' Meeting on 1 Dec. Normanbrook had told them that 'according to the latest information' the White Paper would be published before Christmas, and that its proposals for 'a service of entertainment music and for an experiment in local broadcasting would be acceptable to the BBC' (*\*Minutes*, 1 Dec. 1966). For the local broadcasting proposals, see below, pp. 639–40. A Press Conference was held at the Post Office on 20 Dec. 1966. See \*Norman Longmate, Secretariat, to Greene and Gillard, 'White Paper on Broadcasting: Postmaster-General's Press Conference', 20 Dec. 1966 (R78/3/1). 'One of the few laughs of the conference', Longmate reported, 'was produced when, in response to a question about setting up a "Mary Whitehouse-type Council", the PMG said most emphatically "We are not going to create that."'

<sup>21</sup> Cmnd. 3169 (1966), para. 31. It also dealt with local radio. See below, p. 639. It rejected the idea of a council distinct from both the BBC and ITA 'to consider general issues of broadcasting policy' (para. 49).

<sup>22</sup> Crossman, *op. cit.*, p. 145, entry for 2 Dec. 1966, reporting a lunch with Sir William Haley, who was delighted at the outcome. As often, the diary is a difficult source of factual evidence, for this lunch preceded the Cabinet decision on 8 Dec., when, according to Crossman, 'Ted Short simply reported that the scheme for a public corporation partly dependent on advertising was impracticable and all the modernizers—including Tony Benn, Tony Crosland and myself—gave up' (*ibid.*, p. 154).

the BBC and the Post Office. The medium wavelength of 247 metres used by the Light Programme was allotted to the new service, as Benn himself had suggested, while it was agreed that the old Light Programme would broadcast in future on the 1,500 long-wave frequency, which covered most of the country.<sup>23</sup> VHF transmission would ensure 99 per cent coverage for listeners with VHF sets.<sup>24</sup> The two programmes, 'pop' and Light, would co-operate closely. While pop music would be broadcast on the 247-metre wavelength for about a third of each day, there could be a common programme for the new station and the Light Programme for the rest of the day.<sup>25</sup> The reason for this was not cultural, but economic.

As far as the Government was concerned, everything that mattered had been disposed of, therefore, by 15 February 1967, when Short moved the second reading of the Marine Etc. Broadcasting (Offences) Bill.<sup>26</sup> The purpose of the Bill, he stated simply, was to put an end to broadcasting from the pirate stations which were already outside the law. By then, too, however, the Conservative Opposition had also settled its own policies. It had voted in favour of commercial radio stations at its annual conference in the autumn of 1966, which demanded that 'legitimate' commercial local radio stations should be allowed to operate on British soil after the next general election, provided, that was, that the Conservatives won it.<sup>27</sup>

Political clash of such a frontal kind might have been less frontal had the Bill been introduced much earlier. Now, however, debate was bound to be bitter. There was even an argument as to whether the Conservative amendment to the Labour Government's Bill was

<sup>23</sup> The new service was described in the autumn of 1966 as a 'National Music Network'. See a confidential Governors' paper 'National Music Network: Summary of Arguments', which was prepared on 21 June 1966. It followed an earlier paper submitted to the Post Office, 'Light Music in BBC Radio Programmes', 17 June 1965, which Benn had found 'most useful' ('Benn to Normanbrook, 21 June 1965 (R78/623/1)'). The 247-metre wavelength was subject to serious interference from an Albanian high-powered transmitter ('Attachments to a letter from Greene to Lillicrap, 16 Nov. 1966 (R78/623/1)'), although the interference varied in different parts of the country.

<sup>24</sup> Night-time coverage of the new 'pop' programme was subject to 'continual interference from Albania' ('Board of Management, *Papers*, 'Coverage of Radio 1 and Radio 2', 30 Nov. 1967).

<sup>25</sup> 'Suppression of the Pirates: Provision of Alternative Service', 29 June 1966 (R78/623/1).

<sup>26</sup> The Post Office had been involved in a sequence of discussions with the Musicians' Union, and the Postmaster-General also saw representatives of the ABS ('Arkell to Greene, 'Radio 247/Pilot Local Broadcasting Scheme: Needletime', 3 Nov. 1966 (R78/623/1)). Gillard had written to Ratcliffe stating the BBC's proposals on 21 Oct. 1966 (R78/623/1).

<sup>27</sup> *The Times*, 15 Oct. 1966.

'reasoned' or not. Proposed by Paul Bryan, it would have had the effect of delaying any legislation until the Government put into effect 'a comprehensive broadcasting policy' which took account of 'the proved desire of millions of people'.<sup>28</sup> Not surprisingly, Short did not regard the amendment as 'reasoned'. Indeed, drawing a comparison with a recent debate on Rhodesia, he claimed that if it were carried, the country would be opposing 'world opinion'.<sup>29</sup>

The Bill was, in fact, carried by 300 votes to 213, after a long and discursive debate. It made it an offence to provide a ship or radio equipment for use in pirate broadcasting or to supply programmes, advertising, goods, or services: any one doing so would be liable to a two-year gaol sentence. Nevertheless, there were still loopholes. The resolutions did not—and could not—apply to foreign registered ships operating outside British territorial waters. Nor was there any way of stopping supplies from countries which had not signed the Council of Europe Agreement.<sup>30</sup>

For the mover of the amendment it was not only the pirates whom Short treated as 'untouchable'. 'Anything commercial' was 'absolute anathema to him'.<sup>31</sup> And Bryan went on to put the case for 'legitimized' local commercial stations, as did other Conservative MPs. They would be able to learn, they suggested, from the pirates' experience. There was one Conservative MP, however, who found a different reason for objecting to the Government's policy. According to John Cordle, MP for Bournemouth, Short had shown that he was absolutely 'not with it': he was out of touch with the young.<sup>32</sup>

The war of words was to continue, but there had been an extra touch of violent drama on 21 June 1966, when a group of eleven

<sup>28</sup> An alternative amendment, proposed by T. L. Iremonger, who described the Bill as a 'killjoy', was not chosen by the Speaker. There had earlier been talks between some Conservative MPs and pirates, and one back-bencher, Sir Donald Kaberry, had broadcast over a pirate wavelength thanking constituents for their letters. Bryan had boarded Radio 270's vessel off Scarborough, and Allbeury of Radio 390 had twice addressed the Conservative Party's Broadcasting Committee (*Sunday Times*, 25 Sept. 1966). A booklet *Open Air* had been prepared on behalf of the pirates and sent to every MP, claiming that 'monopoly in broadcasting is inevitably a negation of freedom' (*Spectator*, 5 July 1966).

<sup>29</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 741, col. 630, 15 Feb. 1967.

<sup>30</sup> \*E. G. Robbins, Legal Adviser, to Arkell, 'Marine etc. Broadcasting (Offences) Bill', 9 Aug. 1966 (R78/30/1).

<sup>31</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 741, col. 646, 15 Feb. 1967.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 672. A Labour MP retaliated that he found it 'depressing today that people who should and often do not know better are fleeing before the wind of pop' (*ibid.*, col. 704). In Jan. 1967 Cordle had asked the Postmaster-General whether he would give 'a general direction to the television and broadcasting authorities that they should refrain from broadcasting programmes up to 10 p.m. on national holidays which are unsuitable for public viewing' (*ibid.*, vol. 739, written answers, col. 118, 19 Jan. 1967).

rough-looking men, accompanied by a woman, used grappling hooks to swarm aboard and later commandeered and silenced the Radio City pirate ship on the old Admiralty fort at Shivering Sands. The next day, the manager of Radio City, Reginald Calvert, forced his way into the village home of Major Oliver Smedley, one of the founders of Radio Atlanta and a former Vice-Chairman of the Liberal Party, threatening to kill him. Smedley, who had organized the raid on 21 June, believed that Calvert was in the process of selling Radio City to Radio London. In the struggle that followed Calvert himself was killed. Smedley was arrested, and charged first with murder and then with manslaughter, but was found not guilty by an all-male jury that did not even retire from the box.<sup>33</sup>

What was happening behind the scenes between July 1966 and February 1967 was followed by a public denouement which had its own very different drama. Many of the pirates joined the BBC. In Jeremy Tunstall's phrase, although they lost the battle, 'what they represented . . . won the war.'<sup>34</sup> The new alternative BBC service, which came to be called Radio 1, went on the air on 30 September 1967.<sup>35</sup>

## 8. Planning the Open University

Twelve days earlier, the Government had announced the members of a Planning Committee for the Open University, as it had now come to be called officially,<sup>1</sup> even though how to finance the project, despite Goodman's efforts, had still not been finally settled. The radio allotment, in particular, had not been resolved.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>33</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 19 Oct. 1966. 'No more piracy', Smedley stated after the verdict. 'Now I'm going to take a back seat—until commercial radio becomes official' (*People*, 23 Oct. 1966). He had been Chairman of Project Atlanta, which had a stake in Radio Caroline, both North and South (*Guardian*, 19 Oct. 1966).

<sup>34</sup> J. Tunstall, *The Media in Britain* (1983), p. 45.

<sup>35</sup> See below, p. 574.

<sup>1</sup> The phrase was used in a Department of Education note by Crosland, Secretary of State, on 30 Sept. 1966.

<sup>2</sup> \*Greene to Lee, 12 July 1967 (R78/648): 'We can find no way of [providing time on our own existing networks] that does not involve severe curtailment of existing and long established Radio services of one kind or another.' Greene met Lee in July ('Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 21 July 1966). Postgate, in a Note to Whitley, had stressed that it would be essential to *launch* the University Service as a two-media service ('The Open University—The Radio Element', 30 Jan. 1967 (R78/648)). At one point in the negotiations between the BBC, the Post Office, and the Musicians' Union before Radio 1 went

There had been one awkward meeting in the autumn after the general election which was attended by Postgate and Heads of education output departments, Toomey of the Department of Education and Science, and Brown of the Post Office, which had left other matters unresolved also. Indeed, Toomey said then that he could give no guarantee that the BBC would be the sole operator for the first five years. He asked instead whether the BBC would have any objection to the ITA being invited to contribute programmes, making it clear that they would be transmitted from ITA transmitters which, if networked, would have a wider coverage than BBC-2.<sup>3</sup>

The resolution of the difficulties in the months that followed implied what Toomey had been unable to 'guarantee' in September 1966—'that the relationship between the BBC and the Authority [so described] would be that of an educational partnership';<sup>4</sup> and this was the term used by Postgate when he set out to answer 'current questions' about the Open University in *Ariel* in November 1968.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, as an assessor, he was in close touch with the new Planning Committee, which was to complete its work in January 1969.

When Jennie Lee had announced its setting up at a Press Conference in September 1967, she had reiterated that the new University would be more than what had been called a 'televarsity': it would provide courses leading to degrees and other qualifications by 'a combination of television, radio, correspondence, tutorials, short residential courses and local audio-visual centres'. Significantly, too, it was to be grant-aided directly by the Department of Education and Science, outside the University Grants Committee system.<sup>6</sup> There was a final blast on the subject from Hood, whose article on the Open

on the air, Goodman had been brought in again (\*Arkell to Greene, 'Musicians' Union', 16 Nov. 1966 (R92 Expansion of Sound Broadcasting File 3)). He was less successful in this enterprise, however, than he was in his mediating activities on behalf of the University of the Air.

<sup>3</sup> Postgate to Whitley *et al.*, 'University of the Air: Meeting with Officials of the Department of Education and Science and of the Post Office', 26 Sept. 1966 (R78/648).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ariel*, Nov. 1968, 'Towards the Open University'.

<sup>6</sup> DES Press Statement, 'Government to Set Up an Open University', 18 Sept. 1967. Greene at the BBC's News and Current Affairs Meeting, 15 Sept. 1967, said that all questions relating to the statement should be addressed to Postgate and not to Attenborough, Controller, BBC-2. He suggested that it might be useful to have an item on the subject in *24 Hours*. He and Whitley, even at this late stage, agreed that 'the BBC must be careful to avoid any comment which could possibly be described as sceptical' (\*Minutes).

University in *The Times* was described by Lee as 'scandalous' and 'full of illiterate inaccuracies'.<sup>7</sup>

The Chairman of the Planning Committee, Sir Peter Venables, well known to the BBC,<sup>8</sup> came from outside the traditional university system.<sup>9</sup> The members included Goodman, Fulton, Scupham, Brynmor Jones, and Wiltshire. New voices from a variety of educational circles were Sir William Alexander, the influential General Secretary of the Association of Education Committees; Dr Eric Briault, Deputy Education Officer of the Inner London Education Authority; and Dr A. J. Richmond, Principal of Lanchester College of Technology in Coventry. Sir Eric Ashby, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, was one of the outstanding academic administrators of his generation; Dr Hilde Himmelweit had made her name in television research;<sup>10</sup> Brian Groombridge was Education Officer at the ITA; and MacKenzie from the University of Sussex was once more involved. Roderick McLean was Director of the University of Glasgow Television Service.<sup>11</sup>

The strength of this Committee, both in experience, and equally important given the circumstances of the time, in representative stature, guaranteed that the project would at last move forward, although the date for the first intake of students was inevitably pushed further ahead from the year originally envisaged, 1969, to 1971.<sup>12</sup> On two matters, however, there was a division of opinion between the Committee and the BBC. The introduction of colour on BBC-2 had led to a reappraisal of programme placing in BBC Television, resulting in the decision to start Further Education programmes at 7 p.m., not 7.30 p.m.<sup>13</sup> The new timing meant that Open University programmes would have to start earlier—before many

<sup>7</sup> *The Times*, 22 Sept. 1967; \*Grattan to Postgate *et al.*, 'Miss Lee's Address to the Society for Television and Film', 31 Oct. 1967 (R78/648/1).

<sup>8</sup> See above, p. 501.

<sup>9</sup> At the meeting on 26 Sept. 1966 it was still not clear whether Venables would make any announcement on the Open University's plans to the BBC's Further Education Advisory Council, which he chaired.

<sup>10</sup> See above, p. 25.

<sup>11</sup> I was a member myself, and became chairman of the academic subcommittee. Others members were I. Hughes, Warden of Coleg Harlech; Dr F. J. Llewellyn, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Exeter; Professor (later Lord) Ritchie Calder; and Professor Roy Shaw.

<sup>12</sup> \*Whitley to Adam, 'The Open University', 1 Aug. 1967 (R78/648/1), first mentioned a postponement. Postgate in his note to Greene, 26 Sept. 1966, still envisaged a 1969 start. The BBC would be authorized to incur expenditure, he stated, in early 1968.

<sup>13</sup> \*Greene to Lee, 28 June 1967 (R78/648/1).



students would be back home from work. As for radio, to which the Planning Committee attached great importance, Gillard saw no alternative to VHF.<sup>14</sup> In the talks with Goodman a figure of sixty hours of transmission time a week had been agreed upon, although Goodman himself at a subcommittee of the Planning Committee described the figure as 'a tender neither accepted nor rejected'. Postgate was uneasy about the implications of this demand, including what he considered 'too steep a rate' of arriving at the figure during the first three years.<sup>15</sup>

The Committee, which did not change its views, completed its report in January 1969, and after the necessary first tranche of finance had been cleared with the Treasury, Short, who had moved from the Post Office in April 1968 to become Secretary of State for Education, a move which in itself justifies the title of this chapter, stated in the House of Commons on 27 January 1969 that the Government fully accepted 'the outline plan for development' set out in the report. It would 'now be for the University authority, as an autonomous and completely independent institution, to carry the project forward', knowing that it could 'count on the support of the Government'.<sup>16</sup> Carrying the project forward inevitably meant more talk with the BBC.

Greene was not directly involved in the events leading up to the start of the Open University, but in December 1967 he gave a lecture on 'Education Today and Tomorrow', which in a sense rounded off the educational activities of his Director-Generalship, which was to terminate in March 1969.<sup>17</sup> 'The present educational decade will end', Greene declared, 'and another will begin with the most novel

<sup>14</sup> \*Memorandum by the Open University Planning Committee', 11 Dec. 1967 (R92 Box 15: Radio Reorganisation: Working Group on the Future of Radio: Papers and Schedules). The Committee wanted one repeat each week in both media.

<sup>15</sup> \*Postgate, 'The Open University and Educational Broadcasting', 14 Dec. 1967 (R92 Box 15: Radio Reorganisation: Working Group on the Future of Radio: Papers and Schedules).

<sup>16</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 776, cols. 941–2, 27 Jan. 1969.

<sup>17</sup> He did not mention education in his article in the *BBC Handbook, 1969*, 'The BBC since 1958', pp. 11–13, in which he reviewed his Director-Generalship. Nor, indeed, did he mention the pirates. He devoted one precious paragraph out of twelve to TW3, which in retrospect he described as 'frank, close to life, analytical, impatient of taboos and cant and often very funny. At the same time it was resolutely on the side of the angels. In refusing to talk in reverential whispers or to make ritual bows at every mention of certain sacrosanct subjects it did not lose sight of the things that mattered. It never threw the baby out with the bathwater. It dropped the occasional brick, of course, but that was an occupational hazard.' This considered verdict was authentic Greene.

development in Further Education [that was still how he saw it] for many years—the Open University.<sup>18</sup> ‘This’, he now stressed, ‘is not the University of Broadcasting House or the Television Centre.’ The final responsibility was to lie with the University itself, and the bill would be paid by it—‘ultimately by the Government’. This was ‘the first occasion on which programmes carried on the BBC’s domestic services’ had been financed from outside.

The Open University was not Greene’s only theme. In his Lecture he dealt also, if briefly, with school broadcasting, including the broadcasting of ‘a special television series for less able children’; further education on radio, BBC-1, and BBC-2; the growth of study groups; and training programmes. He also returned to the BBC’s programmes that were ‘educational in the broadest sense of the term’, including programmes like *Panorama* and *24 Hours* that he had mentioned at the beginning of the decade. His last words were on local radio, which had figured in his thinking and planning throughout his Director-Generalship. He saw it not in the same terms as the commercial sponsors of the pirates had done, but rather as ‘yet another means by which the BBC can help to meet the intellectual hunger which is characteristic of this educational decade’.

## 9. Radios 1, 2, 3, and 4

To deal with the ex-pirates, the BBC, through Gillard, had chosen as the head of its new Radio 1 Robin Scott, who planned its content and style between the Easter and the autumn of 1966, in anticipation of the Government White Paper of December 1966 which also covered local radio.<sup>1</sup> Scott was chosen because, in Gillard’s words, ‘there was really nobody in the existing ranks of conventional BBC

<sup>18</sup> \*The Frank Milligan Memorial Lecture, delivered to the National Federation of Community Associations, 6 Dec. 1967 (R78/1571/1).

<sup>1</sup> Cmnd. 3169 (1966). \*G. Campey, ‘National Music Service: Local Radio’, 15 Dec. 1966 (R92 Box 5: Expansion of Sound Broadcasting—Creation of Radios 1 and 2), set out a list of possible questions that could be asked by the Press. They included: ‘Couldn’t you have introduced this form of National Music Programme without having to be directed by a White Paper?’ and ‘How much more will it cost the BBC to introduce this service and can we anticipate an increase in the licence fee to finance it?’ See also Board of Management, *Minutes*, 19 Dec. 1966. Greene stated at this meeting that no one but George Campey should speak to the Press. He wanted to avoid the argument that ‘if senior BBC officials could discuss broadcasting matters with the press they could also appear on the BBC’s own programmes to do so’.

people who . . . had the kind of expertise or approach or experience or vision'.<sup>2</sup> None the less, Scott, then aged 46, was to have a striking BBC career ahead of him, which was to take him into the ranks of conventional BBC people employed in well-established centres of BBC programme making both in Broadcasting House and in Television.<sup>3</sup>

Scott also had a BBC career behind him. The son of a clergyman, he had studied Modern Languages at Cambridge before joining the BBC external services in 1942, and in 1955 he had made his first move to television. In 1958 he had become the BBC's Representative in Paris, and had left after four years to form a television company of his own, Trans Europe Television. He had rejoined BBC Television Outside Broadcasts at the end of 1963, and in 1964 directed the *Top Beat* concerts from the Royal Albert Hall. The Rolling Stones were among the performers. Scott had always been interested in popular music, and he had written song lyrics himself.<sup>4</sup> By 1966 he knew enough also about charts and the rapidly changing record business to apply for the vacant post of Assistant Head of Gramophone Programmes. Instead, he was made Controller of the Light Programme in April 1967, in succession to Denis Morris, who had held it since 1960.<sup>5</sup>

Scott's daunting task was to plan two networks, Radio 1 and Radio 2, one of them entirely new, with only £200,000 of extra budget at his disposal and with only around two hours a day of extra needle-time above the thirty-seven hours a week available on the Light Programme.<sup>6</sup> The needletime had been more difficult to get than the money, although he secured no extra funding to carry out complete dry runs, which he rightly considered essential, given his desire to establish a totally new pattern of presentation.<sup>7</sup> His plan, the first draft of which was sent to Marriott, still Assistant Director of Sound

<sup>2</sup> \*Gillard interviewed by Helen Fry, for the Oral History Project, March 1978.

<sup>3</sup> His final BBC post from 1977 to 1980 was to be that of Deputy Managing Director, Television. When he retired, he was described as having had 'four BBC careers' (*Ariel*, 5 Nov. 1980).

<sup>4</sup> Ruby Murray took his *Softly, Softly* (he wrote the music, Paddy Roberts the words) to the top of the hit parade in 1955.

<sup>5</sup> See above, p. 36.

<sup>6</sup> R. Scott, introduction to *Happy Birthday Radio 1—Ten Years 1967–77* (1977), compiled by David Rider. See also K. Skues, *Radio Onederland* (1968).

<sup>7</sup> \*Scott to M. F. C. Standing, Controller, Programme Organisation, Sound, 'Radio 1 & 2: Pilot Budgets', 9 June 1967; Standing to Scott, 'Radio 1 & 2: Pilot Budgets', 15 June 1967 (R92 Box 5: Expansion of Sound Broadcasting—Creation of Radios 1 and 2). Scott's Presentation Editor was Mitch Raper.

Broadcasting, on 27 February 1967, involved a massive use of radio jingles, an idea imported from the United States. It also involved 'plugging' of other BBC programmes. Scott even went so far as to say that Radio 1 would 'feel a draught by not having commercials. They make a station sound free from official control.'<sup>8</sup>

The needletime deal, which Arkell worked out with the Musicians' Union on the evening of 21 November 1966, is recorded on a note in ink ending with the word 'Midnight!'. The note also includes the sentence 'I had a private word with Ratcliffe about his writing to the PM before the PMG sees him at the end of this week.'<sup>9</sup> Greene himself wrote to Lillicrap at the Post Office four days later telling him that there was no difficulty about the 'concessions' negotiated with the Musicians' Union, and that Ratcliffe had spoken to Short about arrangements the day before.<sup>10</sup> Clearly politicians were still involved in pop music at the top level, as they were to be in educational broadcasting.

On the eve of the sinking of the pirates on 15 August, one month after the Marine Etc. Broadcasting (Offences) Bill had received the royal assent on 14 July 1967, Short, before moving to the Department of Education and Science, was forced to make another political statement on his own initiative. 'I don't think I shall become unpopular', he had said; but when it was put to him that the people who had listened to the pirates had been mainly the ones who put the Government in power, he emphasized that there was 'nothing political' in suppressing the pirates. 'If the Tories had been in office exactly the same Bill would have been enacted.'<sup>11</sup> This was not quite the last word in the politics of piracy.

<sup>8</sup> *Sunday Times*, 10 Sept. 1967; *Sun*, 21 Aug. 1967. 'Jingles' were produced by a Senior Microphone Publicity Assistant, Jim Fisher, an Australian who was an ex-ITN newsreader.

<sup>9</sup> Needletime problems on the eve of the decision to start a new programme were discussed in an important paper 'A National Music Network: A Note by the BBC', 29 June 1966. See also \*Arkell to Greene, 21-2 Nov. 1966. Arkell lunched with Ratcliffe on 15 Sept. 1966 to discuss the new programme (\*Arkell to Standing, 'Radio 247/Pilot Local Broadcasting Scheme: Needletime', 15 Sept. 1966). On 10 Oct. 1966 Campey reported to the Board of Management that Short had seen representatives of the Musicians' Union, and on 21 Oct. 1966 Gillard wrote to Ratcliffe about possible arrangements. (All memos in R92 Box 5: Expansion of Sound Broadcasting File 3.)

<sup>10</sup> \*Greene to Lillicrap, 25 Nov. 1966. Greene was invited to the Post Office in Dec. 1966 to discuss needletime after the meeting on 21 Nov. (\*Gillard to Arkell, 'Negotiations with the Musicians' Union', 7 Dec. 1966). The 'concessions' which were acceptable to PPL were costly: the new service would cost £200,000, and the BBC made concessions also (\*S. M. Stewart, Director General of the IFPI, to Gillard, 28 Nov. 1966). (All in R92 Box 5: Expansion of Sound Broadcasting File 3.)

<sup>11</sup> *News of the World*, 13 Aug. 1967, 'Why I am Sinking the Pirates'.

Scott was operating at a quite different level, and was surrounded by far more Press publicity than Short had been. He had had scarcely enough time to take his bearings when two newspapers carried a story on 28 April that the BBC 'Popular Music Service' would start on 1 October 1967, a date which he himself thought was too late.<sup>12</sup> He knew that there would be an inevitable time gap between the sinking of the pirates and the opening of Radio 1, but he wanted to keep it as short as possible. The answer was to recruit enough of the pirates to launch the new ship speedily.

They were more than willing. Indeed, while Short was preparing for 'the whiff of grapeshot'—and one pirate ship required 2,000 tons of explosive to blow up<sup>13</sup>—the disc jockeys were already using their piratical experience 'to bounce straight into the Corporation'—as Simon Dee had done in 1965. 'It would be foolish to deny that we will not be using some of the techniques of the offshore broadcasters', Scott was reported as saying in August 1967.<sup>14</sup> He might have added the offshore broadcasters themselves. Keith Skues, aged 27, had already left Radio London to host the Light Programme's *Saturday Club*, and other 'buccaneer broadcasters' were said to be working out individual deals.<sup>15</sup> One pirate station, Radio 390, 'the sweet music' station, had already closed down before the general surrender. A court order banning it in May 1967 was upheld on appeal in July: Red Sands Tower, from which Radio 390 broadcast, was held to be within internal waters and subject, therefore, to the control of the Wireless Telegraph Act.<sup>16</sup>

Radio 1 opened ten weeks after the Act received royal assent. Its first programme was presented by Tony Blackburn, and a message of congratulation was received from Radio Luxembourg. Among the ex-pirates who were recruited, some came from Radio Caroline—with Blackburn in the vanguard—and others from Radio London, Radio Scotland, and Radio 390. Radio London supplied most: they included John Peel and Kenny Everett. In addition, sixteen disc jockeys who had not been pirates were signed on or transferred from other parts

<sup>12</sup> \*Scott to Marriott, '247/1500: Starting Date and Wavelengths', 3 May 1967 (R92 Box 5: Expansion of Sound Broadcasting—Creation of Radios 1 and 2).

<sup>13</sup> *The Times*, 22 Aug. 1967.

<sup>14</sup> *Sun*, 21 Aug. 1967.

<sup>15</sup> *Daily Sketch*, 12 Aug. 1967.

<sup>16</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 29 July 1967. By 1968 the BBC was not totally ruling out using disc jockeys who operated after the Marine Offences Act was passed (\*Marriott to Laurence Stapley, Chief Assistant Radios 1 & 2, 'Johnnie Walker & Roger Day', 8 Oct. 1968 (R92 Box 4: Disc Jockeys)).

of the BBC—among them Alan Freeman, Jack Jackson, Pete Murray, and Jimmy Young. The last of these, who attracted an audience of more than 6 million, was to be singled out by the Variety Club in 1968 as the Radio Personality of the Year.<sup>17</sup> The only female disc jockey was Miranda Ward. There was another new voice too. Terry Wogan flew over from Dublin every Wednesday to help present *Late Night Extra*, a show that was carried on both Radio 1 and Radio 2.<sup>18</sup>

The twenty-nine disc jockeys were all contracted for only eight weeks instead of the normal thirteen, in order to allow for weeding out later. In fact, only four of them carried the main burden on Radio 1, accounting between them for forty-three hours of broadcasting.<sup>19</sup> They had to know how to 'chat' as well as how to choose records, for the amount of needletime at their disposal was too little to make for continuous listening to 'pop'.<sup>20</sup> Some of them were told by Scott to avoid 'gratuitous remarks' on controversial subjects 'like Vietnam, hare coursing, and the Prime Minister'.<sup>21</sup> Some of them were criticized by the Musicians' Union for making disparaging remarks about the Union—not in their chat but in print.<sup>22</sup> Their influence clearly went beyond chat. They were largely responsible for an increase of nearly 10 per cent in record sales in 1968/9. It was in that year too that a Radio 1 Club was launched, with its own badges, T-shirts, and page in the *Radio Times*.<sup>23</sup>

Much of the first Press reaction to Radio 1 was unenthusiastic. George Melly, making one of his many critical but quotable remarks about the BBC, described it as 'Auntie's first freak out'. The 'solemnity with which the conventions evolved by the pirate stations' had

<sup>17</sup> Readers of the *Daily Sketch* (24 Jan. 1968) had put 'chat happy Tony Blackburn' first and Young second, although one reader complained that she and her husband could take no more of Radio 1. 'All we hear is drumming and screaming, and the same records three to six times a day.'

<sup>18</sup> Born in 1938, Wogan had joined Irish Television, RTE, as an announcer in 1963. He was Senior Announcer from 1964 to 1966. From 1969 to 1972 he had his own Terry Wogan show on Radio 1. From 1972 to 1984 it was transferred to Radio 2.

<sup>19</sup> R. Scott, 'Radio 1 and Radio 2', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 6th ser., 11 Oct. 1967.

<sup>20</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 27 Nov. 1967. Cf. the earlier BBC statement, 'Why no continuous pop?' (*BBC Record*, 45 (Oct. 1966)). See above, p. 514.

<sup>21</sup> \*Scott to Ken Baynes, Head of Popular Music, 'Controversial Comment by Disc Jockeys', 14 March 1968 (R92 Box 4: Disc Jockeys).

<sup>22</sup> Ratcliffe corresponded on the subject in 'spirited' fashion with Gillard, Arkell, and Robbins, and raised the matter again in a letter to \*Gillard, 14 March 1969 (R92 Box 4: Disc Jockeys).

<sup>23</sup> Cmnd. 4216 (1969), *Annual Report and Accounts of the British Broadcasting Corporation 1968-69*, p. 30. There was strictly limited plugging of particular records which 'the industry' expected (\*Letter by Scott, 5 Dec. 1968 (R92 Box 14: Needletime)).



been 'plagiarized' had been 'almost Germanic in its thoroughness'. It all seemed 'lifelike' but 'lifeless', like waxworks.<sup>24</sup> Another knowledgeable critic, Jimmy Savile, described by Melly as 'the fascinatingly dreadful Jimmy Savile', did not believe that one BBC station could be as good as the seven or eight pirate stations that had been supplanted.<sup>25</sup> The *Sunday Times* got nearer to the truth: 'As a network churning out non-stop pop, Radio 1 is bound to be a huge success. After all, the rivals have been, or are about to be, killed off.'<sup>26</sup>

Only a minority of the BBC's listeners who bothered to write letters reacting to the change were of the same opinion as the *Sunday Times*. 'Just to say that the station is marvellous', one of them said simply. Another referred to the 'plucky disc-jockeys' who had been on the air during the first few days. A majority wanted more pop than the BBC could provide, and one listener who said that he would not listen to Radio 1 again, looked back to Radio Caroline. 'Inside me', he went on, 'has been born fresh seed for the fight for free radio.'<sup>27</sup> 'Radio 1 my foot,' wrote another, 'Radio Rubbish . . . Radio Caroline for ever.'<sup>28</sup> The immediate success of the Radio 1 Club showed that there was nostalgia rather than force behind such exclamations.<sup>29</sup>

The introduction on 30 September 1967 of the newly named Radios 2, 3, and 4, alongside the new Radio 1, on what Gillard called a 'milestone day' in broadcasting history,<sup>30</sup> generated more criticism than Radio 1 itself, although one listener congratulated the BBC for presenting on Radio 2, the successor to the Light Programme, 'the kind of music that we can really enjoy'.<sup>31</sup> This was described by Scott as 'including the great and melodic store-house of "light music" '.

<sup>24</sup> *Observer*, 1 Oct. 1967.

<sup>25</sup> Melly, *op. cit.*, p. 160; *People*, 1 Oct. 1967. As always, the Press made the most of differences of opinion. 'Verdict . . . Top marks for Auntie say some', was a headline in the *Daily Sketch*, 'but others won't even listen' (2 Oct. 1967).

<sup>26</sup> *Sunday Times*, 1 Oct. 1967.

<sup>27</sup> \*Miss K. Haacke, Head of Programme Correspondence, to Marriott, 'Correspondence and Telephone Calls for 7 Days ending 10 October 1967', 10 Oct. 1967 (R78/622).

<sup>28</sup> \*Haacke to Marriott, 'Correspondence and Telephone Calls for 7 days ending 31 October 1967', 31 Oct. 1967 (R78/622).

<sup>29</sup> Cf. a 'half term' report by John Knight in the *Daily Express*, 12 Nov. 1967. Though headed 'Far from One-derful', it concluded that it had lived up to Scott's promise to be 'fast-moving, friendly, unsquare'.

<sup>30</sup> *Radio Times*, 28 Sept. 1967.

<sup>31</sup> \*Haacke to Marriott, 10 Oct. 1967. There were thirty letters of complaint that *Music While You Work* was no longer broadcast. The half-hour became part of the Jimmy Young show.

Scott's own view was that as far as the majority of the population was concerned, 'the "latest pop" did not rate high'. 'It is significant that the "Sound of Music" long playing record has stayed at or near the top of the L.P. best sellers for nearly three years.'<sup>32</sup>

Apart from Radio 1, however, which really was new, bigger changes had already taken place in radio between 1964 and 1967 than took place in 1967 itself. Peter Black was exaggerating, therefore, when he wrote from a vantage-point five years later that 'the division into Radio 1, 2, 3 and 4 surrendered the remnants of the old Reithan [sic] principle of giving help to the listener who needed it most whether he wanted it or not'. He was only partly right, too, when he went on to claim that whereas there had hitherto been one BBC, there now appeared to the public to be three or four quite separate BBCs.<sup>33</sup>

The choice of numbered names for the four radio channels, 'radio by numbers', was Gillard's. He had always thought the name 'Home Service' was 'ludicrous': 'all broadcasting is a home service, so why tack it on to just one channel?'<sup>34</sup> And since he could not think of an appropriate name for the new pop music channel, why not Radios 1, 2, 3, and 4? Television already had BBC-1 and BBC-2. Scott had considered calling the new programme Radio 247 after the wavelength. It seemed appropriate to Gillard that the pop channel and the new 'Light' channel, which would share much of their programming, should be numbered as a pair, while Radio 3 carried with it all the echoes—and according to Gillard's plan they were more than echoes—of the old Third Programme. It was by a process of inescapable elimination, therefore, that the Home Service now became Radio 4.

To those who believed, as Black did, that the Home Service was the BBC rock on which all else was founded, there was bound to be a sense of unease and to try to allay it, Radio 4 was announced for two

<sup>32</sup> *BBC Handbook 1968*, p. 23.

<sup>33</sup> P. Black, *The Biggest Aspidistra in the World* (1972), p. 224: 'For Radio 1 listeners the BBC had become a barmy teenage twit . . . for Radio 2 listeners it had become a kind of meals on wheels service.' Black did not discuss what images to identify for Radios 3 and 4. Scott gave a brief account of 'popular' radio between 1964 and 1967 in his *Lunch-Time Lecture*, 6th ser., 'Radio 1 and Radio 2', 11 Oct. 1967. The Light Programme had 'hovered somewhat uneasily' between 'pop' and 'sweet music', but it had built up a large 'breakfast special' audience with a peak of about 6m. at 8 a.m.

<sup>34</sup> \*Gillard interviewed by Fry, March 1978; *Radio Times*, 3 Aug. 1967. For an analysis of the numbers see Paul Ferris, *Observer*, 6 Aug. 1967. 'Radio 1', Ferris stated, 'has first place because it's the audience-stealer.' He predicted wrongly that Radio 4 would go, leaving only three channels. 'It's Them or Us—Beat Back the Numbermen' was the heading of an article in the *Daily Express*, 14 March 1967.

years as 'Radio 4, the Home Service'.<sup>35</sup> After the change of name there was, in fact, little change in the size of its audience. A slight reduction in listening figures in the early morning was counterbalanced by increases in listening at lunch-time, largely accounted for by the appeal of *The World at One* and by the introduction on 17 September 1967 at Sunday lunch-time of *The World This Weekend*. For the presenter of both programmes, William Hardcastle, *The World at One* had marked 'a real adventure in journalism', and *The World This Weekend*, which went ahead, thanks to Gerard Mansell, without any testing of temperature or depth in rehearsal, now marked 'a further stride down the same exciting road'.

'Sunday journalism', wrote Mansell, then Controller of the Home Service, 'has for long been a prominent feature of the British scene . . . Yet oddly enough, radio has not up till now provided its own Sunday newspaper.'<sup>36</sup> Sixty minutes in length, *The World This Weekend* offered 'a not-always-reverent view of the passing scene'.<sup>37</sup> At its best, it was journalism of the highest order. Its editor, Andrew Boyle, was a talented and highly original thinker and writer, who in 1972 was to publish a substantial biography of Reith, *Only the Wind Will Listen*. None the less, the programme did not escape criticism from politicians, including the Prime Minister, who complained about a specific item in it in February 1969 in the same breath as he also complained about *Panorama*. He also objected to the introduction of an 'editorial stance'. The Governors listened, agreeing that avoidable 'lapses of judgement' were quite unacceptable, but adding that they would be 'loath to sacrifice the real achievement of these programmes in the field of popular news presentation'.<sup>38</sup>

Radios 1 and 2 were to have their own regular short news bulletins too, although earlier in 1967, before the change of names, *Radio Newsreel* had been transferred (along with *The Archers*) from the Light Programme to the Home Service. One more sign of concern for topicality was the decision that the new Third Programme, incorpor-

<sup>35</sup> *Radio Times*, 3 Aug. 1967.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 Sept. 1967. For Hardcastle, see his obituary by his colleague Andrew Boyle, *The Listener*, 20 Nov. 1975. Boyle awaited my own verdict as a historian on the programme, which, he claimed, was the product of 'days of drought and uncertainty when believers in radio's ability to attract, build and hold mass audiences were an almost extinct race'.

<sup>37</sup> Peter Black hailed the advent of the programme in the *Daily Mail* (16 Sept. 1967), as a victory of the Moderns over the Ancients.

<sup>38</sup> \*Lord Hill, then Chairman of the BBC, to Wilson, 17 Feb. 1969 (Man. Reg. file N449, p. 1).

ated in Radio 3, was also to end the day with a 'comprehensive 15-minute news bulletin'. There was also an increased emphasis on current affairs in Radio 3 discussion programmes. The kind of programmes that now figured prominently were a seminar on 'Cabinet Responsibility and the Party System', broadcast from Nuffield College, Oxford, early in 1967, and a sequence of talks planned on the Third Programme on Israel and the Middle East after the Arab/Israel War of June 1967, brilliantly covered on the Home Service.<sup>39</sup> The fiftieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution was marked by lectures given by George Kennan, the former American diplomat, and two British professors, E. H. Carr and L. B. Schapiro.<sup>40</sup>

Key changes had already been made to Radio 3 before it got its name, as significant in relation to radio as the changes made in television when BBC-2 was introduced. It now incorporated several distinct components: the old Third Programme, broadcast only during the evenings from 7.30 p.m. on Monday to Friday, from 6 p.m. on Saturday, and from 5 p.m. on Sunday, which might still include in its repertoire a foreign play, like the Polish writer Slawomir Mrozek's *Tango*; the Music Programme, which had been introduced in that form only in March 1965, 'to cater for the casual listener as well as the listener of fixed habits';<sup>41</sup> Study Session educational programmes, broadcast from Mondays to Fridays between 6.30 p.m. and 7 p.m.; and a Sports Service, concentrated on Saturday afternoons, which was said to cover 'the widest possible range of sporting events'.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> While the war was in progress, twelve BBC news correspondents and four television camera teams operated in the Middle East. The Israeli authorities, while applying military censorship, gave them all the co-operation they could expect (Cmnd. 3779 (1968), *Annual Report and Accounts of the British Broadcasting Corporation, 1967-68*, p. 40). The *Annual Report* referred to the *Observer* description of the BBC reporting as 'brilliant'. This was a war when radio was described as a more effective medium of communication than television. Incongruously, the Hebrew Service of the BBC (see below, p. 707) came to an end in Oct. 1968.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30-4.

<sup>41</sup> Cmnd. 2823 (1965), *Annual Report and Accounts of the British Broadcasting Corporation 1964-65*, p. 11. The *Report for 1966-7* described a steady growth in the size of the audience (Cmnd. 3425 (1967), p. 30). The repertoire included half music, half talk programmes, in which the BBC specialized, like *This Week's Composer*, *Music Magazine*, incorporating *Record Review*, and *Your Concert Choice*, each attracting an audience of about ¼m. *Music Magazine*, which began with the opening bars of Schubert's 'To Music', provided a strong sense of continuity. Yet it also registered change. 'Essentially informal', it was 'always on the alert for new ideas and new methods'. Its critical approach was to avoid the 'highbrow and patronising', but 'never to avoid a subject because of its technical difficulty in explanation' (*Radio Times*, 5 Oct. 1961).

<sup>42</sup> In 1967, when the Test Matches were played against the West Indies, they were said to have drawn 'unexpectedly high audiences'.

While the Music Programme, with less than half of its programmes recorded, was evidence, as Hans Keller put it, that the BBC had lived up to its duty in making good music available to 'all who can be discovered to want it',<sup>43</sup> there was no Music Programme on Radio 3 when Test Matches were being played—only—as in the past, ball-by-ball commentaries—a source of frequent complaint from music lovers.<sup>44</sup> They too, however, had their own special events. Thus, in April 1966 a concert was held in the Festival Hall to celebrate Sir Yehudi (later Lord) Menuhin's fiftieth birthday—he had been knighted the year before—and in 1967 another birthday concert was broadcast, with Pierre Boulez conducting, to celebrate the composer Stravinsky's eightieth birthday.<sup>45</sup>

All in all, less sport was broadcast on Radio 3 than on Radio 2, which also included the Test Match as one of its attractions. No fewer than 2,350,000 heard the exciting climax to the Fourth Test in 1965, yet this was only a small figure when compared with the 6½ million audience for the boxing contest in 1967 between Henry Cooper and Billy Walker. *Sports Report*, forty-eight hours older than *The Dales*, which it was to long survive, had long been praised both for its 'professionalism' and for its 'determination to overstep every hazard of communication'. Many journalists who appeared on it moved over to television, among them David Coleman, Kenneth Wolstenholme, and Frank Bough. It was a setback to sports broadcasting on television, however, when in 1965 the Football League banned the live broadcasting of matches, although *Match of the Day*, televised on Saturday evenings on BBC-2, attracted growing audiences. The World Cup held in Britain in 1966—and won by England—broke all such records.<sup>46</sup> Like the Olympics, it was a media event as

<sup>43</sup> *The Music Programme*, an introductory booklet, 1965. Gillard wrote proudly that it would no longer be possible for anyone in Britain to describe music as the 'inaccessible art' ('New Developments in Radio', *Radio Times*, 18 March 1965). The stages in the development of the programme were set out by Marriott in *BBC Record*, 29 (Aug. 1964).

<sup>44</sup> Some cricket lovers would doubtless have complained about the broadcast in full of Wagner's *The Ring* from Bayreuth in 1966. In the same year, not an exceptional one, there were studio performances of several operas, including Busoni's *Turandot*. There were also fourteen live relays from festivals, including Edinburgh, Glyndebourne, Aldeburgh, Cheltenham (contemporary music), and Bath.

<sup>45</sup> Cmnd. 3425 (1967), p. 26.

<sup>46</sup> See 'World Coverage for World Cup', *Ariel*, June 1966. Each night, the whole of one outstanding match would be covered live in *World Cup Grandstand* on television. On radio the BBC's Outside Broadcasts Department was busier in July than it had ever been in its history.

well as a sporting event, and the England captain, Bobby Moore, deemed 'player of players', was a media personality as well as a sportsman.<sup>47</sup> The televising of football was never to be the same again although it was often to change in style.

## 10. God and Mammon

Sport, which became a staple of television in off-seasons as well as at times of 'great events', did not figure as a separate section in the BBC's *Annual Report and Accounts*, whereas religion did.<sup>1</sup> It was still 'mainstream' religion.<sup>2</sup> Religious services remained a substantial element, but alongside traditional services on Sundays, there were 'experiments' in worship also described cautiously as acts of worship 'of the less conventional kind'. 'It was hoped in this way to cater to a wide range of listeners.' There were also 'straightforward religious features'.<sup>3</sup> When the Light Programme came to an end, *The People's Service* moved to Radio 2, where it was said to have 'stood up well' to competition of a contrasting kind from Radio 1;<sup>4</sup> and on television, which was becoming increasingly important in religious broadcasting, Richard Cawston produced a sixty-minute documentary in 1966 on the Billy Graham Greater London Crusade, *I'm Going*

<sup>47</sup> Among media events, 'contests' have been described as a main category. See D. Dayan and E. Katz, *Media Events* (1992). The two other categories were 'conquests' and 'coronations'.

<sup>1</sup> In the Pilkington Report religious broadcasting and political broadcasting were bracketed together in the same chapter, along with news, sport, and education (Cmnd. 1753 (1962), ch. IX), under the revealing heading 'some particular kinds of programming'. The *Radio Times* referred not to 'Sport' but to 'Sports' in its headlines. Philip Purser described *Sportsview* as the first 'really democratic—and demotic—programme' in the history of BBC television (*Sunday Telegraph*, 29 Oct. 1990).

<sup>2</sup> For the history and connotations of the term, see Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, p. 696. Reith wrote an interesting introduction to *Religion by Radio* (1967), almost the only book of its kind, by Melville Dinwiddie, who from 1933 to 1957 had been Controller of BBC, Scotland. In 1939 he launched the programme *Lift Up Your Hearts*. Reith was at his fiercest in dealing with religious broadcasting. He described it as 'probably relatively the most ineffectual or anyhow the most inefficient—in an engineering or commercial sense of effort to result—of all the sectional activities of broadcasting'. For Muggeridge's views see his *Christ and the Media* (1977). As in sport, there was a debate on the impact of broadcasting on attendances. For the relevant religious statistics, see R. Currie *et al.*, *Churches and Churchgoers* (1977).

<sup>3</sup> Cmnd. 3425 (1967), p. 39.

<sup>4</sup> Cmnd. 3779 (1968), p. 45.



to Ask You to Get Up Out of Your Seat. There was no regular place in British television, however, for 'televangelism' American style.<sup>5</sup> Significantly, in religious broadcasting, as in other types of broadcasting, there was a greater stress on current affairs. Religion began to be treated as news. In these circumstances the Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Church was extensively covered in non-religious as well as religious programmes in August 1968.

Discussion programmes dealing with a broad range of religious subjects were now common also. The 450th anniversary of the Reformation, commemorated in 1967, was discussed at length and from different angles in *Meeting Point*, *Viewpoint*, and a specially written Sunday programme on Radio 4, while in 1968 the most substantial discussion programme, which lasted over two hours on the Third Programme, examined *The Decline of Religion in the West*. The producer of the programme, Hubert Hoskins, was invited to contribute a special article to *The Times*, and *The Listener* devoted a front-page article to the subject.<sup>6</sup>

Occasionally, as in other branches of broadcasting, it was the battle between the new and the old which made the headlines. The announcement in 1965 of a decision to replace *Lift Up Your Hearts* on radio with a new daily five-minute programme called *Ten to Eight* generated a storm of criticism, including the tabling of motions in Parliament, and complaints were made about it by Dance during the debate on broadcasting in May 1965.<sup>7</sup> Complaints came direct, too, from a former Governor, Mrs Cazalet-Keir, and from Mrs Whitehouse, who requested once more that she should lead a delegation to present her case to the Chairman.<sup>8</sup> The criticisms soon melted

<sup>5</sup> Another religious programme which, like Cawston's, was produced outside the BBC's Religious Department, was *Silent Song*, a comedy by Frank O'Connor and Hugh Leonard about life in a Trappist monastery. It won a major award at the Roman Catholic International Television Festival.

<sup>6</sup> Cmnd. 3779 (1968), p. 45; *The Times*, 27 Jan. 1968; Alasdair MacIntyre, 'Secularisation', *The Listener*, 15 Feb. 1968. Participants in the programme included the anthropologist Margaret Meade, the sociologist of religion Bryan Wilson, and the philosopher Bernard Williams.

<sup>7</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 712, col. 819, 13 May 1965.

<sup>8</sup> Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 27 May, 23 June 1965. The Governors accepted the advice of the Board of Management that they should not see Mrs Whitehouse, on the grounds that 'it was unrealistic to expect that the views held by Mrs Whitehouse could be modified by discussion at such a meeting'. It was acknowledged by Normanbrook that Lord Hill, as Chairman of ITA, had invited her to lunch, but he said that Hill was in a different position from himself, 'since he had no direct responsibility for the production of programmes'. The issue was discussed in the introductory article in the *BBC Handbook*, 1966, pp. 11-19, 'The BBC: Focus of Controversy'; but the article, which mentioned

away, and, according to the BBC, were 'succeeded by an encouraging flow of appreciation and constructive criticism of the new programme—some of it from those who had denounced the original decision'.<sup>9</sup> Normanbrook had told the Governors that he himself regretted that one of the reasons given for the change in Press Announcements had been a change in the Christian commitment of the audience.<sup>10</sup>

On BBC-2, religious programmes 'had to win their place on merit',<sup>11</sup> and a deliberate contrast was drawn with BBC-1. Thus, *Doubts and Certainties*, broadcast from 1964, was very much a BBC-2 type programme. BBC-1 dealt more with certainties than with doubts: BBC-2 'complemented' what BBC-1 was doing.<sup>12</sup> BBC-2 had a place for Mammon also. In November 1965 Attenborough, inspired by the *Sunday Times Business Supplement*, proposed a programme that would deal with 'practical problems of making and selling things; biographies of tycoons, the drama and strategy of take-over bids; industrial relations; techniques and problems of modernisation; banking in the City; relations between politics and the business world, etc.'.<sup>13</sup> The outcome was *The Money Programme*, 'a weekly business magazine', which first went on the air on 5 April 1966.

During its first season of sixteen weeks, which included the sterling crisis, the contributors included the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Governor of the Bank of England, the President of the International Monetary Fund, and the Prime Minister of France.<sup>14</sup> The first producer was Terry Hughes, with Erskine Childers and William Davis as early commentators.<sup>15</sup> Tom Jackson, the General Secretary of the

Dance and the National Viewers' and Listeners' Association, which had been founded on 29 Nov. 1965, foolishly made no reference to Mrs Whitehouse by name. For Hill's later relations with Mrs Whitehouse, see below, pp. 602, 607. Three years later, Mrs. Whitehouse appeared in a BBC *Talkback* programme, and wrote about it in *The Listener*, 11 Jan. 1968.

<sup>9</sup> Cmnd. 3122 (1966), p. 43.

<sup>10</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 27 May 1965. Greene stated that the phrase had been approved by the Bishop of Bristol on behalf of CRAC, and that he had written to the *Church Times* supporting this view.

<sup>11</sup> Cmnd. 3122 (1966), p. 39.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>13</sup> \*Attenborough to Wheldon, 'BBC-2 Current Affairs Programmes', 30 Nov. 1965 (Talks: Money Programme: General).

<sup>14</sup> \*Hughes to Fox, 'The Money Programme', 21 July 1966 (Money Programme: General).

<sup>15</sup> The programme had its dynasty. In 1968 Hughes was succeeded by Michael Bunce, who was succeeded in 1970 by Robert Rowland, who became editor of *Panorama* in 1972. He was succeeded by John Dekker.

Union of Post Office Workers, who became a Governor in February 1968, thought that the programme was anchored too firmly to the City. He wanted 'industrial affairs to be discussed outside the usual context of crises'.<sup>16</sup>

Three years earlier, Sir Norman Kipping, then Director-General of the Federation of British Industries and a member of the BBC's General Advisory Council, had pressed Greene to set up a BBC Industrial Advisory Committee, but no action had followed.<sup>17</sup> He complained then of the 'cumulative damage' broadcasting was doing to British industry, and that there were too many predominantly critical programmes.<sup>18</sup> Not everyone agreed, but a long discussion was devoted to the subject at a General Advisory Council meeting in April 1967. A paper had been prepared by one of its members, Campbell (later Sir Campbell) Adamson, then a manager of a steel firm and a future Director-General of the CBI, when the case was argued for programmes on industrial innovation and development, and, when cross-reference was made to industrial drama, programmes like *The Troubleshooters* and *The Newcomers*.

Industry also figured from time to time, of course, in radio's main discussion programme *Any Questions?* which focused mainly on topical news and which was moved to Radio 4 on 10 April 1970. After 1968, however, *Any Questions?* lost its Chairman, a versatile broadcaster whose voice had become familiar long before Hardcastle's. Freddie Grisewood was no longer heard after his eightieth birthday on 12 April 1968, and his farewell broadcast from Liphook had quite exceptionally been recorded the day before. One of the participants in the programme, John Arlott, had a voice at least as well known as his.

<sup>16</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 6 May 1971.

<sup>17</sup> Greene had met representatives of the FBI and of the British Employers Association in 1960 (\*Meeting with Representatives of the FBI and BBC, 21 Oct. 1960 (Man. Reg. file B675-1)). No action was taken to create an Industrial and Business Affairs Advisory Group until 1976.

<sup>18</sup> \*Kipping to Greene, 15 March 1965 (same file). Greene took the charge seriously, and asked Kipping if his letter could be printed in the *BBC Record* (\*Greene to Kipping, 8 April 1965). Kipping asked for the two letters to be printed in the FBI's fortnightly paper *British Industry*, 3 May 1965. The correspondence ended with a brisk letter from Kipping to Greene, 14 May 1965. In Aug. 1965 the FBI joined with the National Association of British Manufacturers and the British Employers Confederation to become the Confederation of British Industry, CBI. Kipping was succeeded by John Davies.

## 11. Programme Parade

Grisewood had been ill for some time, and after a search—and trials—David Jacobs, who had also made his name with a very different programme, *Juke Box Jury*, had already taken his place. It was at least as symbolic a change as changing the title of *Lift Up Your Hearts* to *Ten to Eight*. Jacobs was Scott's choice, and *Any Questions?*, a programme where voices mattered as much as opinions, continued to flourish. When a list of the Top Twelve Speakers had been announced in 1967, few professional politicians appeared in it. Lord Boothby, however, scarcely a conventional professional politician, was at the head of the list.<sup>1</sup> The venue of the programme had already begun to move around from its West Country base, and there was one difficult occasion on 29 November 1968 when a programme, due to be broadcast from the Pressed Steel Fisher Works in Oxford, with the unconventional politician Enoch Powell as one of the participants, had to be shifted, because of fears of interruption, to the Concert Hall at Broadcasting House.

Television still had no programme of the *Any Questions?* type, but it had one programme much criticized inside the BBC, which had no real radio counterpart. *Late Night Line Up*, which had started on BBC-2 in April 1964 as a ten-minute informational programme at the beginning of the evening called *Line-Up*, moved in September to the end of the evening, and started to review BBC television output for viewers in open-ended fashion. Rowan Ayers, Assistant Head of Presentation, later Editor, Presentation Programmes, Television, was in charge, strongly supported by David Attenborough once he had become Controller.

The main domestic complaint inside the BBC was that producing departments, which included Light Entertainment, Drama, and Current Affairs,<sup>2</sup> had not been given adequate opportunity to defend

<sup>1</sup> \*Michael Bowen, producer, to acting Head of Programmes, South West, 'Any Questions?', 23 June 1967 (R51/1041/1). Because of the views expressed by members of the panel, the programme had from time to time run into almost inevitable difficulties during the 1960s, with both the Conservative and Labour Parties complaining in 1966 about imbalance. After the Conservative complaint had been investigated by Whitley and Bonarjee, Camacho, Head of Talks and Current Affairs, Sound, wrote to Whitley that while he thought, 'on the whole', that the Central Office had 'some justification for their complaint', it was so slight 'that in their place I would be ashamed to make it' (\*Camacho to Whitley, 'Any Questions?', 25 July 1966 (R51/1041/1)).

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Newman to Rex Moorfoot, Head of Presentation, Television, 'Late Night Line-Up', 1 June 1966 (TV Talks, Late Night Line-Up, 1963–7). 'The LATE NIGHT discussions

what was being criticized. A further complaint was that BBC output was being 'belittled'. Wheldon defended the programme in 1966 as 'an arena in which important things have been said about television, and as a place where extremely bright television is itself being made',<sup>3</sup> but the complaints continued, reaching a climax in October 1969, when Nicholas Tomalin made critical comments about the serial *The First Churchills* on the strength of one episode. Andrew Osborn, Head of Series, Drama, Television, exclaimed that it seemed totally wrong to him 'in view of the effort, talent and money that were expended in creating programmes for the BBC to provide the space for such attacks on them'.<sup>4</sup> After protracted discussion a weekly review item in the programme was stopped in December 1969.<sup>5</sup>

When the programme reached its 2,000th edition in 1970, Attenborough congratulated Ayers, who in return acknowledged his debt to him.<sup>6</sup> There were other debts to acknowledge, too, to Joan Bakewell, who established her reputation as an interviewer in the programme, and to Michael Dean, Denis Tuohy, and Sheridan Morley. Attenborough himself summed up his opinion. *Late Night Line Up* had 'introduced many new faces to television; it had pioneered new styles and subjects; it had been the first regular colour programme in Europe; it had remained bold with the courage of its convictions against, on occasion, vehement opposition'.<sup>7</sup> For Bernard Davies *Late Night* had become 'inseparable from, and symbolic of, one's concept of BBC-2'.<sup>8</sup>

of our dramas are mainly valuable, but yet too often the directors rightfully feel that their case is never presented. Putting it another way, staff members must stomach a newspaper critic's ignorance, but feel that when the parent organisation inadvertently aids and abets an "attack" on themselves, this is interpreted as betrayal.'

<sup>3</sup> \*Wheldon to All Group and Departmental Heads, 'Late Night Line-Up', 4 April 1966 (TV Central: Discussion Programmes—Late Night Line-Up).

<sup>4</sup> \*TV Weekly Programme Review, *Minutes*, 8 Oct. 1969.

<sup>5</sup> \*Ibid., 17 Dec. 1969.

<sup>6</sup> \*Attenborough to Ayers, 8 May 1970; Ayers to Attenborough, 12 May 1970, '2000th Edition of "Line-Up"' (TV Talks—Late Night Line-Up General 1969–70). The programme was to come to an end on 14 Dec. 1972, when Ayers moved to a new Community Programmes Unit (\*Attenborough to Curran, 'Late Night Line-Up', 31 July 1972 (TV Central: Discussion Programme—Late Night Line-Up—Policy)). The very last programme was devoted to an interview with Attenborough on the occasion of his resignation from BBC management. For the Community Programmes Unit see below, p. 961.

<sup>7</sup> \*Television Weekly Programme Review, *Minutes*, 20 Dec. 1972. See also *Sunday Telegraph*, 10 Dec. 1972, where the programme was described by Philip Purser as 'the Trattoria of TV', and the *Daily Mail*, 14 Dec. 1972, where Peter Black noted how the open-ended interviews had greatly 'expanded the range of TV discussion'.

<sup>8</sup> *Television Mail*, 22 Dec. 1972.

Changes in television—and in BBC-2, in particular—have to be considered alongside changes in radio; for while there were relatively few organizational links between television and radio, there were few listeners now who were not also viewers.<sup>9</sup> Across the channels, too, there was great admiration for Attenborough's work as Controller, BBC-2, who in his first year raised the BBC-2 audience to 5 million.<sup>10</sup> Before the channel opened, he had been described in one newspaper as 'the star with a lust for travel'.<sup>11</sup> Now he had emerged, if reluctantly, as an effective organizer of a genuinely alternative channel, willing 'to experiment with style in many ways' but anxious also to gain the benefits of 'integrated planning'.<sup>12</sup> For Scott, who was to cross from radio to television in February 1969 to succeed him in Television Centre, Attenborough had 'picked up' BBC-2, 'shaken it out', and introduced 'a mass of new dynamic ideas'. His was 'a great renaissance mind at work'.<sup>13</sup>

Whether or not *The Forsyte Saga* reflected a renaissance mind at work, it was a huge success when shown on BBC-2 from 7 January 1967. The Audience Research Reports showed very high Audience Reaction Indices—81 for the first episode—and for the last the figure had reached the extraordinary figure of 91. 'How nice it is to be able to praise without reservation', wrote one viewer. Of the thirteenth episode a plumber commented, 'once you switch on you are glued to your set until it is finished'.<sup>14</sup> Some critics had reservations, but the series which was subsequently replayed on BBC-1 did much to establish BBC-2 even before the long awaited advent of colour. It

<sup>9</sup> There were still many cross-programme links in radio after 1967—e.g., *Study Session* programmes, a regular element in Radio 3, were repeated on Radio 4 on Saturday mornings, while *Any Questions?* on Radio 2 was also repeated on Sunday afternoons on Radio 4. Contrasts between programmes on the different channels were stressed, however, as well as links. If Radio 4 was broadcasting a concert—and music figured regularly in its programming—Radio 3 would broadcast speech (Cmnd. 3779 (1968), p. 30).

<sup>10</sup> *Current Biography*, April 1983. See *Guardian*, 19 Sept. 1970, where he is reported as telling Deirdre Macdonald that 'when you've been offered not just 25 minutes a week, but 3 or 4 hours a night, and a few million viewers you can't say no!'

<sup>11</sup> *Sunday Express*, 21 Jan. 1962. Twenty-one years later the *Sunday Express* magazine, 3 April 1983, was to head an article on him 'Animal Cracker'. He himself used an animal metaphor to describe the beginning of the service after its gestation period of twenty-one months—'longer than a kangaroo's [the animal chosen as the first symbol] but shorter than an elephant's'.

<sup>12</sup> D. Attenborough, 'BBC-2', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 4th ser., 16 March 1966.

<sup>13</sup> \*Scott interviewed by Gillard for the Oral History Project, 3 Feb. 1981. While there was no radio programme like *Late Night*, a pioneering 'listeners speak their mind' type of programme, *Listening Post*, had been introduced in July 1964, immediately after the *Ten o'Clock* programme.

<sup>14</sup> \*VR/67/16, 7 Feb. 1967; VR/67/219, 25 April 1967.



now stands out in broadcasting history as the last major drama serial made in black and white.

One possible news-making discussion programme that was not permitted on any radio channel (or television) was the broadcasting of Proceedings of Parliament.<sup>15</sup> The issue had been raised in May 1965, and was often discussed in the House of Commons. Indeed, in 1965 it had been referred to the Select Committee on Publications and Debates, which had been asked 'to make the most detailed examination of the problem in its technical aspects, its likely effect on Parliament itself, and the need that there is for televising Parliament from the consumer end, the viewer's point of view'.<sup>16</sup> Before any report was produced, the Government set up a new Select Committee in 1966, on which seven members of the previous Committee sat, and this time a report was produced and submitted to the House by Crossman, then Leader of the House, in November 1966. Crossman said that he had had talks with the BBC, which was making specimen sound recordings of speeches, in relation to the formation of a special House of Commons Broadcasting Unit. It would provide both broadcasting authorities with 'full television and sound "feed"'.<sup>17</sup>

In the course of the debate, which covered many aspects of the question, political, constitutional, financial, and technical, Bryan, from the Opposition benches, stressed the existing power of television to impart information. Two million people listened to *Yesterday in Parliament* and to *Today in Parliament*, the equivalent in words of two columns in the *Daily Telegraph*. Twenty million people each day viewed the main news bulletins of the BBC and ITN.<sup>18</sup> Another MP, however, John Forrester, representing Stoke-on-Trent North, reminded his colleagues of the capacity of television to 'kill stone dead'. 'The road to "Ally Pally" is strewn with the bodies of over-exposed comedians, and over-exposure is one of the great dangers to which this House might subject itself.'<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Robin Day argued the case persuasively in 1963 in a pamphlet 'The Case for Televising Parliament', published by the Hansard Society with a foreword by R. A. Butler. The pamphlet stressed that Day was not concerned with the interests of television. He wished 'to enable the democratic powers to be served by television more adequately' (R. Day, *Grand Inquisitor* (1990 edn.), p. 168).

<sup>16</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 713, col. 1075, 28 May 1965.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 736, col. 1607, 24 Nov. 1966.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1628.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1680. Forrester added that television had offered so much cricket that cricket had almost been killed. This comment aroused loud cries of 'No'.

The House of Lords, which, since 1958, had allowed cameras into the chamber for the State Opening of new Parliaments, had already expressed itself in favour of an experiment.<sup>20</sup> The Commons turned a motion down, by a margin of one vote (131 votes to 130). Margaret (later Lady) Thatcher, who had entered the House in 1959, when she had heard Aneurin Bevan proposing that cameras should be admitted to the Chamber, was among the 'Noes'. So, too, was the Labour MP Joel (later Lord) Barnett, a future Vice-Chairman of the BBC. Crossman, Tom Driberg, Michael Foot, Bryan, Selwyn Lloyd, and Nicholas (later Lord) Ridley were among the 'Ayes'. Wilson, Heath, and Benn did not vote.<sup>21</sup>

One new type of topical programme that would not have been necessary before the 1960s had been proposed first in the General Advisory Council, which for once was making not a complaint but a suggestion that led to action. In 1964 Donald McLachlan, Editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*, who figured prominently more than once in questioning BBC news policies,<sup>22</sup> suggested that 'the BBC ought to be thinking about its responsibility towards the large coloured immigrant population'.<sup>23</sup> Already by then they constituted 'a very substantial minority of well over half-a-million'.<sup>24</sup> Already by then, too, the first Commonwealth Immigrants Act had been passed in 1962.

As in all Council meetings, different views were expressed in the discussion that followed, with the black West Indian ex-cricketer Sir Learie (later Lord) Constantine urging that the BBC should do nothing which might 'tend to emphasise the apartness of the

<sup>20</sup> *House of Lords, Official Report*, vol. 275, cols. 65–136, 15 June 1966. In Feb. 1968 the House of Lords was the scene of a successful joint BBC/ITA closed circuit experiment in the broadcasting of Parliamentary proceedings (see *BBC Record*, 57 (Feb. 1968), and Cmnd. 3779 (1968), p. 12). For the 1958 televising, repeated in 1959 and in 1964, see above, p. 241. Television cameras were allowed into the House of Commons for the first time on a closed circuit basis in an economics debate on 21 April 1966.

<sup>21</sup> It was not until 9 Feb. 1988 that the House of Commons on a free vote decided to 'approve in principle of the holding of an experiment in the public broadcasting of its proceedings'. Televising began in 1989, and the experiment was made permanent in 1990. Sound only broadcasting from the House of Commons began in April 1978.

<sup>22</sup> See above, pp. 365, 530.

<sup>23</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 21 Oct. 1964. He added, first, that 'the need for a proper understanding of those matters had been underlined by certain disagreeable occurrences during the recent general election campaign', and, second, that new markets were opening overseas in 'non-white countries', and that the BBC should develop a programme export strategy. It should not be concerned only with 'white programmes for white people'.

<sup>24</sup> See C. Peach, *West Indian Migration to Britain* (1968).

coloured immigrant in Britain'. Constantine was to become the first black Governor of the BBC in 1969. Richard Hoggart, who had joined the Council in 1964, claimed that the BBC should seek 'to take the heat out of the immigration issue'. In Hoggart's opinion, 'the so-called immigrant "problem" was really no more than a reflection of the endemic ills of our society, such as bad housing, the fear of losing one's job and so on.' Margaret (later Dame Margaret) Miles, a well-known headmistress, agreed. Speaking as head of 'a comprehensive school which was itself on the way to becoming a multi-racial society', she argued that 'it was not the problem of immigration but the problem of integration that should be emphasised. The BBC could help . . . not only through the content of its programmes but also by using coloured immigrants as announcers and in other programme capacities.'

Greene told the Council that the BBC in its services to the Caribbean area had already broadcast a special series of informational programmes addressed to intending immigrants to Britain, which had later been published in booklet form, and he agreed that the BBC should now devote more attention to achieving integration. He did not, however, favour special programmes for immigrants for this reason. Nevertheless, a few months later, after the Postmaster-General, then Benn, had written to him to draw his attention to a suggestion in the *Guardian* that there should be special BBC programmes for 'Hindustani speaking immigrants',<sup>25</sup> he decided to take the advice of the Institute of Race Relations.<sup>26</sup> He also met Maurice Foley, the Minister of State at the Department of Economic Affairs, who was charged with special responsibility for immigrant problems.<sup>27</sup>

The conclusion Greene reached was that 'the job, if it was to be done at all, was primarily one for sound radio—ideally local radio—but there might be some place in it for television';<sup>28</sup> and he went on to plan two conferences for July 1965 with leaders of the Indian, Pakistani and West Indian communities. Foley had expressed the

<sup>25</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 4 Feb., 27 May 1965; General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 21 Oct. 1964.

<sup>26</sup> In 1965 the first Race Relations Act was passed, and the Race Relations Board was set up. There was also further restriction on immigration, followed in 1968 and 1971 by further restrictive Acts. See N. Deakin *et al.*, *Colour, Citizenship and British Society* (1969), and W. W. Daniel, *Racial Discrimination in England* (1968).

<sup>27</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 29 April 1965; TV Controllers' Meeting, *Minutes*, 25 May 1965.

<sup>28</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 29 April 1965. He suggested that they should be shown some television material, including *English by Television*.

view that BBC action should not await a Government decision on local broadcasting, and had stated that he intended to publish a White Paper on the subject of assimilation of immigrants.<sup>29</sup>

The conference with West Indian communities concentrated, as Greene had expected, on 'the need to educate the white host community to accept coloured citizens', while Indian/Pakistani talks had pointed to the value of new radio and television programmes on Sunday mornings which could include Indian music, citizens' advice material on the lines of *Can I Help You?*, and *News from Home*. The programmes would be sent out over the Midlands, North, and London transmitters.<sup>30</sup> Patrick Beech, Controller of the Midland Region, was given responsibility for proposing an operational schedule which could then be discussed by the Board of Management. Thereafter, progress was rapid, and the first programmes were arranged for October.<sup>31</sup> There was one change, however. *Topical News from Home* was not included, 'because of the probability that much of it would be concerned with the current troubles between India and Pakistan'.

To oversee the scheme, an Advisory Committee was set up, chaired by Philip Mason, Director of the Institute of Race Relations, and after a successful Press Conference, its first meeting was planned for November 1965, even though the High Commissioners had not yet appointed their representatives on it.<sup>32</sup> The first programmes, broadcast on 10 October, met with some protests from listeners, but there were far more letters from immigrants welcoming them than there were complaints. A leaflet describing them was prepared in Hindi and Urdu,<sup>33</sup> and there was also an article in *Ariel* by David Gretton, the organizer and producer of *Make Yourself at Home*, who placed the radio and television programmes both in their social and cultural and in their BBC context.

<sup>29</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 27 May, 10 June 1965; *Hansard*, vol. 713, col. 2174, 4 June 1965.

<sup>30</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 22 July 1965; Board of Management, *Minutes*, 26 July 1965.

<sup>31</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 23 Sept. 1965. Scotland would be added to the coverage. The sound programme would replace *The Eye Witness*, which would continue to be broadcast on VHF in the Regions and on the remainder of the VHF and medium-wave network.

<sup>32</sup> \*Ibid., 7 Oct. 1965. The first members included Dr D. R. Prem, Vice-Chairman of the Commonwealth Welfare Council in the West Midlands; Dipak Nandy, who was to become an authority on British broadcasting; and Nurul Islam, Secretary of the Pakistani Society in London.

<sup>33</sup> *BBC Record*, 36 (Oct. 1965).

The weekly television programmes began on Sundays, ten minutes after the weekly radio programme ended, and were repeated on Wednesdays. Again there were interesting broadcasting links. The production secretary on the television side, Mary Flood, was involved also in the old BBC Victor Sylvester programme *Come Dancing*, and the first face to be seen on the screen was that of Aley Hasan, lent to the new team by the BBC's Eastern Service in Bush House. The brief English lessons on radio were prepared by the English-by-Radio Unit in nearby Queen's House.

The programmes were produced in Birmingham for management reasons, but the first month's letters showed that there were good social reasons also. Nearly a third of the letters responding to the programmes came from the Midlands, the same number as those from London and the North. Only 10 per cent came from other parts of the country.<sup>34</sup> Gretton believed that the programmes were reaching a quarter of a million people, some highly educated, like his own colleagues, some illiterate. He regarded the wives and schoolchildren who had only recently arrived as being his 'most urgent customers'. 'If for a few minutes in the week the Box talks to them in a language they can understand, the vast black incomprehensibility of England is lit by one small candle of hope and reassurance.'<sup>35</sup>

It was a blow to the Immigrants Programme Unit in Birmingham when Gretton died suddenly and unexpectedly in 1966.<sup>36</sup> By then a new series of programmes had been broadcast for newly arrived immigrants from India and Pakistan—with special attention being paid to women—and BBC publications had published a booklet in four Asian languages. In 1967 the 100th edition of *Make Yourself at Home* was broadcast, and *Rainbow City*, a six-part serial based on the life of Caribbean groups in Birmingham, was produced for a general audience; it focused attention on a West Indian solicitor with an English wife. A special audience survey showed that while the characters in the serial won the sympathy of viewers, the serial did not change viewers' attitudes to black or coloured people.<sup>37</sup>

Programmes for immigrants figured in the *Annual Report* of the BBC to Parliament submitted in October 1967, along with items like the

<sup>34</sup> For the segregation of immigrant communities in Birmingham see P. N. Jones, *The Segregation of Immigrant Communities in the City of Birmingham* (1967).

<sup>35</sup> 'Make Yourself at Home', *Ariel*, Feb. 1966. There is no reference to the programmes in the useful study by P. Husband and C. Husband, *Racism and the Mass Media* (1974).

<sup>36</sup> Cmnd. 3425 (1967), p. 49.

<sup>37</sup> Cmnd. 3779 (1968), pp. 53–4. \*Audience Research Reports VR/67/433, 9 Aug. 1967; VR/67/499, 6 Sept. 1967.

World Cup, the Wednesday Play (*Cathy Come Home* was singled out), and Sandie Shaw winning the Eurovision Song Contest with her contribution 'Puppet on a String'. The *Report* began, however, with a reference to the death of Normanbrook at the age of 65 on 14 June 1967, even though this occurred after the end of the period covered in the other pages, which ended in March. The reference included the words of a resolution of the BBC Governors carried the day after his death thanking him for 'distinguished service' and recalling 'the respect and affection that he inspired'.<sup>38</sup>

Because of the timing of printing and publication, there was no reference to Normanbrook's death in the *BBC Handbook* for 1967, which began, indeed, with the text of the speech which Normanbrook had delivered at the news conference when the *Annual Report for 1965/66* had appeared.<sup>39</sup> There was no reference to him either in the *BBC Handbook* for 1968, which opened with a section called 'The BBC in 1968' written by Greene. This was the year the *Handbook*, lavishly illustrated, celebrated its own fortieth anniversary. The more ephemeral *BBC Record* called the year 1967 'a year of decisions' before the year drew to a close, but its October number in 1967 began its chronicle not with events but with statistics.

The statistics were formidable. On an average day 53 per cent of the population watched BBC television, and 51 per cent listened, however briefly, to BBC radio. Over 400 million people, scattered throughout the world, had seen the televised World Cup Final between England and West Germany. BBC-1 had an audience of 26 million for the match. BBC-2 was now available to over 65 per cent of the population, with an increase of a quarter of a million people each month in the number of people owning sets capable of receiving the 625-line programmes. BBC Regions were producing 781 hours of programmes each year for the national television networks and 2,815 hours for national radio.<sup>40</sup>

## 12. A New Chairman

Already by the time that this number of the *Record* appeared, one event had taken place, following Normanbrook's death, which for once pushed all such statistics into the background. Politics became more important again than either economics or culture. On 26 July

<sup>38</sup> Cmnd. 3425 (1967), p. 7; \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 15 June 1967.

<sup>39</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1967, pp. 9-10.

<sup>40</sup> *BBC Record*, 54 (Oct. 1967).



1967 Lord Hill, Chairman of the ITA, was appointed Chairman of the BBC. 'He would take over his duties', it was stated, on 1 September. His appointment, a major shock inside and outside the BBC, was also a matter of resentment—Greene considered it an insult—yet it was not mentioned in the *BBC Handbook* for 1968 except that the name of Hill now appeared in place of the name of Normanbrook at the head of the list of members of the Board of Governors. Nor did Hill figure in the *BBC Handbook* for 1969 in an article by Greene called 'The BBC since 1958'. In that same edition of the *Handbook*, however, Hill was given the privilege of writing the first words, a 'Foreword', and Greene's article, which made the most of the contrast between 1958 and 1968, was a valedictory article on 'a decade of change'. Greene, the person most directly affected by Hill's appointment, ceased to be Director-General on 31 March 1969.

After Normanbrook's death and before it was time for valedictions, McLachlan described the Chairmanship of the BBC as 'one of the key positions in public life', adding that one of his main problems would be that of 'overseeing Sir Hugh Greene, a man of great determination and with a strong conviction that his mission is that of a liberal editor'. 'This philosophy', McLachlan went on, had brought the BBC 'praise and blame in almost equal proportions' during the previous five years. Normanbrook, 'a model of *gravitas* and courtesy', had been appointed at a time when the BBC was accused of left-wing bias. In fact, during his regime, there had been a paradoxical, delicate situation as 'the old guard' protected the avant-garde. Could this situation last?

The *Association of Broadcasting Staff Bulletin*, which quoted McLachlan's remarks—they had first appeared in the *Evening Standard*—listed possible candidates for the Chairmanship, among them Lord Radcliffe, whose name had for long appeared on any such list; Lord Goodman, who was soon to find himself in the same position; Sir Geoffrey Crowther; Professor Herbert (later Sir Herbert) Butterfield, historian and Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University—his appointment would have been an even bigger surprise than Hill's was to be, not least to himself—Lusty, acting Chairman after Normanbrook's death; and Fulton, 'the hottest favourite', who was to serve as Vice-Chairman under Hill. The last name on the ABS list was that of John Freeman.<sup>1</sup> The *ABS Bulletin* reported that Mrs Whitehouse

<sup>1</sup> *ABS Bulletin*, July 1967. The writer added that the ABS had 'virtually no contact with the Chairman'.

had asked for the new Chairman to be paid a salary sufficiently in excess of the Director-General's so as 'to leave no doubt in anybody's mind who holds the senior position'.<sup>2</sup>

Wilson's choice of Hill as Chairman in 1967 stands out historically as his own decision, and the reasons why he arrived at it are stated most convincingly not in his own memoir of the period, where disappointingly he has virtually nothing to say about broadcasting, but in Marcia Williams's *Inside No. 10*:

Before we went off for our holiday that year, Harold appointed Lord Hill Chairman of the BBC. This was greeted with some bewilderment, though Harold had gone to great pains to consider all the people who were qualified to take on the job from within the organisation itself. If one was going to have a Conservative, he felt it was best to have the real thing, and a man who had already presided over an organisation where impartiality had to be observed because of the Act under which the ITA operates. He felt Lord Hill might even be able to educate the BBC in how to operate a broadcasting system on these terms, rather than in the spirit of the independent empire that they had preserved for themselves.<sup>3</sup>

This clear statement corroborates other evidence. Yet another statement, which has received less attention, adds an extra dimension to the dramatic story. In an interview in 1980, Short, Wilson's Postmaster-General when the appointment was made, recalled that he himself had put forward Hill's name. When he had made the suggestion, he added, Wilson had treated it as a joke.

Short suggested Hill, he himself stated, because he had been 'an outstandingly successful Chairman of the Independent Television Authority', and because he (Short) believed that it was good to have 'cross fertilization' between the BBC and ITV. When questioned about why he had been outstandingly successful in the ITA, he did not go into any detail, however, but praised Hill for his personal qualities—'his straightforwardness, his integrity, his calling a spade, a spade'. He also described him as a man of 'broad cultural interests'. Neither he nor Wilson, he insisted, had conceived of the move as an 'anti-Greene' manoeuvre, and 'nobody wanted Hugh Carleton Greene to resign'. Short conceded, however, that Wilson, whose relations with the BBC were, he recalled, less good than they were with Greene personally, accepted his suggestion gladly because he

<sup>2</sup> In July 1967 the Chairman's salary was £5,000 and the Director-General's £12,500—to be raised to £15,000 on 1 Oct.

<sup>3</sup> Williams, *op. cit.*, pp. 197–8.

believed Hill to be 'a disciplinarian who would put the BBC in its place'.<sup>4</sup>

It is obvious why Wilson felt that the BBC needed 'disciplining'. What he discerned as BBC 'bias', the theme of so many incidents on the record between 1964 and 1967, clearly influenced his decision, as Hill himself confirms in his memoirs. He describes, for example, one long meeting with Wilson in which he gave detailed 'examples of the Corporation's wickedness, many of which went back long before my own time'.<sup>5</sup> Such examples mattered deeply to Wilson, because throughout his Prime Ministership—before and after 1966—he had to deal with an undoubtedly politically biased Press, and because he almost always had more difficult relations with the BBC than with the ITA, which, after all, did not produce programmes and which under Fraser and Hill did not always seek to argue back. The ITA was regulated, too, as Marcia Williams observed, by an Act, not by a Royal Charter, and to Wilson this also mattered. So, too, did the fact that there was machinery for appeal.<sup>6</sup>

Short's own reasoning in 1967 would not have appealed to Greene. Nor would he have liked what Short called 'cross fertilization', one of the most interesting themes of 1967. Significantly, it was to be raised by Wilson a year after Hill's move to the BBC, in an address in Leeds on the opening of Yorkshire Television. Describing the BBC as 'the chartered channel', he added that 'the two television systems' were 'in fact complementary parts of a single public service'. Each had drawn 'many of the best qualities of the other to itself'.<sup>7</sup> The same thesis, which Greene disliked, was argued cogently in book form by Professor Wedell, who had served as the Secretary of the ITA from 1961 to 1964.<sup>8</sup>

'Cross-fertilization' was also raised, although not so named by Short, in an interview with Normanbrook a year before his death. 'Informal contacts' between the Chairman of the BBC and the

<sup>4</sup> \*Short interviewed for BBC programme about Greene, *Battles of Broadcasting*, transmitted 11 Oct. 1980.

<sup>5</sup> Hill, *Behind the Screen: The Broadcasting Memoirs of Lord Hill* (1974), p. 100.

<sup>6</sup> Lusty thought that the BBC was 'always news to an extent that the ITA was not'. Anything at all sensational, or less than sensational, in a BBC programme would be commented upon 'far in excess of any comment on any IBA programme' (Interview with Michael Tracey, quoted in Tracey, *The Production of Political Television* (1977), p. 165). Ch. 9 of Tracey's book consists of an interesting account of 'The Retiring of Hugh Greene'.

<sup>7</sup> Wilson, Speech to mark the opening of Yorkshire Television, 29 July 1968.

<sup>8</sup> E. G. Wedell, *Broadcasting and Public Policy* (1968). Wedell, who in 1983 was to become Director of a new European Institute of the Media, was then Professor of Adult Education at Manchester University.

Chairman of the ITA should become regular. Indeed, there should be meetings to discuss 'such matters of common concern to the two broadcasting organisations as might be brought forward by either of the Chairmen or by the Postmaster-General'. Normanbrook declared himself 'willing in principle to co-operate in an arrangement of this kind', suggesting that 'a form of words could no doubt be worked out by Post Office officials in consultation with the two broadcasting organisations'.<sup>9</sup> It is not clear what happened afterwards or what they discussed if they met. According to Hill, Normanbrook had once told him 'in a mood of exasperation that he could do nothing with Greene', and there were, indeed, some signs, subsequently matters of argument, that before his death Normanbrook had become uneasy about his Director-General.<sup>10</sup>

Much that Short encompassed in his references to 'cross fertilization' would have appeared to Greene to be political manoeuvres designed to hold back or restrict the necessary increase in the BBC's licence fee—'some syphoning of money from one [ITA?] to the other' and 'a council of the two to co-ordinate them'. Greene and the Governors, including Normanbrook, were firmly opposed to both these proposals. They had resisted—and continued to resist—any suggestion that BBC income should accrue indirectly or directly from advertising, and they believed that the creation of any such council would undermine the Governors' position as trustees of the national interest. Hill himself quickly came to share this perspective if, indeed, he had not shared it before his own surprise move from the ITA to the BBC.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> \*Note by the Chairman, 13 July 1966 (R78/3/1).

<sup>10</sup> Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 142. Hill added that he had no such experience with Greene. Lusty noted 'signals' of this when he was Vice-Chairman; Normanbrook was becoming 'a little worried' by some of the complaints 'which were reaching him about what people regarded as BBC blunders in the field of religion and good taste and all the rest of it' (quoted in Tracey, *The Production of Political Television*, p. 165). In a review of this book, Curran (*New Society*, 19 Jan. 1978) wrote that Normanbrook had 'doubts as Chairman about how long Greene should continue in office, but they never came to the point of action because of Normanbrook's death'. Greene denied to me and to Leonard Miall separately that Normanbrook had such doubts. He had retained, he said, his full confidence to the end.

<sup>11</sup> See below, pp. 724–5. For the idea of such a council, see Wedell, *op. cit.*, pp. 269–70. Wedell gives a specific example (p. 76) of co-operation between the BBC and ITA and of the attitude of the Postmaster-General (then Benn) to it. Both Greene and Fraser complained to Benn about the purchase by a pay TV company of the exclusive rights to the World Heavyweight Boxing Championship between Clay and Liston in May 1966. Benn refused to intervene. For *The Times* (7 May 1966) it should have been no business of his anyway.

When Normanbrook died, there was bound to be a difference of approach to the appointment of his successor in Broadcasting House and in Downing Street. Any Labour Prime Minister might have felt that he needed to appoint a political Chairman who would be 'on the same wavelength' and, incidentally, more able to provide an easy line of access to a self-assured BBC than Normanbrook, a civil servant, had been able to do. Wilson's own first choice might well have been Herbert Bowden, Labour Chief Whip before Short, who had become Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs after the general election of 1966. Bowden had told Wilson before Normanbrook's death that he wished to move out of politics, and he had many contacts with the BBC. Instead, Wilson cleverly made two appointments in one by choosing Hill for the BBC and appointing Bowden to the Chairmanship of the ITA in Hill's place. What Wilson did not then know was that Hill would prove to be more independent-minded than Normanbrook or, indeed, Bowden. He seems to have believed that Hill would succeed in 'educating the BBC', a phrase that carried with it more than a whiff of arrogance, the kind of arrogance that Wilson, Benn, and Short, three very different kinds of politicians, associated with the BBC itself.

Benn's views on the BBC (and Normanbrook) were clear at the time. Short set out his views in his memoirs, where, describing his life as Wilson's Chief Whip, he recalled 'the indifference of the BBC to all our complaints'. He liked Normanbrook and Greene personally, but complained after the Blackpool party conference of 1965 that the BBC 'seemed to be quite incapable of dealing in a balanced way with anything involving the Labour Government', adding for good measure that there was 'no discernible improvement until the 1966–70 Government, when I, as Postmaster-General—with the agreement of the Prime Minister—appointed Charles Hill Chairman. His wisdom, toughness and experience of political life injected a much needed element of discipline into its editorial and production activities.'<sup>12</sup> It is fair to note that Short was critical of the ITA also.

<sup>12</sup> Short, *Whip to Wilson* (1989), pp. 177, 139–40. Short had described earlier how Wilson telephoned him frequently with complaints about BBC programmes, including the daily summary of the Press, broadcast in *Today*, after the news bulletin. Because most newspapers were Conservative, this was in Short's opinion 'a daily party political programme on behalf of the Conservatives'. Short recalled in his interview for *Battles of Broadcasting* that there had been a 'general feeling in politics' that 'producers in the BBC pleased themselves what they did, that . . . neither the Director-General nor the Board, nor the Chairman, knew very much about what was going on'. On reflection he had come to the conclusion that the BBC was not biased against the Government.

He described his contacts with both broadcasting authorities as 'rather troublesome'. On one occasion Greene and Fraser in turn, obviously, in his view, acting in collusion, had refused to let him see a list of MPs who had appeared on their programmes.<sup>13</sup>

Whatever the reasoning behind Hill's appointment, it was obvious, not least to Wilson himself, that the choice that he was making would not appeal to many people inside the Labour Party. Indeed, even before the appointment, many of his supporters complained that far too many committed Conservatives were being offered senior public posts.<sup>14</sup> Wilson still had the Bowden appointment, however, at his disposal, and he concluded, rightly as it turned out, that this would restore the balance. As for Hill himself, he had never thought of becoming Chairman of the BBC, and first heard of his possible appointment when the telephone rang on the evening of 25 July 1967 while he and his wife were 'dozing peacefully' in front of their television set. At the other end of the line was Philip Phillips, the television correspondent of the *Sun*, who asked him to comment on a story he had just heard that he was to move to the BBC and be succeeded by Bowden at the ITA.

A few months earlier, Wilson had met Hill at a party, and had told him lightly that when he had finished sorting out the ITV companies he had better go on and sort out the BBC. Hill had rightly taken the remark as a joke, and on 25 July he characteristically called the *Sun's* story 'a load of nonsense'.<sup>15</sup> None the less, he rang Short, who was attending a public dinner, who told him quite unhelpfully that he had heard a similar story from a *Daily Mirror* executive an hour or two before. There were three or four more Press calls for Hill that evening, to which his wife now replied that her husband was not available; but there was also a call from Short asking him to meet the Prime Minister at the House of Commons at 2.30 p.m. the next day.<sup>16</sup>

When they met, with Short present, Wilson congratulated Hill on his work at the ITA, and asked him at once whether he would move

<sup>13</sup> Short, *op. cit.*, pp. 197–8.

<sup>14</sup> The *Guardian*, 26 July 1967, reported that the appointment of Hill 'received a less than enthusiastic welcome among Labour MPs yesterday. Many were indignant for this reason. Others were concerned that the appointment would precipitate a clash with Greene.' Crossman (*op. cit.*, vol. 2, entry for 26 July, p. 445) described the choice of Hill as 'a characteristic piece of Wilsonian gimmickry . . . So Harold has coolly switched Hill to the BBC to discipline it and bring it to book'.

<sup>15</sup> Meanwhile, Greene had been told by Arkell at a party that he had heard a Post Office official say that Hill would be appointed. Again it was rightly taken as a joke. The official had been pulling Arkell's leg (Tracey, *A Variety of Lives*, pp. 278–9).

<sup>16</sup> Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 70.



to the BBC. 'The press had got wind of what was in his mind', and it would be convenient if he could answer at once since he wished to make an announcement at midnight.<sup>17</sup> There were no strings, and Hill, who found the surprise invitation 'irresistible', accepted.<sup>18</sup> He was not offered an extension of his ITA chairmanship: Bowden was obviously in line for that. It was Fraser, however, whom Hill told first about his impending switch, having himself chosen the date of 1 September for it to take place.

Hill went on very quickly to tell the Board of the ITA of his impending move at the end of a dinner being given that evening for their retiring Vice-Chairman, Sir Sydney Caine, by which time the story (with his approval) had already been released earlier than had been agreed upon in the afternoon. The first reaction yet again was that it was a joke, but there were some 'No, Noes' and several black looks. One member of the Authority, the formidable Baroness (Evelyn) Sharp, whose own name had appeared in the Press as a possible candidate for the BBC Chairmanship, 'looked', in Hill's phrase, 'as if she could murder me'.<sup>19</sup>

There were people inside the BBC who shared that reaction. The first person to receive the news was Lusty, the Acting Chairman, who had been summoned to the Post Office on 26 July.<sup>20</sup> When Short announced the appointment to him, having first made an awkward slip of the tongue and told him that the Chairman was to be 'Charles Smith',<sup>21</sup> the impact on Lusty, in his own breathless words, was 'absolutely enormous':

I'd hardly any idea what to say or what to think. But instantly I thought how am I to go back to the BBC and tell the Director-General that . . . our new Chairman was to be Charles Hill. However, I arrived at the BBC with this dreadful news, as I thought it to be, and I went straight up to the Director-General's office where he was sitting down, and I said 'Hugh, I am sorry to

<sup>17</sup> According to Tracey, *A Variety of Lives*, p. 279, Wilson had told an *Economist* party about his plan on 25 July.

<sup>18</sup> Hill, *op. cit.*, pp. 70–1.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72. The two had worked together when Hill was Minister of Housing and Local Government in 1961–2. There is a slightly fuller account in Hill's Diary, 26 July 1967. Most of the first letters of congratulation came, to Hill's delight, from ITV. 'Nothing from the BBC except for a few heavily confidential ones from old friends' (Diary, 27 July). The ITA gave Hill his farewell dinner on 31 Aug.

<sup>20</sup> He was rung up twice by Short on 26 July. At first the appointment was fixed for 27 July, but this was later changed on the second call to 26 July. He did not know why he was being summoned.

<sup>21</sup> Charles Smith, General Secretary of the Post Office Engineering Union, an able and agreeable man, was obviously in Short's mind for other reasons. Lusty had never heard of him.

bring you the worst possible news that I could possibly bring you. Our new Chairman from the first of September is to be Lord Hill.' And . . . I might have shot him. He bounded up in his chair. And I said, 'Hugh, don't do anything hasty.'

Greene himself recalled that he 'had never felt the BBC so united from top to bottom as in its rude shock at this, I can only use the term, disgraceful appointment. He [Hill] did not have the intellect or the character that one had become used to in a Chairman of the BBC.'<sup>22</sup>

Greene was wrong both about the man and about BBC reactions to the change after the first shock waves had passed through Broadcasting House and Television Centre. At first, the news had been greeted, it was said by Attenborough, in the same way as a wartime announcement by Churchill assigning Rommel the command of the Eighth Army. Yet if Wilson was no Churchill, Hill was no Rommel. He had, indeed, been a highly successful Chairman of the ITA when he had taken over that post in 1963, even then not without critics;<sup>23</sup> it had been his main task to 'sort things out' in the light of the Pilkington Report. 'We weren't an army in disarray,' one of the joint Assistant Director-Generals, Anthony Pragnell, recalled, 'but it was good to have some steadying which certainly Hill gave us.'<sup>24</sup>

Very soon, however, Hill had done more than steady the Authority. He had presided genially over ITV's tenth anniversary, and had seen through, if not in triumph, the new franchise awards made by the ITA earlier in 1967.<sup>25</sup> Howard Thomas, one of the Managing Directors of a leading company, ABC, which was to merge with Redifusion in 1968 to form Thames Television, wrote to him privately in that year that until he had arrived at Brompton Road there had been lack of confidence in the system. 'It was not until you came into Independent Television that the picture began to change.'<sup>26</sup>

While at Brompton Road Hill had given many clues as to the course that he would follow in Broadcasting House. He had appointed committees, including a Finance Committee, and he had visited all the Independent Television companies one by one. He had clearly

<sup>22</sup> BBC Radio programme, *Remember the Voice: The Story of Charles Hill*, 15 Aug. 1990.

<sup>23</sup> Lord Morrison of Lambeth described his appointment as a 'public scandal' (quoted in Wedell, op. cit., p. 122). He and other critics complained that he had been Postmaster-General when the first ITV station had gone on the air.

<sup>24</sup> *Remember the Voice*.

<sup>25</sup> Two new companies, London Weekend Television and Yorkshire Television, were created. See Sendall, op. cit., ch. 30, 'The Franchise Trail'. One personal casualty in 1967 was Sir John Spencer Wills, Chairman of AR.

<sup>26</sup> Thomas to Hill, 11 Sept. 1967 (Hill Papers).

stated the case for public service broadcasting, and he had claimed that competition with the BBC was healthy, provided that it was fair competition and, turning an old argument on its head, that ITV was not subjected all the time to pressure to go for numbers. He had expressed the hope too that the number of broadcasting hours would be looked at afresh 'the moment the BBC' got 'its proper licence fee', a recognition of the fact that the fee was too low, as the BBC claimed.

Hill had supported ITN in the battle for *News at Ten*, which first went on the air on 3 July 1967, using his full weight as Chairman to win over the contracting companies; and by the time that he moved to the BBC had had the satisfaction of hearing it called 'the most important news programme on television'.<sup>27</sup> He had taken a personal interest also in quality programming. 'Would money spent on programmes raise their quality?' he had asked in an interview which he gave to the *Evening Standard* in 1965, replying to his own question, 'As yet, there is no sign that this would follow'. There was naturally no premonition in this interview that he would ever move from ITA to BBC after his appointment ended in 1968. Was there, however, any chance, he was asked, 'of his coming back to broadcasting as a performer?' 'No,' was his reply, 'I have had my day in that respect.'<sup>28</sup>

Greene was quite unimpressed by Hill and by his record, and particularly disliked the fact that Hill had chosen not to ignore Mrs Whitehouse but to meet her and to correspond with her in a 'postal dialogue'.<sup>29</sup> His own immediate reaction to the news of Hill's appointment, therefore, was to offer his own resignation. Indeed, he made an appointment to see Short the following morning, 27 July.<sup>30</sup> His colleagues—and Lusty—urged him to be patient and to think things over before acting, with Whitley telling him that if, after that, he chose to resign, the whole of the Board of Management would resign with him, 'leaving the BBC at the mercy of its new master'.<sup>31</sup> He was finally swayed, however, neither by Lusty nor by Whitley, but by Peter Hardiman Scott, the BBC's Political Correspondent, who told him that Wilson's motive had been to force him to resign. It was this news influence, true or false, that prevailed.

<sup>27</sup> Sendall, *op. cit.*, pp. 232, 235.

<sup>28</sup> *Evening Standard*, 16 Sept. 1965.

<sup>29</sup> Hill, *op. cit.*, pp. 26, 79–80.

<sup>30</sup> He never thought of offering his resignation to Short, with whom he had good relations. He would 'tell him what he thought about it all' ('Greene interviewed by Gillard for the Oral History Project, March 1977).

<sup>31</sup> Tracey, *A Variety of Lives*, p. 281.

Given all the evidence, it is unlikely that, in putting forward the name of Hill, Wilson actually wished to provoke the resignation of Greene as Director-General.<sup>32</sup> He might well have foreseen, however, what Greene's final reaction would be. Greene stayed, but fanned the flames, using the *Observer* to suggest that Wilson was determined that henceforward things would not be the same again.<sup>33</sup> Greene's own language could be inflammatory. Much of the newspaper comment, by contrast, was bemused.



14. 'And here's the four letter word that caused the biggest shock of all H-I-L-L!', Whitworth in *Sheffield Morning Telegraph*, 28 July 1967.

Anne Duchesne writing in the *Guardian* in September after six weeks abroad—and Hill was then ensconced in Broadcasting House—described the situation as 'uncomfortable'. All things connected. Broadcasting House had been invaded also by 'a posse of ex-pirate disc jockeys', and even the *Listener* was switching from the 'contemplative' to the 'contemporary'.<sup>34</sup>

Angry or bemused, the Governors showed by their behaviour, if not by their words, how unhappy they were at Hill's arrival. His reception was frosty when he entered Broadcasting House in September, although the commissioner gave him a 'theatrical salute', and in later years he was to recall honestly, but not with bitterness, 'the pettiness, the childishness of some people at the top of the BBC before and after my arrival'.<sup>35</sup> When he left the BBC, Hill wrote to a few colleagues asking them to explain the initial reception. Attenborough, then a free-lancer, explained it in part as deriving from 'a strong competitive feeling towards ITV'. Glanmor Williams said that there was a feeling that some kind of 'Trojan horse'

<sup>32</sup> Crossman, *op. cit.*, p. 445, spoke of Wilson choosing Hill to 'deal with Greene'. Tracey, considering this and other evidence, reaches a different conclusion from me.

<sup>33</sup> *Observer*, 30 July 1967: 'It is already being suggested that the BBC will manage to accommodate him as an oyster does a piece of grit.'

<sup>34</sup> *Guardian*, 11 Sept. 1967. The new Editor of *The Listener*, Karl Miller, would not have put it that way, any more than Hill or Tony Blackburn. He stated that he would depend less on published scripts and more on pieces derived from television that would look like 'original material'. He also promised to review ITV as well as BBC programmes (*The Listener*, 3 Aug. 1969).

<sup>35</sup> Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

had entered Broadcasting House, 'by means of which what the ITV had lost by means of fair competition was going to be regained by more insidious methods'. Gillard told him he had been regarded as 'Mr. ITV'.<sup>36</sup>

Already before the Governors met at 11 o'clock on the morning of 27 July, Lusty had written to Short, telling him that the news given him in their brief meeting on the previous day had filled him with 'profound dismay and consternation', and he now read his letter to his colleagues. 'My basic anxiety', he had told Short, 'is that one man in one lifetime can, with sincerity, accept with conviction two completely different concepts.'<sup>37</sup>

The concepts were not quite as different as Lusty suggested, but it was to take time before Lusty saw this. He may have hoped to be Chairman himself. Greene never saw what Lusty came to see. He did not believe in 1967 that Hill's tenure at the ITA, where one of his main tasks had been to deal with the contracting programme companies, would help him in any way to be Chairman of the BBC and years later after Hill had left the BBC, he was never prepared to pay any tribute to him for what he had accomplished as BBC Chairman. Within the BBC Greene had always seen his own main role, as McLachlan appreciated, as being that of Editor-in-Chief. His 'concepts', Lusty's term, both of his own role and of the Chairman's role were genuinely incompatible, therefore, with those of Hill.<sup>38</sup> When in 1974 he read the proofs of Hill's published memoirs, the three criticisms which Greene referred to in a letter to Hill all related to editorial matters.<sup>39</sup>

It was of help to Hill that the Governors' meeting of 27 July was the last meeting of the Board until September, and that there would soon be changes in its composition and size, which was to be increased from nine to twelve. The increase, which generated little public interest and took time to implement, may well have been part of Wilson's Bowden plan, although it had been proposed earlier by Short: Hill was told of it when he met Wilson on 26 July, and two

<sup>36</sup> Attenborough to Hill, 20 Jan. 1973; Glanmor Williams to Hill, 13 Jan. 1973; Gillard to Hill, 7 Jan. 1973 (Hill Papers).

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Tracey, *A Variety of Lives*, p. 284; \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 27 July 1967.

<sup>38</sup> The incompatibility was revealed in a review by N. Collins of my book *Governing the BBC*, which also discusses in detail the relationship between Chairman and Director-General (see N. Collins, 'The Governors', *Books and Bookmen*, Feb. 1980).

<sup>39</sup> Greene to Hill, 7 June 1974 (Hill Papers). He stated more generally, however, that 'as you would expect there is much that I disagree with and much which I would question'.

days later it was promulgated by Order in Council.<sup>40</sup> There was now a new National Governor for Northern Ireland, Lord Dunleath, whom Hill welcomed at the next meeting, the first which he chaired, and another future member was also present then, Sir Ralph Murray from the Foreign Office, who formally took office from 1 October 1967. Murray's appointment was highly acceptable to Greene, who had suggested his name;<sup>41</sup> none the less, it was Murray who is said to have introduced Hill, with courtesy and tact, to the members of the old Board, who still felt 'numbed and shocked' by what had happened.<sup>42</sup>

The first two new Governors in 1968 were chosen from outside the circles which Greene knew best, and in their different ways were to be helpful to Hill, whose Chairmanship they, unlike their predecessors, took completely for granted. The first, Sir Robert Bellinger, appointed in February, came from business, and was a recent Lord Mayor of London. The second, Tom Jackson, Secretary of the Union of Post Office Workers, also appointed in February, was down to earth and able. Other appointments soon followed, so that by the time Hill had been in the Chair for a year, he had a very different Board with which to work from that which he had inherited. Sir Learie Constantine joined the Board in July, along with Dame Mary Green, experienced and outward-looking Headmistress of Kidbrooke Comprehensive School and a member of the Donovan Commission on Trade Unions.<sup>43</sup> Constantine's tenure was relatively short: he died in office in 1971; Dame Mary stayed until July 1973. One new Governor appointed in 1970, Lady Plowden, was to make a Hill-like move in reverse, leaving the Vice-Chairmanship of the BBC in 1975 to become Chairman of the IBA, ITA's successor.

<sup>40</sup> Hill mentions the increase in his unpublished Diary, 26 July 1967. Lusty sent Hill a copy of a letter he had sent to Short on 26 June 1967 objecting to the change, which he said would be 'disastrous to the essential cohesion of the Board in dealing with the responsibilities which confront it', and which, 'if I may say so, are entirely different from the responsibilities confronting the members of the ITA' (Lusty to Hill, 28 Dec. 1967 (Hill Papers)).

<sup>41</sup> Greene to Sir John Nicholls, July 1966. 'Unfortunately we don't choose our Governors, but we are sometimes consulted. If you managed to get Ralph Murray's name fed into the Foreign Office machine and we were asked about it we should give it warm support' (quoted in Tracey, *A Variety of Lives*, p. 248).

<sup>42</sup> Briggs, *Governing the BBC*, p. 164. Hill describes in his Diary, 15 Aug. 1967, a meeting with Murray. They had first met when Murray was in the Foreign Office and Hill was Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

<sup>43</sup> When Hill retired, Dame Mary wrote to him saying that he was the best of Chairmen, 'strong, decisive and absolutely fair'. 'For me personally it has been a great privilege and a great pleasure to work with you' (Greene to Hill, 22 Dec. 1972 (Hill Papers)).



Lusty, who left the Board on 1 February 1968, had had a difficult interview with Greene following the meeting on 27 July 1967. It had nothing, however, to do with the dramatic change that had taken place. Rather, Greene told him that his marriage was breaking up, and that there would soon be a divorce. 'I suppose I can assume', he continued, 'that in these liberal days the Board will take a liberal attitude and not regard this with disfavour.' It must have been another shock to Greene when Lusty replied that he did not know. The situation was, he felt, extremely complicated.<sup>44</sup> What Lusty meant has been a matter of debate.<sup>45</sup> It was not he, however, who had to deal with the information that Greene had given him. The news of the divorce did not break as quickly as had seemed likely, and, ironically, while Lusty took immediate soundings among his colleagues, it was Hill who was left to deal with the complications.

At his first Board meeting, when no one formally welcomed him, Hill took the chair as if he had been Chairman for years. He also attended his first meeting of the General Advisory Council on 18 October, and that did not impress him at all. Meanwhile, he had deliberately broken with BBC precedent in a number of ways, bringing in his own secretary from outside, Hazel Fenton, who had worked with him for twenty years; choosing a modest new room on the fourth floor and, as a result, abandoning close proximity to the Director-General, whose office had hitherto been separated from the Chairman's only by a common secretarial pool; talking at length to senior BBC officials and to producers and visiting different sections of the BBC inside and outside London, an activity which itself aroused suspicion;<sup>46</sup> wishing to keep a colour television set installed in his home by the ITA;<sup>47</sup> and, biggest break of all, actually receiving a deputation from Mrs Whitehouse and two others on 9 Novem-

<sup>44</sup> Tracey, *A Variety of Lives*, p. 285.

<sup>45</sup> His own recollections of 'so-called' liberal days were not consistent. After meeting Lusty in 1977, Miall recorded that he said that when Normanbrook was expressing his doubts about Greene to him and the name of Curran had been mentioned as successor, Normanbrook's first reaction was that Curran would be an impossible candidate since he was a Roman Catholic (Note by Miall, 15 Nov. 1977). See also a letter from Lusty to *The Times*, 1 Oct. 1983.

<sup>46</sup> Tracey, *A Variety of Lives*, p. 289, reports Greene as saying that 'one could not have confidence that he was not doing things behind one's back'. Greene's reactions were very similar to those of Reith in the 1920s and 1930s, when Lady Snowden talked to members of BBC staff. Hill visited Television Centre for the first time on 5 Sept. He visited Manchester among other places on 23 Nov. where he 'emphasised to staff my belief in the importance of regional broadcasting' (Hill, Diary, 23 Nov. 1967).

<sup>47</sup> Diary, entry for 28 July–6 Aug.: 'BBC not pleased'.

ber.<sup>48</sup> 'I treated Mrs Whitehouse and her colleagues with courtesy,' he explained later, 'recognizing that the central theme of her campaign could not be contemptuously dismissed, even though I was rarely able to agree with her.'<sup>49</sup>

All these breaks were in part symbolic. There was a different break, however, which was not symbolic at all. Almost at once Hill had to deal with questions of finance, questions which Normanbrook had never probed as fully.<sup>50</sup> There was, of course, continuing concern in this connection, for the BBC's financial problems, while new to Hill, were not new to his colleagues—or to Greene. The first cordial letter from Lusty to Hill—although it was addressed 'My dear Lord Hill' (the 'My' was new)—related to finance. He now described as 'splendid' a draft letter from Hill to Short that set out the BBC's financial position.<sup>51</sup>

According to Hill, Greene, whatever his feelings, behaved in a civil fashion to him from the start—they were soon on Christian name terms<sup>52</sup>—and in late December 1967 he told him privately what he had told Lusty in July. He was worried that because of failure to reach a financial settlement, his divorce action would be contested, and that the Press would soon publish details of his private life. Hill's response was reassuring. Although he knew him less well than Lusty did, he told him, as Lusty had not done, that he believed that a man's private life was his own, and that he did not regard the matter as being of concern to himself or to the Governors.<sup>53</sup> There is no evidence as to whether the phrase 'in these liberal days', which Greene had used in talking to Lusty, was used on this occasion.

Nothing happened immediately about the divorce, although rumours circulated widely inside the BBC and the Press that, for whatever reason, Greene was about to cease to be Director-General;

<sup>48</sup> Hill, op. cit., p. 79. For Mrs Whitehouse's account of a lunch at the ITA at which Hill invited her to speak, see *Cleaning Up TV* (1967), pp. 57–8. She quotes a passage by Marsland Gander comparing ITV and BBC attitudes in the *Daily Telegraph*, 20 Dec. 1965.

<sup>49</sup> Hill, op. cit., p. 80.

<sup>50</sup> See below, p. 724.

<sup>51</sup> Lusty to Hill, 1 Nov. 1967 (Hill Papers). For the exchange with Short, see below, pp. 724–5.

<sup>52</sup> Diary, 8 Aug. 1967. Hill had invited Greene to lunch before he took over; it was, in Hill's words, 'brief and not hostile'. 'I told him not to believe what had been said in the newspapers about Wilson's and my motives.' After two months he still found Greene 'cautious' and 'almost remote'. Whitley he found 'the perfect gentleman', Wheldon 'frank, friendly, wordy and argumentative', Arkell 'helpful and not displeased to see me'. Kenneth Adam showed *bonhomie*, and called him by his Christian name 'when others were not there' (Diary, general note after about two months).

<sup>53</sup> Hill, op. cit., ch. 10.

and in April 1968 Greene approached Hill once more, this time with a specific request that the Governors issue a statement which he had already drafted saying that he would remain Director-General 'at least until his sixtieth birthday in November 1970', adding that any possibility of an extension beyond that date would be the subject of later discussion between the Board and himself. A further point was to be made in the statement: 'The Board believe in principle that the eventual successor to Sir Hugh should be found if possible from within the ranks of the BBC.'<sup>54</sup>

The divorce, not politics, was uppermost in Greene's mind when he penned this statement, and Hill, not surprisingly, found it odd and disturbing. It was a statement which even now does not stand up to careful scrutiny. Why the words 'at least', and why should it have been a 'matter of principle' that his successor should be found inside the BBC? Yet, the statement drew Chairman and Director-General into deeper private discussion than they had hitherto shared. Hill sensibly suggested as they talked that the whole question of future senior appointments—and not merely his own—might well be raised with the Board. He also drew out Greene's views not only concerning the time when he felt that he should cease to be Director-General but also on the names of possible successors. He thereby learned more about the inner politics of BBC leadership than he had hitherto done.

The outcome was unpremeditated and unprecedented. Hill conceived of the idea of Greene being appointed a Governor of the BBC after he ceased to be Director-General, a move that would contradict any suggestion that Greene had been required to leave the Director-Generalship because of the divorce: his private life would be kept out of the limelight. The idea was Hill's, not Greene's, and after further talk he accepted it, calling it later, somewhat ungenerously, 'a very skilful piece of work on his [Hill's] part'.<sup>55</sup> It was Greene, not Hill, who was helped by it. Greene now went on, however, to write a letter to Hill on 23 May, which was very different in content and tone from that of 26 April: it stated that, after having been on 'this job for nearly 8½ years', the time was coming to 'hand over to a successor who would then be well established by the time the next enquiry into the future of broadcasting gets under way, probably in 1972'. The handwritten letter had a last paragraph which must have pleased

<sup>54</sup> Greene to Hill, 26 April 1968 (Hill Papers).

<sup>55</sup> \*Interview with Gillard, March 1977.

Hill. 'I should like to say how much I have come to enjoy our personal association in recent months. I think, if I may say so, that the future of the BBC is in good hands, both at Board and at Board of Management level.'<sup>56</sup>

To separate Greene's divorce from his leaving the BBC continued to require wise handling. After Greene had stated precisely that he would like it to be announced that he would step down as Director-General in mid-1969 and become a Governor, it was necessary for Hill to put the proposal in outline to the Prime Minister for his approval, and, before he did so, Greene also asked Hill, 'diffidently', to raise with Wilson whether he might receive a life peerage. He wished, he said, to be 'active on the fringe of politics'.<sup>57</sup>

Wilson had heard of Greene's impending divorce, and accepted the arrangements in outline. The life peerage was only mentioned briefly, however, along with the BBC's licence fee. It was now the turn of the Governors to be less immediately forthcoming. One of them doubted, correctly, whether an ex-Director-General could become an effective Governor.<sup>58</sup> Another rightly raised the question of the likely impact of such an arrangement on the Director-General who would follow Greene. Eventually all of them agreed, however, and on 15 July 1968 Hill, with Greene at his side, announced Greene's retirement as Director-General and appointment as a Governor at a special Press Conference. Whatever either man thought, the right words were said. Greene welcomed the new possibilities open to him, hinting that his successor should come from inside not from outside the BBC. 'I think my greatest satisfaction', he went on, was that in his time as Director-General, 'the BBC has become more realistic as an organisation and closer to life as lived'.<sup>59</sup>

Press comment the following day was largely favourable to Greene, and the explanations given were taken at their face value. 'Lord Hill "Suggested Post as Governor"', *The Times* headline read.<sup>60</sup> There were other suggestions, however, that there had been a great row between Hill and Greene—there had not—or, going back to comments made when Hill was appointed, that there had been a plot

<sup>56</sup> Greene to Hill, 23 May 1968 (Hill Papers).

<sup>57</sup> Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

<sup>58</sup> Greene was told this also by several of his closest colleagues. It did not help that he suggested that the arrangement would allow him to 'keep an eye' on Hill (Tracey, *A Variety of Lives*, p. 298).

<sup>59</sup> \*Press Announcement, 15 July 1968.

<sup>60</sup> *The Times*, 16 July 1968. *The Evening Standard*, 17 July 1968, asked: 'Did he jump or was he pushed?'

from the start to get rid of Greene. 'No one . . . is ever going to convince the world outside' that the reasons for Sir Hugh's departure 'upstairs to the Governors' room are as simple as they seem' was a comment in a *Guardian* leader, 'Room at the top in the BBC', which added that scepticism was inevitable. 'The BBC is not always popular with politicians of any party.'<sup>61</sup> When Hill had been appointed Chairman, Ivor Yates, a percipient and knowledgeable observer, had written in the *Observer* that there had been no sounds from the Conservative Party. 'No dog barked . . . Even Mr. Heath failed to run off one of his reach-me-down statements. The silence somehow seemed suspicious.'<sup>62</sup>

There was no silence, however, as the naming of Greene's successor was awaited. 'Who next, and whither Sir Hugh?' *The Times* diarist asked two days after the Press Conference, suggesting that Curran was the strong favourite and noting that Mrs Whitehouse's candidate was Lord Shawcross.<sup>63</sup> In fact, by then Curran had been interviewed more than once by the Governors, along with others, including Wheldon and Attenborough.<sup>64</sup>

Greene felt that the Governors took too long to announce that Curran would be his successor; it should have been 'the easiest thing in the world' to choose him 'if enough of them had experience and sense'.<sup>65</sup> There was anger in this reaction, as well as frustration. The announcement was not made until 8 August, one day after a Board meeting, when the tenure was described as 'of the order of eight years', from 1 April 1969.<sup>66</sup>

Greene's last months as Director-General were far from straightforward, and he was to remain a Governor for only a short period, standing down in August 1971.<sup>67</sup> Before he handed over to Curran, the Governors had given a lunch to Wilson, when Hill found the Prime Minister 'friendly, confident, chatty' at lunch, for once not reciting complaints and claiming that he wanted less politics on the

<sup>61</sup> *Guardian*, 16 July 1968.

<sup>62</sup> *Observer*, 3 Sept. 1967.

<sup>63</sup> *The Times*, 17 July 1968.

<sup>64</sup> \*Curran interviewed by Leonard Miall for the Oral History Project, Jan. 1978. Hill, op. cit., pp. 104 ff., notes how Greene favoured Curran and how Whitley quickly dropped out as a possible candidate. Various other BBC posts were at stake, and he records that Curran, Whitley, Lamb, Wheldon, and Attenborough talked to the Board in turn (See below, p. 727). He gives his impressions of each one in turn.

<sup>65</sup> Tracey, *A Variety of Lives*, p. 305.

<sup>66</sup> \*Board of Governors, 7 Aug. 1968; Press Announcement, 8 Aug. 1968.

<sup>67</sup> For his meeting with Hill at which he announced his resignation, on 5 Aug. 1971, see Hill, op. cit., p. 146. He said that he was soon to be appointed Chairman of the family business, Greene King Brewery.

air, not more. In the words of an unnamed BBC official present, he had buried the hatchet, but marked the spot.<sup>68</sup> When they met alone, Wilson and Curran got on well, although the BBC continued to be accused of bias against the Labour Party, between their meetings as well as at them.<sup>69</sup> At a dinner at Chequers in December 1969, at which staffing problems, licence fees, party political broadcasts, and the Open University were discussed, the last item recorded by Curran was 'the position of the Chairman'. Referring to a *Sunday Times* profile of Hill, Wilson asked about Hill's critics in the BBC. By then, they had been roused again by the policy document *Broadcasting in the Seventies*. 'It was quite unfair to blame the Chairman for those proposals,' Curran stated firmly, 'and there was certainly no rift between myself and the Chairman on these matters. Anybody who hoped to divide us was pursuing a fruitless ambition. It was quite certain that the relationship between the Chairman and the BBC was a much happier one than at the time of his appointment.'

Curran added in his note that Hill had acquired considerable respect for the political robustness of his 'sense of independence', and this remark, he observed, 'was not lost on the Prime Minister'.<sup>70</sup> What was not lost on Hill and the Board of the BBC was that by then Greene had tired of being a Governor. He and Hill had found themselves in agreement on a number of political issues, and it was other matters that continued to drive a wedge between them. One such matter was whether Board of Management papers should be seen not only by the Chairman but by all members of the Board of Governors. Hill wanted them to be: Greene objected. The first time the matter was discussed, Hill won on his own casting vote. The second time he lost after Greene had rounded up support. A handwritten letter from Greene to Curran survives with one sentence standing out: '6 Governors including myself seem to be quite safe.'<sup>71</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 103. Curran sat on one side of Wilson, Hill on the other ('Board of Governors' Lunch to the Prime Minister'—seating plan (Man. Reg. file (N449, pt. 1)). Wilson thanked Hill, stating that he had 'greatly enjoyed our useful, and to use your phrase, candid, talk round the table' (\*Wilson to Hill, 4 Feb. 1969 (N449, pt. 1)).

<sup>69</sup> See, e.g., Curran's 'Note of a Conversation with the Prime Minister on General Broadcasting Matters—28 April 1969'; and 'J. Haines to William Hardcastle, 4 March 1970 (N449, pt. 1).

<sup>70</sup> \*Curran to Hill, 'Notes on Dinner with Prime Minister, 7th December', 19 Dec. 1969 (N449, pt. 1). Curran saw Wilson again on 22 Dec. 1969, after Wilson had been enraged by an edition of *Panorama* dealing with the Biafran war (\*Curran, 'Note of Conversation between D.G. and the Prime Minister on Tuesday 22nd December 1969', 2 Jan. 1970 (N449, pt. 1)). Hill was called in to see him on the same matter (*op. cit.*, p. 147).

<sup>71</sup> Greene to Curran, 12 Nov. 1969 (Curran Papers).



If Greene won that round, he came out less well on the next round, after he had decided, much to the surprise of his colleagues on the Board, who knew of his views on commercial television, to become a consultant for a series of ITV programmes based on old detective stories and called *The Rivals of Sherlock Holmes*. Equally surprisingly, he announced this at a Press Conference.<sup>72</sup> This was 'cross-fertilization' of a kind that Short had never contemplated, and it was strange that Greene was involved in it. Another less controversial example of it had been the appointment of Michael Peacock and Humphrey Burton to London Weekend Television in 1967.<sup>73</sup> There had also been an earlier, very different kind of cross-fertilization within a couple of months of the end of Greene's Director-Generalship. The former Chairman of the ITA, Sir Kenneth Clark, presented the first of his programmes in one of the best remembered of all BBC series, *Civilisation*, thirteen programmes in colour on BBC-2. Hill had expressed no desire to return to 'performing'. Clark was delighted to do so.

Whether everything that had happened inside the BBC between the summers of 1967 and 1971 was 'civilised' remains a matter of opinion, and much that happened will be described in the next two chapters. There was no doubt, however, about Clark's programmes. Huw Wheldon, who became Curran's Deputy Director-General, described them at the time as 'a milestone in television history', and they won numerous prizes and sold world-wide.<sup>74</sup> Yet the series broke no viewing records. Indeed, Clark himself observed that a series of forty-eight programmes that he had made earlier for ATV had probably been seen by more British viewers and had had more influence.<sup>75</sup> They were called *Five Revolutionary Painters*.

<sup>72</sup> The publishing firm Bodley Head, of which Greene was Chairman, had sold Thames the television rights of the book which Greene had edited (see Hill, op. cit., pp. 144-5; \*Board of Governors, Minutes, 9 Sept. 1971).

<sup>73</sup> Glanmor Williams referred to their move in his letter to Hill describing why initial BBC feeling was so hostile to him (13 Jan. 1973 (Hill Papers)). One attempt at cross-fertilization did not work. Efforts being made in 1968 to attract Johnny Speight back to ITV failed. Frank Muir, who had been Tom Sloan's Assistant Head of Light Entertainment when Speight had first signed his BBC contract, had also moved to LWT and, knowing that *Till Death Us Do Part* was coming to an end, had tried to get an LWT contract for Speight. Muir, Sloan thought, had no right to 'entice' him (\*Sloan to Muir, 27 Feb. 1968 (T12/1321/2)). In fact, *Till Death Us Do Part*, like many other programmes, was to be revived by the BBC in 1972.

<sup>74</sup> In the USA Xerox underwrote the expenses for its American showing by PBS.

<sup>75</sup> In *The Other Half* (1977) Clark describes his television experiences, including an earlier disastrous experience with ATV. He concluded that he might not have been able to do the filmed sequences of *Civilisation* 'with as much vivacity' if he had not 'come up the hard way' of live transmission (ibid., p. 207).

Clark was wrong at least on the question of influence, for *Civilisation* begat many other series. It even created a genre. The first such series was the work of a far more experienced radio and television performer than Clark, Jacob Bronowski, one of the stars of the wartime radio *Brains Trust*, who now set out, in his own words, to 'present the development of science in a series of television programmes to match those of Lord Clark on *Civilisation*'.<sup>76</sup> *The Ascent of Man*, already outlined in July 1969, was broadcast in 1972, the same year as Alistair Cooke's *America*, simultaneously televised in the United States by NBC. Both were series of thirteen programmes, each lasting an hour.

The earlier BBC-2 outstanding success, *The Great War*, had been the work of several collaborators.<sup>77</sup> *Civilisation* was written and narrated by one man alone, Clark, who devoted two years of his life almost exclusively to it. He proved himself to be a superb popularizer, though he was never without critics. The title of the series, however, was not his but Attenborough's. It 'slipped out' when Clark was invited to lunch to discuss the idea, which had also been in Attenborough's mind. Clark, who immediately saw immense possibilities in such a series, had accepted the invitation at the same lunch over coffee, remarking then that he would not need any 'outside help' with the writing and narrating.<sup>78</sup> In his introduction to the richly illustrated volume that accompanied the series, Clark commented that a more descriptive title with the right capital letters would have been 'Speculations on the Nature of Civilisation as Illustrated by the Changing Faces of Civilised Life in Western Europe from the Dark Ages to the Present Day'.

It was a fair comment, for while the programmes were beautifully produced, some of the speculations were limited in range, and some were challengeable. Clark was better in talking about pictures than in discussing ideas. He made another perceptive point, however, which many of his critics would have endorsed. Television, not a

<sup>76</sup> J. Bronowski, *The Ascent of Man* (1973), p. 13. Again, audiences for this, while large, were small in terms of percentages of the viewing public, and while viewers' reactions were generally very favourable, minority opinion was that the programmes were 'all above my head' (BBC, *Annual Review of BBC Audience Research Findings, 1973-74*, pp. 44-50).

<sup>77</sup> See above, p. 415. In 1972 Michael Howard was to present eight BBC programmes, *General Strategy of World War II*, and in 1973 Thames was to produce a twenty-six part series, *World at War*, dealing with the Second World War, masterminded by Jeremy Isaacs with Laurence Olivier as narrator.

<sup>78</sup> Clark, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

book, he explained, was the right medium to have been involved: 'a combination of words and music, colour and movement can extend human experience in a way that words alone cannot do.' Certain moments in the programmes had been 'genuinely moving and enlightening'. They would be 'lost in a book'.<sup>79</sup>

Such programmes cannot, in fact, be the work of one man alone, for they depend for their beauty and for their success on teams of people. Clark himself paid particular tribute to Michael Gill, his senior director, who was to produce Cooke's *America* and had a distinguished career ahead of him on both sides of the Atlantic; to his second director, Peter Montagnon, someone who inspired 'immediate affection'; and to Ann Turner, an assistant producer who turned out to be 'the most marvellous researcher' he had ever known.<sup>80</sup> The word 'research' was to be used extremely loosely in the world of the makers of television series, including series dealing with television itself: Ann Turner was a researcher in an older sense of the word.

Wheldon, in his introduction to a brochure which accompanied the series, singled out also A. A. Englander, the lighting cameraman; Kenneth Macmillan, the camera operator; and Allan Tyrer, the supervising film editor; drawing attention to the daunting technical problems that had been involved, like lighting great areas in the interior of Chartres Cathedral or remote vistas in the high ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Wheldon himself was to solve similar problems when he presented a series called *Royal Heritage* in 1977 in co-operation with Professor (later Sir John) Plumb.

Clark, who had been associated with many committees in his life, including the Trustees of the British Museum, the Advisory Council of the Victoria and Albert Museum, the National Art Collections Fund, and the National Theatre Board, as well as the Arts Council and ITA, quoted John Ruskin with approval at the beginning of the brochure introducing the series: 'Great nations write their autobiographies in three manuscripts, the book of their deeds, the book of their words and the book of their art . . . but of the three the only trustworthy one is the last.' 'If I had to say who was telling the truth

<sup>79</sup> K. Clark, *Civilisation* (1969), pp. xiii, xv. Nevertheless, one viewer wrote to him after a William Blake programme which he said was ruined by loud noisy music. He preferred reading Clark's opinions in *The Listener* (\*Letter of 19 March 1969 (TS3/325/1)). Whatever the relative merits of television and books, the American edition of Clark's book *Civilisation* was on the best-seller list in the USA for eight months, and sold 230,000 copies at \$15 each.

<sup>80</sup> Clark, *The Other Half*, p. 211.

about society,' he added, 'a speech by a Minister of Housing, or the actual buildings put up in his time, I should believe the buildings.' He did not offer his opinion of the future value of the testimony of a major television series, a series that still lives.

# VII

---

## Local, Regional, National, Global

This is BBC Radio Brighton on the air for the very first time . . . over two months ahead of schedule. This is Bob Gunnell, your Station Manager, speaking from the Pavilion Studio, not from our official home. The sudden snow fall has had such a serious effect on our community that it was decided to attempt to open an emergency service.

BOB GUNNELL, first announcement broadcast by Radio Brighton 8 Dec. 1967

It is no easy task to appraise the regions. They bear unexpected likenesses and surprising differences, and each within itself can be a jumble of contradictions. The best collective noun for them is a ramification of regions, an arrangement of the branches of a tree.

HYWEL DAVIES, *BBC Lunch-Time Lecture*, 13 Jan. 1965

Television as well as sound radio must be the voice of the nation, available to the nation as a whole.

BROADCASTING COUNCIL FOR WALES, Evidence to the Pilkington Committee, 1960

In the past ten years the General Overseas Service, now World Service, has ceased to be a service largely in the image of the Home or Light Programmes, broadcasting to a fairly compact and small audience in which expatriates were dominant. . . . Today the audience [largely foreign] has been multiplied many times over.

R. E. GREGSON, 'World Service Reorganisation', 20 April 1966

---

## 1. Basic Geopolitics

In tracing the story of the respective contributions of pirates, educationists, politicians—and presenters—to the making of new broadcasting policies during the 1960s, one of the main themes was the potential role of local radio. It could make a television series in itself. Local radio could be conceived of as a provider either of pop music or of education, if seldom, however, of both together. Yet, it could also be conceived of as a provider of news and as a force making for greater democracy.

The different ways in which it could be conceived at the time are brought out in the questions raised about it in the House of Commons. In an interchange on piracy in October 1965 one MP stated, for example, that 'the problem might solve itself if he were to authorise some legitimate local radio stations'; while in March 1966 Paul Bryan pressed Tony Benn for his ideas on the possibility of providing universities with low-power transmitters of their own for local broadcasts.<sup>1</sup> One of the most remarkable replies to a question on its scope and potential was by Edward Short: 'I think there is a demand for local broadcasting. I do not think it is connected with the number of people listening to pirate radio stations.'<sup>2</sup>

The main thrust behind local radio came initially from inside the BBC, but the politicians were bound to enter the fray from its very beginning, since it was the Government, through the Post Office, and not the BBC, that had to decide whether or not local radio should be introduced. It also had to decide on its timing, on its scale of operations, on its financial basis, and on its management. Should it be left to the BBC, or should it be provided by other agencies? In finding answers to these questions—and often they were long delayed—the questions themselves often got entangled with bigger questions, like the size of the BBC's licence fee and the distribution of wavelengths. Sometimes, too, there were disagreements between senior politicians and senior civil servants.

The first Government White Paper on broadcasting to be issued after the Pilkington Committee had reported, the Paper that awarded

<sup>1</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 718, col. 141, 27 Oct. 1965; *ibid.*, vol. 725, col. 1571, 3 March 1966.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 734, col. 199, 19 Oct. 1966.



the BBC its second television channel, brought an extra consideration into the reckoning. It stated that, as far as local radio was concerned, the Government would 'prefer to take cognisance of public reaction before reaching a decision'.<sup>3</sup> The second White Paper, however, which was issued five months later, in December 1962, raised a different reason for delay, the question of priorities. It stated that the Government would review the situation later 'in the light of the other developments in broadcasting dealt with in this and the previous White Paper'.<sup>4</sup> It was not until 20 December 1966, in the second of two new Labour Governments, that the decision to go ahead with local radio was announced in the long awaited—and long promised—White Paper on broadcasting, the Paper that also authorized the BBC to begin a new network of popular music. It was a decision that immediately produced Opposition protests, and it was not finally to settle the shape of local radio.<sup>5</sup>

While the politicians hesitated, the BBC was tackling a different, if complementary, set of questions about local radio. If it were to launch local radio—and in its thinking the 'if' very soon disappeared—how would its provision relate to the provision of Regional and national radio? Where should it start? In what places, and in what kind of places? Should it be exclusively VHF radio, making use of a new transmission system that opened up new broadcasting channels, the potential of which had been fully recognized by the Beveridge Committee?<sup>6</sup> What could be learnt from the United States, where even small communities had developed local radio on a community basis?<sup>7</sup> What competition could be expected from com-

<sup>3</sup> Cmnd. 1770 (1962), *Broadcasting: Memorandum on the Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960*, para. 76.

<sup>4</sup> Cmnd. 1893 (1962), *Broadcasting: Further Memorandum on the Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960*, para. 41. The White Paper added that the Government did not discount 'a possible latent demand for local sound services'.

<sup>5</sup> Cmnd. 3169 (1966), *Broadcasting*. See above, p. 564, and below, p. 639. The Post Office had already indicated to the BBC on 19 July 1966 ('Lillicrap to Greene (R78/608/1)') that a Ministerial Committee had agreed that the BBC could go ahead. See also 'Greene to Normanbrook, 29 July 1966 (R78/608/1)'.  
<sup>6</sup> The Beveridge Committee had proposed the setting up of VHF stations in local selected areas (Cmd. 8116 (1951), *Report of the Broadcasting Committee, 1949*, Recommendation 73), a proposal which figured in the evidence of the Fabian Society (Cmd. 8117 (1951), *Report of the Broadcasting Committee, 1949: Memoranda Submitted to the Committee*, pp. 318–21). For all its long-standing belief in 'regionalism', which went back to H. G. Wells, the Society now decided to base its policies on changes in technology. 'Local broadcasting was abandoned in favour of Regional broadcasting owing to lack of wavelengths, and the increased supply of wavelengths promised by VHF or FM transmission makes it possible to revive it.' For VHF technology, see below, pp. 839–43.

<sup>7</sup> Frank Gillard went on a tour of the USA in May and June 1954. It had a powerful influence on his attitudes to local radio and other aspects of radio broadcasting. One

mercial interests looking for profits in local radio? Would the programmes that they offered locally be different from BBC programmes? Might they attempt 'networking'?

Within the whole spectrum of BBC broadcasting, there was also a quite different perspective to consider when local radio was on the agenda, particularly at meetings of the Governors and of the General Advisory Council. The Corporation transmitted both national radio programmes and radio (but not television) programmes that were designed for overseas. How would local radio fit into an overall BBC strategy? What within a new spectrum would be the balance between the local and the global, the parish and the world? And what lay between? By a coincidence, this last question had both domestic and international implications, for the word 'region' was employed inside the external services as well as inside the domestic services of the BBC, albeit with a different meaning. In both services, too, there was discussion as to whether there should be smaller units still, what came to be called 'areas'. These became as prominent in the discussions as the Regions themselves.

In domestic broadcasting there were six existing BBC Regions to take into account, including three 'national Regions'—Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, each with its own history. In order to shape policies in relation to them, it was necessary, if only to a limited extent, to take account of Government policy in relation to differently defined Regions, their boundaries and their economic development, a policy which changed during the 1960s. In external broadcasting, now thought of increasingly as 'post-imperial broadcasting',<sup>8</sup> Government policy was always crucial. Through the grant-in-aid, it set the terms of the enterprise.<sup>9</sup> There were also what were in effect policy directives. Certain regions of the world, like North

small station that greatly appealed to him was WVPO Stroudsburg in the Pocono mountains of Pennsylvania. It operated in daylight hours only, and served a community of 15,000 people with a staff of thirteen. It 'spoke to its listeners as a familiar friend and neighbour', and the whole operation was conducted 'with the utmost informality'. One section of the report is called 'Music While You Shop'. Gillard did not meet a single person, he reported, who thought that radio was dying. 'Fundamental changes' were, however, taking place. They affected 'big battalion broadcasting' and an increasing range of local stations (\*Gillard, 'Radio in the USA: A Visitor's View', 6 July 1954 (WAC file E15/75)).

<sup>8</sup> A lecture on this subject was delivered by Tangye Lean to the Royal Commonwealth Society in Feb. 1967 with the title 'Information after Imperialism' (E2/940/1).

<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless at a General Advisory Council meeting in 1960, two members suggested that the external services should take priority over local broadcasting at home (\*Minutes, 13 Jan. 1960).

America or Western Europe, might be cut out of the picture by the Foreign Office. The communications framework was increasingly thought of as global, but regions and areas of 'British interest', including Europe, were narrower and frequently redefined. Meanwhile, for television viewers the world was being perceived increasingly as one. The 1960s ended with the televising of Neil Armstrong landing on the Moon in July 1969 and with pictures of Planet Earth seen from outer space.

All this was new; but as far as radio was concerned not all the questions posed during the 1960s either about the external services or about local radio were new. After one of the many Governmental reviews of external broadcasting had been carried out in 1967, Charles Curran, then Director of External Broadcasting, stated that whenever such a review took place, 'we have invariably found ourselves forced back to consider our first principles', and in a paper called 'a valuation' he started with one 'unbashful assumption' that went back to the years before the Second World War: 'Among external broadcasters the BBC has an unrivalled reputation for veracity, reliability and general standard of performance; when people want to hear "the spoken word" . . . from a foreign station, then, on the whole, it is the BBC which they most want to hear.'<sup>10</sup> The word, not the image, was in his mind.

In the decade before short-wave Empire broadcasting began in 1932, to be followed by the first broadcasts to other countries in their own languages in 1938 and 1939, local radio had been there in the beginning. It was not until the late 1920s that the BBC introduced its Regional Scheme in 1928, devised by engineers and based on high-power medium-wave transmitters.<sup>11</sup> Broadcasting House, Manchester, was opened in 1929. Broadcasting memories were long, and when during the late 1950s the question of local radio began to be discussed again, there was a feeling that in a sense the wheel had turned full circle. On 16 November 1923 broadcasting had started in Sheffield from one of the first of the BBC's low-power relay stations in the provinces.<sup>12</sup> On 15 November 1967 Radio Sheffield was the second new BBC local radio station to go on the air.

<sup>10</sup> \*Curran to Sir Harold Beeley, 7 April 1967; 'The BBC's External Services: A Valuation', 7 April 1967 (E2/655/2). Greene, to whom Curran sent a copy, wrote on it in ink 'a very interesting paper'.

<sup>11</sup> See Briggs, *The Golden Age of Wireless* (1965), pp. 271 ff.

<sup>12</sup> Briggs, *The Birth of Broadcasting* (1961), p. 198. See also *idem*, 'Local and Regional: The Story of Broadcasting in the North of England', in *Collected Essays*, Vol. III: *Serious Pursuits, Communications and Education* (1991), pp. 157–73. A few local stations, among them Manchester, 2ZY, had preceded the founding of the British Broadcasting Company.

During the 1960s a generation-old debate concerning the relationship between Regional and national programmes, which had never been resolved, continued against the background of a changing geographical and social map of Britain, while, against the background of a far more dramatically changing map of the world, external broadcasters, dependent on the developing knowledge and skills of engineers, were drawn into a new interplay of forces 'east and west of Suez'. Both in domestic and in external broadcasting, not totally dissimilar structural questions were arising about the relative share of resources that were to be devoted to 'regions' and about the balance between institutional centralization and decentralization.

## 2. The Regional and the Local

As far as domestic Regional broadcasting was concerned the debate was continuing and unresolved, not only because at every point it involved the disposition of often scarce financial resources, but because the BBC's Regional boundaries in England had been originally fixed purely in terms of engineering practicalities. Geographical, demographical, and cultural considerations had been left out of the reckoning. The huge North Region, with its headquarters in Manchester, stretched deeply into the North Midlands and Lincolnshire; the Midland Region, with its headquarters in Birmingham, spanned a group of counties from the Welsh borders to East Anglia; and the West Region, with its headquarters in Bristol, extended as far east as Brighton. 'The transmitters had ordained it so.'<sup>1</sup> London and the South-East never had a Regional frequency assigned to them, and were left to depend solely on national programmes.

Between 1945 and 1955, so long as radio remained the dominant medium, the Regions enjoyed a period of considerable autonomy. BBC Television, however, was organized from the start on a national basis, and as its coverage spread, what Regional activity was permitted was grafted on to a national system. It could not develop

<sup>1</sup> 'The Broadcasting Role of the English Regions', Paper prepared for the General Advisory Council, 12 Dec. 1972. See also Briggs, *Sound and Vision* (1979), pp. 84-117. Somewhat fancifully it might be claimed that they were modern counterparts of the ancient kingdoms of Northumbria, Mercia, and Wessex (H. Davies, 'The Role of the Regions in British Broadcasting', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 3rd ser., 13 Jan. 1965). Cf. C. B. Fawcett, *Provinces of England* (1960 edn.).

'from below'. The fact that the reverse applied for ITV after the BBC had lost its television monopoly added a new element to the problem. The commercial companies, enfranchised somewhat surprisingly on a regional basis, introduced a new kind of non-metropolitan competition.<sup>2</sup> From the start there were regions in the South and the East, as well as the North, the Midlands, and the West. By the time this happened, a whole library of BBC memoranda had been devoted to what had always been for a number of reasons a highly problematic relationship in radio. The most significant of the new competitive features was that ITA required the regional companies to produce locally 15 per cent, or 7½ hours a week, of their output.

One of the last memoranda on broadcasting in the Regions to be written before the BBC's loss of its television monopoly was an eight-page paper by Frank Gillard, then living and working in Bristol as Head of Programmes, West Region.<sup>3</sup> It is of particular interest in that during the 1960s he was to become both the main advocate of local radio inside the BBC, a very eloquent and determined advocate, and its main organizer. His paper was divided into ten sections, the titles of which speak for themselves: 'Where regional broadcasting begins'; 'What regional broadcasting is'; 'What regional broadcasting does'; 'The response of the audience'; 'Where regional purposes fail'; 'Where regional broadcasting must move forward'; 'A fundamental problem—news gathering'; 'VHF as the weapon'; 'Problems of staffing'; and 'Some early steps'.

Before turning to particulars—and it is particulars that matter most in any discussions of local or, for that matter, Regional radio—Gillard began with a generalization:

The ecology of the culture of Britain is a matter of importance, since a national culture draws its vitality from the cultures of its component areas. Culture in this sense is not an artificially sustained antiquarianism but a contemporary force . . . influencing the way people think, feel and behave. Since a healthy national culture is based on healthy regional cultures, broadcasting which is one of the greatest instruments of our day for the nourishment of culture must accept some responsibility for the whole plant from the roots up.

It was a pertinent generalization, for already before 1960 those regional cultures were making their way into fiction and into film.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For the Regional basis of ITV, see above, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> \*Gillard, 'An Extension of Regional Broadcasting', 28 Feb. 1955 (R34/731/5). For Gillard's role at that time, see above, p. 35.

<sup>4</sup> In 1968 Donald Edwards, first General Manager, Local Radio Development, was to talk of an 'amazing cultural revival' in the provinces in recent years. Yet he talked too of 'culture' as 'a dirty word' ('Local Radio', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 6th ser., 24 Jan. 1968).

The North, in particular, was asserting its identity through Liverpool even more than Manchester, but a Midlands city like Nottingham was on the new cultural map too. And beyond England there was an increasing awareness of Welsh, Scots, and Irish nationhood.

Within this context, Gillard concluded circumspectly that Regional broadcasting—and he did not distinguish clearly between England and Britain—could be only a ‘limited operation’. At best it could fulfil only two primary purposes: serving ‘the purely regional requirements of the domestic and local audience in a region’ and enabling that Region ‘to be properly represented in national and international broadcasting’ by contributing programmes which were ‘characteristic of itself’. Having raised the question of culture himself, Gillard insisted that the main role of Regional broadcasting was ‘informational’.

There might, however, be a further national consequence. Regions (like local radio stations later) might operate as ‘supply units’ or, in more picturesque language, ‘nursery-slopes in broadcasting’.<sup>5</sup> People trained there could go on to play a part in what came to be thought of as a national network. They might also learn through experience in Regional specialization. The West Region, for example, which Gillard knew intimately and where he had been involved in the making of policy, had for long served as a ‘supply unit’ by originating and developing programmes of national interest like *The Naturalist*, *The Archaeologist*, *Country Questions*, and, not least, *Any Questions?*<sup>6</sup> The Midland Region too had developed specialist lines of output.<sup>7</sup>

Gillard, who had made his reputation as a war correspondent, was in the mainstream of BBC thinking when he insisted in 1955 that if non-metropolitan broadcasting—and he used this general term—were to ‘move forward’ in the 1960s either in radio or in television, it would have to create its own news gathering organization, carrying out tasks that it was not then fully discharging.<sup>8</sup> He deliberately—

<sup>5</sup> An older description, within the widest setting, was ‘to exploit programme resources, wherever they may be found, for the benefit of all BBC listeners, both at home and overseas’ (Cmd. 8117 (1951), p. 26).

<sup>6</sup> See above, pp. 221–2. For the West Region’s early television programmes, notably *Look*, see above, p. 180. The Natural History unit was ‘ambidextrous’, dealing both in radio and in television. This was an adjective used in all the Regions. Bristol had also introduced *Down Your Way* (1947).

<sup>7</sup> *The Archers* was the programme usually picked out at the time, not least because of its agricultural content, but the television programme *Come Dancing* had also had its origins in Birmingham (1951). For Regional specialization, see also below, pp. 653–4.

<sup>8</sup> ‘No local paper would allow its reporters to supply news to a purely local BBC radio station,’ yet, ‘if community broadcasting is seen to be inescapable, there is no doubt that



even provocatively—put entertainment second in the balance of programming. ‘People seek out the best entertainment they can find, with little regard to its place of origin.’ ‘Regionalisation in the purely entertainment world has gone phoney.’

Before reaching the point in his argument where he claimed that news gathering and news presentation were crucial, Gillard, by introducing the word ‘area’ into the debate, had already made an imaginative leap of his own which took him outside the existing structure and into the field of local radio. ‘If British radio is to provide real community service [a bigger role than that of supplying information, although a role that was related to it], ways have to be found of concentrating certain broadcasts on localities smaller than the present regional areas.’ The coming of VHF had made it technically possible for the BBC to have as many channels as it required. This made it sensible to split up Regions. ‘We are emerging from the long, dark tunnel of wavelength restriction’, and more units would now be able to broadcast. There was a cultural side to this also. In the new circumstances, ‘the presence of a local transmitter in each town and city’ would not only increase the flow of information; it would vitalize the community. In doing so, it ‘would no doubt flatter local pride enormously’.

On grounds of cost Gillard stopped short in this seminal paper of advocating a local radio system. Instead, he suggested three options within the Regions: local opting out of Regional programmes on a local or an area basis within each Region, similar to Regional opting out of national programmes;<sup>9</sup> Regional allotment of news bulletins to local communities at set times; and the full fragmentation of an existing Region into an appropriate number (perhaps three or four) of smaller areas, each equipped with a transmitter serving a limited number of communities. Showing a preference for the third option, which, like the other two, would involve recruiting and paying for additional staff, particularly in news gathering and presentation, Gillard concluded, for the West Region, that ‘it might be possible’, for example, to allocate up to one hour each day to independent community broadcasting devised and presented within areas.

Gillard added realistically that even if a consequential decision about restructuring were to be taken in principle, practical implemen-

local newspapers would greatly prefer to see it happening under the BBC than under any commercial organisation. Few of them can afford to lose advertising revenue’ (‘An Extension of Regional Broadcasting’)

<sup>9</sup> For opting out, see below, pp. 651, 656, 668.

tation would require time, even 'several years'. In the meantime, a morning Regional news bulletin should be introduced at once within 'areas'. 'In every urban area of any size there is room for both a morning paper and an evening paper. Equally there is room for broadcasting to report local news at the end of each day.' This idea was reiterated in a paper put to the General Advisory Council early in 1959, in which 'area and local broadcasting' were singled out. The areas would not be concerned with 'entertainment as such': they would concentrate on news and local items.<sup>10</sup> One example of an area was the North-East, based on Newcastle. Another was the South-West, based on Plymouth. Both had had BBC local radio stations during the early 1920s.

When Gillard moved for a year from Bristol to London as Lindsay Wellington's second-in-command in 1955, he carried these ideas with him, without being able to convince Wellington.<sup>11</sup> Yet later, when he returned to London as Wellington's successor in 1963, he had accumulated considerable extra experience and, fully supported by a new Director-General, Hugh Greene, he was in a position to make policy. In a forceful note which he wrote in May 1961, he had already maintained that 'public service broadcasting in this country cannot claim to serve "the whole man" unless it is empowered to introduce [a] local dimension'.<sup>12</sup> He went on to arrange sixteen closed circuit experiments in places as far apart as Bournemouth and Dumfries, Dundee and the Isle of Wight.<sup>13</sup>

Thereafter, the pattern of local radio which emerged during the 1960s, and which laid great stress on topicality and on community involvement, was largely of Gillard's making. So, too, was the stress on the use of VHF, which was later to be qualified.<sup>14</sup> Even before he

<sup>10</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 14 Jan. 1959; *Papers*, 'Regional Broadcasting', 22 Dec. 1958.

<sup>11</sup> \*Gillard interviewed by Helen Fry, for the Oral History project, March 1978.

<sup>12</sup> \*Gillard to Wellington, 8 May 1961.

<sup>13</sup> *BBC Record*, 5 (Jan. 1962). London was also the centre of an experiment. R. D'A. Marriott said of it: 'The whole area of Greater London shares undoubtedly many common interests and has a certain sense of community, though of a less personal kind than is found in smaller towns. It is also possible to identify within it many large centres sharing common characteristics . . . How best this whole area can be treated remains to be determined.'

<sup>14</sup> 'Local broadcasting must be on VHF. We know that the idea of using medium waves had been canvassed in some quarters, but there are not enough medium waves to go round. We *might* be allowed to use medium waves allotted to other countries, but if so, only in daytime . . . We see no future for a service that had to switch from one waveband to another as soon as the sun went down' (\*'Local Sound Broadcasting', 7 Feb. 1961). For the future of medium-wave local radio see below, pp. 842-3, 887.

returned to London, however, Gillard had already won over the Board of Management to his belief in local radio,<sup>15</sup> and the Board of Governors had taken the crucial decision to approve the introduction of local radio on an experimental basis at the very first meeting which Greene attended as Director-General.<sup>16</sup> It was Greene, therefore, who in April 1960 wrote to the Post Office stating that the BBC now wished to open six local radio stations, to be in operation by April 1961, with a further eighteen stations to be in operation by April 1964.<sup>17</sup>

The setting up of the Pilkington Committee determined the pace of any further progress,<sup>18</sup> but when the BBC's fully considered proposal reached Pilkington in February 1961, it was far more ambitious than any previous proposals. No fewer than eighty to ninety new stations were contemplated, to be opened at an average rate of eighteen a year.<sup>19</sup> Each station, it was estimated, would cost about £17,500 to build and about £28,000 a year to run. Local material would be the staple fare for listeners, but daily 'supporting' programmes would be provided free from the BBC's network. The main role of the stations would be that which had been advocated by Gillard: to purvey local news and information.

The BBC's proposal to Pilkington promised that any local broadcasting service that it would provide would be 'friendly, reliable, [and] in touch with people's lives'. It carried the warning, however, that if there were to be competition from commercial stations costs would rise. There would also be 'needletime' difficulties if commercial local radio were authorized and the BBC had to compete with a flow of 'gramophone records'. The main danger, however, would be that commercial local broadcasting would soon be networked, and

<sup>15</sup> \*Gillard interviewed by Fry, March 1978.

<sup>16</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 9 Jan. 1960. The General Advisory Council had agreed also (*Minutes*, 13 Jan. 1960), although in its case to a strictly limited experiment in one urban and one rural area. Some members were sceptical.

<sup>17</sup> \*Greene to the Postmaster-General, 6 April 1960 (R31/55/10): 'We expect to be able to finance the opening stages', he added, 'without seeking an increase in the licence fee within the present Charter period.'

<sup>18</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 3 Nov. 1960. 'The desirability of a six-station local broadcasting experiment had been pressed on the Minister who had undertaken to consult the Committee on Broadcasting and the Treasury about the proposal, but it seemed highly unlikely, if only for political reasons, that any experiment would be authorised.'

<sup>19</sup> See above, p. 285. Cmnd. 1819 (1962), *Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960: Memoranda Submitted to the Committee*, Vol. 1: 'The Future of Sound Broadcasting: Local Broadcasting', pp. 216-23.

that 'commercial sound broadcasting would have come in, as it were, through the back door'.<sup>20</sup> In the particular circumstances of the time this was a real danger.

Already over a hundred local commercial radio companies, many of them backed by the local Press, had been formed by the autumn of 1960 in the expectation that a new Committee on broadcasting would favour them,<sup>21</sup> and before Greene took over the Director-Generalship, their plans had already been taken into account by the Marriott Committee on area and local broadcasting in 1959.<sup>22</sup> The Committee had come down firmly in favour of local broadcasting, as distinct from area broadcasting. Area broadcasting was conceived of in terms of existing transmitters: it was the transmitters that defined the coverage. By contrast, local broadcasting would require 'the deliberate siting of transmitters to serve localities' which had 'some clearly recognisable sense of community'.<sup>23</sup>

Greene, who studied carefully the Committee's proposals, noted also—and it was the kind of note that revealed his strong distaste for commercial competition—that the Committee had warned that the BBC would be lucky to retain more than a third of the total available audience for radio if local commercial companies were allowed to go

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* If the local newspaper and the local radio station were amalgamated, the BBC argued, there would be a monopoly in the presentation of local news. Norman Collins (*Observer*, 4 Sept. 1960) talked, as did Pye, of a cost of £15,000 to £20,000 for local commercial stations, a figure 'within the reach of small local interests'. He also argued that the BBC, with 'what within [it] are pejoratively called "the Regions"', had 'failed to satisfy the legitimate needs of the smaller communities'. That was why new independent radio companies had 'sprung into existence'.

<sup>21</sup> *Financial Times*, 20 Sept. 1960. See also Collins, *loc. cit.*, where he referred to seventy projected stations. The first moves in a campaign to promote commercial radio had not concentrated on local radio. On 25 Nov. 1959 Geoffrey Hirst, Conservative MP for the West Riding of Yorkshire, announced as 'a preliminary step' the formation of Radio Yorkshire (*The Times*, 26 Nov. 1959), and on 26 Nov. Lord Teynham initiated a debate on commercial radio in the House of Lords (*House of Lords, Official Record*, vol. 219, cols. 988 ff., 26 Nov. 1959). In April 1960 the Southern Broadcasting Company was formed (*Guardian*, 7 April 1960), with Lord Bessborough of ATV as a Director. In Jan. 1961 the BBC's Board of Management identified 162 such companies ('Board of Management, *Papers*, 'Companies Formed for the Purpose of Local Commercial Radio', 5 Jan. 1961).

<sup>22</sup> 'Area and Local Broadcasting: Report of a Committee to the Director, Sound Broadcasting', 1 Sept. 1959 (Local Radio file: Area and Local Broadcasting: Final Report, 1.9.59). The other members of the Committee were Michael Standing, Controller, Programme Organisation, Sound; Rooney Pelletier, Controller, Programme Planning, Sound, F. Williams, Controller, Sound Broadcasting Engineering; Robert Stead, Controller, North Region; Donald Edwards, Editor, News; George Camacho, Head of Planning, Light Programme; Ronald Lewin, Head of Planning, Home Service; Robert Silvey, Head of Audience Research; Desmond Hawkins, Head of West Regional Programmes. Colin Shaw was Secretary.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 5.

ahead.<sup>24</sup> Most members of the Pilkington Committee shared Greene's distaste; but when Gillard first addressed them, he found them at best 'agnostic' when local radio was mentioned: 'there wasn't a friend to be found on the Committee.' He had to persuade J. S. Shields, who lived in the West Region, to stimulate their interest and particularly that of Pilkington, who began by saying that he didn't think the subject was worth spending time on.<sup>25</sup>

Shields replied that whether it was or not, there were people who were 'keen on the idea and had prepared specimen programmes'.<sup>26</sup> Thereafter, they began to respond, and when on the evening of the first anniversary of their creation, the members of the Committee, along with Greene, Wellington, and Gillard, listened to compilation tapes of the local closed circuit experiments which Gillard had prepared in Bristol, they were quickly won over, and accepted the BBC's proposals on local radio exactly as they stood. Shields himself was to become Chairman of the BBC's General Advisory Council in 1967.

In going as far as they did, the Pilkington Committee went further even than Sir Ian Jacob had expected.<sup>27</sup> 'I must say I feel a bit apprehensive', the former Director-General wrote to Sir Arthur fforde after the Pilkington Committee Report appeared, 'about colour and local broadcasting. They will demand great resources and money and management. Colour is already inevitable sooner or later . . . Whether local broadcasting will pay off, I doubt, but perhaps this will be held back.'<sup>28</sup>

Clearly there were commercial interests which took the view that, given the right management, local broadcasting could pay off, and these were the interests that the Pilkington Committee abruptly dismissed. The most ambitious commercial plan had been prepared by Pye, the Cambridge radio manufacturing company, which had earlier submitted a medium-wave local radio plan to the Beveridge Committee, accompanying it with a map showing all the towns in

<sup>24</sup> \*Ibid., para. 44. Marriott gave a further warning that commercial radio would have 'spectacular successes' in the cultural field: it was already promoting a London Festival of Music at the Festival Hall after the 1960 Proms season. If local commercial radio were introduced 'the advocates of commercial radio, would almost certainly express goodwill towards the BBC and the Third Programme be maintained intact' (ibid.).

<sup>25</sup> For Shields, by profession a schoolmaster, see above, p. 271.

<sup>26</sup> Shields, in a letter to John Cain, 3 Oct. 1989, recalled that their dialogue took place when the Committee met in Pilkington's dining room in St Helens, a rare event, held there because Pilkington was ill.

<sup>27</sup> See above, p. 298.

<sup>28</sup> \*Jacob to fforde, 9 July 1962 (R4/4/15/2). For colour, see below, pp. 848-63.

Britain with a population greater than 50,000, among them four new towns with projected populations of 60,000 or 80,000 (Milton Keynes was not among them). Not surprisingly, the most homely detail to be found in the plan in support of genuinely local radio related to Cambridge. 'Nobody in Cambridge is interested in the traffic jams in Bedford. The Cambridge housewife has not the slightest interest in what is selling in Bedford shops, though they are only 25 miles away.'<sup>29</sup>

The Association of Municipal Corporations and the County Councils Association favoured local stations to be run and financed by the BBC,<sup>30</sup> but there were a few proposals made to the Pilkington Committee for local radio that would neither be managed by the BBC nor commercially orientated. One came from Birmingham University, and another from the Bristol and West of England Radio Ltd. The latter claimed, as did other proposals, that there was 'a belief all round that in an age of increasing centralisation people would welcome the opportunity to keep in touch with local affairs and local interests'. It referred, therefore, to churches, university, schools, hospitals, countryside, and the Old Vic Company, and among the more unusual practical points made in the proposal was that 'a number of people in Bristol would like to hear on Radio short local Stock Market reports at the end of the afternoon'.<sup>31</sup>

The Newspaper Society, which had an obvious interest in the subject, stated that, after full discussion, it had decided 'to express no opinion in principle';<sup>32</sup> and one other piece of evidence to Pilkington from W. R. H. Coleman, a director of the *Sheerness Times-Guardian*, supported by other newspapers in places as far afield as Whitby, Bingley, Hereford, and the Isle of Wight, stated that while

<sup>29</sup> Pye, *A Plan for Local Broadcasting in Britain*, Oct. 1960. C. O. Stanley, Pye's Chairman and Managing Director, who had been prominent in the campaign for commercial television, was a key figure. A mock-up station was built for the Royal Show in Cambridge in the summer of 1960. The Pilkington Committee rejected the Pye plan at its forty-first meeting on 8 July 1961 (PRO HO 244/2), but it was not until its forty-ninth meeting on 16 Aug. 1961 that they decided to set up a small committee on local radio.

<sup>30</sup> Cmnd. 1819-1 (1962), *Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960: Memoranda Submitted to the Committee*, Vol. II: 'Association of Municipal Corporations', para. 9, p. 1159; 'County Councils Association', para. 5, p. 1211.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1026-9. The Bristol proposal was printed in shortened form and without the names of the twenty-three founder members. The University of Birmingham proposal (pp. 1044-5), which included no references to degrees, stated that the University would seek 'a more intimate, more nearly personal relationship with its local audience, than is possible in regional or national broadcasting; its success would not be measured by the size of its audience, though failure would be attested by a very small one'.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1039-40.



most newspaper proprietors would prefer not to be involved in broadcasting, they might choose to do so 'if commercial sound broadcasting were regarded as a national necessity'.<sup>33</sup>

One of the first major statements on local radio that Gillard made after he had become Director of Sound Broadcasting in 1963, was written for a newspaper, the *Yorkshire Post*, published in Leeds, and was headed 'Radio Station in Every City':

Each station would undertake a continuous and detailed task of modern radio-journalism, aiming to present on the air, in many different forms and through a multitude of local voices, the running serial story of local life in all its aspects. Through the direct and intimate medium of broadcasting, the local radio station would try to parallel the service which a good local newspaper can and does provide for its public.<sup>34</sup>

The word 'parallel' was important to Gillard, and he went on to emphasize that 'the relationship between local radio station and local paper would not be one of competition'. They would complement each other. Broadcasting was ephemeral: the spoken word was 'instantly gone'. The interest it aroused would persist. Only the written word would really satisfy it.<sup>35</sup>

Gillard made much also of the simplicity of the relevant radio technology. 'The VHF transmitter, taking up no more room than a wardrobe and housed in a small hut, is located at some geographically commanding spot in the city and joined to the studio by landline . . . For the rest, the station needs a few tape recorders and a radio-equipped car . . . [which] would soon become a familiar sight to every citizen.' Gillard ended his article with a question that stood on their head critics' complaints that local radio would cost too much. He asked boldly whether 'the communities of Britain' could

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1030–1. The evidence ended somewhat inconsequentially with a statement that most 'local' newspapers would be willing to see a five-year experiment in limited BBC local broadcasting. Among newspapers in favour of such an experiment were the Westminster Press provincial newspapers group and the *News of the World*. The Institute of Journalists was also in favour: the National Union of Journalists was against. The Rank Organization was in favour: the TUC and the *New Left Review* against. The Committee did not print a submission from Ross Radio Productions, of which John Whitney was an owner (see PRO HO 244/5/BC46). In 1982 Whitney, Managing Director of Capital Radio, was to become Director-General of the IBA.

<sup>34</sup> *Yorkshire Post*, 11 Dec. 1963.

<sup>35</sup> Edwards (*loc. cit.*) expanded the point after local radio had been introduced: 'Each medium has advantages. Most of the public both read and listen. Radio and newspapers supplement each other—friendly rivals and, at the same time, allies. Local radio will give the news very quickly, but then the public will want to read more about it in their local paper.'

'afford to be without this valuable new instrument, available at such modest cost'.

The day before Gillard's article appeared, Greene had written an accompanying article in the *Yorkshire Post* in which he too made the most of the point that 'television is very expensive: radio is very cheap'. He was making it with particular reference to education, which he now believed should be a staple element in local broadcasting. When the BBC had asked the Pilkington Committee for its approval of a plan to build eighty to ninety local radio stations, education, Greene observed rightly, had not been prominent in the proposal. Now in 1963, if the BBC were required to make out a 'new case for local radio stations', 'educational possibilities' should be placed 'right in the forefront'. 'The whole atmosphere in the educational world and among politicians about the use of broadcasting for education' had changed completely since the Pilkington Report.<sup>36</sup>

Greene's article was called, significantly, 'Local Broadcasting Universities of the Air', and he suggested that the BBC should now provide an educational service as 'trustees for the local authority, the local university, the WEA and other educational interests'.<sup>37</sup> Greene's idea of what the phrase 'University of the Air' meant was far removed from the idea that was to captivate Jennie Lee;<sup>38</sup> but when eventually, in 1966, the BBC was given a green light to develop regular local radio on a limited scale, what Greene had said about educational trusteeship was not forgotten. There was to be a local radio educational effort of a substantial and unique kind.<sup>39</sup> And six years

<sup>36</sup> See above, p. 296. At a General Advisory Council meeting in Jan. 1960 one prominent adult educationist, Professor Ross Waller of Manchester University, had stated cautiously that 'all adult educationists would be interested in the possibility of some small amount of time being regularly given to the needs of local communities' (*Minutes*, 13 Jan. 1960). Local committees would, however, be necessary. Similarly, in May 1961 John Scupham, Head of Educational Broadcasting, pointed out that Station Managers of BBC local stations would require the formation of 'a special local advisory group to assist Station Managers over local school broadcasting and educational broadcasting'. He stated too that the Schools Broadcasting Council would demand this ('Comments on BBC Paper no. 12, prepared for the Pilkington Committee, in Gillard to Wellington, 'Local Broadcasting: Meeting of May 12th', 8 May 1961).

<sup>37</sup> *Yorkshire Post*, 10 Dec. 1963. Greene's and Gillard's articles were reprinted by the BBC in a pamphlet *The BBC and Local Broadcasting*, Jan. 1964. Greene clearly had in mind—and mentioned—the suggestion that a fourth television channel be devoted to education.

<sup>38</sup> See above, pp. 493–6.

<sup>39</sup> See below, pp. 642 ff.

later in 1972, Hal Bethell, the BBC Local Radio Education Organiser, was to write a pamphlet called *Education and BBC Local Radio: A Combined Operation*. By then, of course, the Open University had opened its doors.<sup>40</sup>

Gillard too had mentioned the phrase 'University of the Air' in his article in the *Yorkshire Post* in 1963, and in the same article he also mentioned explicitly—and immediately rejected—an alternative approach to local radio which he had studied on the ground in the United States, years before the pirate ships appeared on the European seas. 'The stations we have in mind would not be mere amplified juke-boxes, as in so many places in North America. They would not be concerned primarily with show-biz, or with pouring out large quantities of conventional entertainment . . . They would confine themselves to programmes which would reflect the affairs, activities, interests, issues, cares and pleasures of the centres in which they operated.' In a Lunch-Time Lecture delivered in March 1964 Gillard explained to his knowledgeable audience in Broadcasting House just why he thought local radio would transform radio as a whole. Radio could not survive on the basis of a 'rigidly circumscribed formula'. It had not been killed by television, but in a period of change it would have 'to respond to circumstances and be flexible enough to seize new opportunities'. Local radio offered a new dimension to sound broadcasting.<sup>41</sup>

The last BBC general statement on local radio before the Government authorized the start of local radio was published in the form of a brochure in February 1966, ten months before the Government's White Paper (Cmnd. 3169) and twenty-one months before the first of eight local radio stations, Radio Leicester, went on the air on 8 November 1967. *Local Radio in the Public Interest: The BBC's Plan* had a different slant from the two articles of 1963, even though the thrust was the same. Democracy was now given more weight than education. Its biggest claim was that local radio would necessarily further extend democratic debate. National radio had led the way. Through 'network broadcasting' public interest in 'national and international affairs of almost every kind' had grown in recent years,

<sup>40</sup> 'Education has been a major preoccupation of BBC Local Radio from the outset', Bethell wrote. 'Indeed, in one sense, the entire social purpose of local radio, as conceived by the BBC, may be described as educational' (loc. cit., p. 3).

<sup>41</sup> Gillard, 'Sound Radio in the Television Age', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 2nd ser., 11 March 1964.

and 'the citizen' was now 'in touch, as never before, with all the issues of the day'. Taking it for granted, somewhat condescendingly, that the process had been 'good for us as individuals, and good for our society', the brochure explained how the good could now be further spread.

'The BBC believes', the statement continued, 'that what broadcasting has done for the national community over the years, it could also do for the local community, given the chance.' The need, it suggested, was great. So, too, was the potential. Democracy often broke down at the local level, as the low turn-out at local elections showed. Indeed, 'in many places community life' was 'flabby and undeveloped'; and this was attributed, again perhaps too easily, to 'the lack of a fully effective system of communication'. 'The special aim of the local BBC station would be to help build a vigorous and satisfying local life, with a wide and progressive outlook.' In other hands local radio might not encourage the urge to democracy. In BBC hands, however, the development of local radio, serving single communities, would advance it without becoming ensnared in 'parochialism'.

There was no danger of this, the statement explained, because the BBC offered a whole spectrum of services, and if it added local radio to the spectrum, 'listeners would be accustomed to regard the local stations as one service in a comprehensive and balanced system of broadcasting in which emphasis was properly distributed between international, national, regional, and local interests'.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, within the spectrum there might also be room for other *ad hoc* groupings, like 'county networks', 'university networks', even 'Regional Planning Board networks'. 'With relatively small basic units, all these combinations become possible. There would be great flexibility in the system.'<sup>43</sup> Nothing would be standardized. The range of each local transmitter would depend on 'the nature of the community'. For a single, compact city it might be no more than five or six miles. For 'a rural district possessing a strong community sense' the range might be considerably greater. The capital sum required to establish each station would average, it was estimated, between £30,000 and £35,000, considerably more than the figure submitted to the Pilkington Committee, and the operating costs for a programme output of

<sup>42</sup> There were a few references in the statement to Regions. One summed up much relevant history: 'Long experience of regional and area broadcasting has convinced the Corporation that a station addressing a plurality of local groupings is continually at a serious disadvantage' (*Local Radio in the Public Interest: The BBC's Plan (1966)*, p. 6).

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

five or six hours a day would average about £1,000 per week.<sup>44</sup> The programmes would reflect and cover 'everything of real concern in community life'. Within this context there would be a place both for education<sup>45</sup> and for the widening of access to the microphone for 'great numbers of people who had never broadcast before'.<sup>46</sup> There would also be a special place for 'programmes designed to help immigrant groups in becoming fully integrated and happy components of local society'. 'The immigrants have to learn the way of life of their hosts, and the hosts need to know enough of the background of the newcomers to accept and welcome them with understanding and respect. Only a local station could really do this job effectively over the air.'<sup>47</sup>

Before the statement was drafted, Gillard had won approval inside the BBC for the idea of a 'Station Manager's Charter'—an interesting early example of the use of this term—and the 1966 brochure reiterated that it would be the task of each station director to ensure that from the outset listeners should 'come to regard their local station as "our station", not as "the BBC station in our town"'.<sup>48</sup> Point One in the Charter read that 'station managers would be free to provide the programmes which in their judgment best met the needs of their communities'. Point 3 read that 'only in the most exceptional circumstances would the station manager be obliged to carry programmes from London or any other extra-mural centre'. Point 7, the last, re-emphasized that 'the station manager would be encouraged to enlist the utmost possible support for his station in his community'. He would have to be 'courageous in making air-time available to appropriate local interests, subject to their competence in making package programmes and his own final editorial authority'.<sup>49</sup>

The proviso was revealing. So, too, was a proviso in a section, vaguer than the section on finance, that related to the scope of local

<sup>44</sup> The BBC reiterated its belief that the new service should be paid for through the licence fee which should be increased by 5s.

<sup>45</sup> There would be a local Educational Broadcasting Council for each station, 'representative of all the leading educational interests of the community'. 'Expertise in this instance would lie with the outside associates rather than with the broadcasting staff' (*ibid.*, p. 13).

<sup>46</sup> It was claimed that how good some of them were as broadcasters had been proved during 'the relatively brief run of the BBC's dummy exercises' in the sixteen experimental cities (*ibid.*).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5. For other programmes for immigrant groups, see above, pp. 589–92.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

radio Councils ('Councils of some kind') which would operate with 'a reasonably loose rein' in order to 'assist the station manager'. Such Councils, the statement went on, 'would have to be made up of men and women willing to recognize and respect—[and here came the key word]—the professionalism of the staff'. 'Otherwise good staff would quit, and the quality of the programmes would suffer.'<sup>50</sup>

There was to be a further strand of guidance from above. While enjoying 'an extremely high degree of independence', the Council and management of the local radio station, it was reiterated, would 'be able to enjoy the great advantages which would flow from its parentage in an experienced and long established national organisation'. Such 'parentage' would have two advantages. It would enable local radio stations to use 'sustaining' programmes produced elsewhere in the BBC. Just as important—and more fundamental—it would satisfy the strongest supporters of the BBC as an institution. 'It must not be forgotten that although a great many people, and rightly, lay much stress on the vital importance of local independence, a great many others favour BBC local radio over other forms because their knowledge of the Corporation leads them to place the most confidence in local stations operated by the BBC and run under BBC influences.'<sup>51</sup>

The brochure ended with what had become a familiar gesture towards newspaper proprietors and editors. 'With local radio in BBC hands,' it read, 'local papers would have no anxieties. The question of competition for advertising revenue would not arise, and the prosperity of the local press would not be endangered.' There would, indeed, be 'avenues of co-operation'. The familiar gesture was now made, however, with a touch of effrontery, given the BBC's own long history as a monopoly. Newspaper proprietors were advised to be co-operative because many of them were operating in a 'monopoly situation' and would scarcely be in a position, the BBC suggested, to acquire local radio for themselves if the BBC were not given per-

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 12. At the same time, the statement suggested that there was a role for 'amateurs'. 'Volunteers' could be trained to become producers. 'There is no particular mystique about the making of simple radio programmes, as tape recording clubs and other organizations up and down the country have shown in recent years. There is much that keen and able amateurs might achieve in this way with their communities' (ibid., p. 14).

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 13. For an alternative point of view about 'grass roots' local radio, which would not be subject to such influences, see P. Lewis, *Different Keepers: Models of Structure and Finance in Community Radio* (1977), written after the publication of the Annan Committee Report, but drawing on a wide range of experience from different countries.



mission to provide it. Was it 'likely that public opinion would allow the voice of local radio to be added to [their] monopoly'?<sup>52</sup>

The effrontery was somewhat forced, for already the Local Radio Association, founded in 1964 by John Gorst, later to become a Conservative MP, was active in mobilizing Conservative support for local stations in which the Press might have an interest,<sup>53</sup> and the Conservative Opposition had formally pledged its support for commercial local radio. Five years later, after Heath had become Prime Minister, the BBC was to be forced to recognize that it would no longer be possible to exercise a monopoly of its own in local broadcasting as the Pilkington Committee had recommended.<sup>54</sup> By then, however, the first BBC stations had proved themselves. Indeed, in 1969 the Labour Government had authorized another twelve, and had gone on to speak of twenty more to come.<sup>55</sup> By then, too, the BBC was beginning to reconcile itself to eventual competition. *Broadcasting in the Seventies* made no claim to a continuing monopoly, and in a lecture on BBC radio, delivered in March 1970, Ian Trethowan, then Managing Director, Radio, reaffirmed that if there was to be competition, so be it: 'we would be foolish to underestimate the impact it could make, but we would have some confidence in being able to stand up to it.'<sup>56</sup>

In the long process that led to the introduction of local radio, no one inside the BBC had ever suggested that there was any evidence of substantial public demand for it. Outside the BBC, Pye had reported in 1960 that a poll in Lowestoft had shown that 82 per cent of the local public were in favour; but Peter Laslett had reported around the same time that 66 per cent of the population were against it in Reading and York, the latter the city of classic social surveys.<sup>57</sup> Such figures had never deterred the BBC. Nor did they during the crucial years between 1960 and 1966. Indeed, as late as 1969, after the BBC had launched its first local radio stations, Gillard chose to

<sup>52</sup> *Local Radio*, p. 15.

<sup>53</sup> See *Sunday Telegraph*, 12 July 1970.

<sup>54</sup> Cmnd. 4636 (1971), *An Alternative Service of Radio Broadcasting*. There were no references to competition in local radio in Edwards's Lunch-Time Lecture, but in a later Lunch-Time Lecture ('BBC Radio in the Community', 11th ser., 26 Oct. 1976), Michael Barton, Edwards's successor, was to write that 'commercial radio has given us an added stimulus to the job we are doing; but we believe . . . that we have different roles to play'. In 1970 the Local Radio Association published a pamphlet, *The Shape of Independent Radio*.

<sup>55</sup> John Stonehouse, Postmaster-General, to Lord Hill, 13 Aug. 1969 (R78/5/1).

<sup>56</sup> I. Trethowan, 'Radio in the Seventies', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 8th ser., 5 March 1970. See below, Ch. VIII, for *Broadcasting in the Seventies*.

<sup>57</sup> PRO HO 244/5, Paper BC/Sec/68.

tell a Press Conference that the BBC had never claimed that there was a big demand for local radio. How could you 'expect a big demand for something with which most people in this country have no concept and no experience'?

The reason for its introduction, he stressed, was different. It was the BBC's 'business as professional broadcasters, and has been all down the ages, to spot the ways in which our service can develop and become of improved value to the listener'. There was not the slightest doubt that people were 'interested and deeply interested in local affairs', and if there was room 'in the whole spectrum of newspaper journalism for the local paper', there certainly was 'room in the whole span of broadcasting for the local radio station'.<sup>58</sup>

### 3. BBC Local Radio

The first of eight local VHF stations, Leicester—there might have been nine—was opened on 8 November 1967 by Edward Short, then the Postmaster-General, who was responsible for the long awaited White Paper, Cmnd. 3169, which appeared in December 1966 and which covered colour television, the new 'pop' channel, and hours of broadcasting, as well as local radio.<sup>1</sup> 'No blueprint has been laid down', Short told his local Leicester audience. 'They [the Local Broadcasting Council and the Station Manager] have not been given any instructions; except that the station should never forget that it is home town radio with its own Leicester individuality and that it must always be bright and attractive.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>58</sup> \*Verbatim Report of a Press Conference, 10 July 1969 (R78/576/2). For the Press Conference, chaired by Hill, see below, pp. 769–73.

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 564, 620, and below, p. 841. The channels for the low-power VHF had been obtained at the Stockholm Conference of 1961 (see below, p. 000), when VHF frequencies were also obtained for four high-power radio networks, which were subsequently used for Radios 2, 3, and 4. Manchester would have been the ninth, had the majority of the Council not changed from Labour to Conservative, the Conservatives not favouring the idea. In July 1967 Gillard reported to the Board of Management that although the Postmaster-General was 'anxious not to slam the door on Manchester, he regarded the plan for a local station there as dead' ('Board of Management, *Minutes*, 17 July 1967). There was a political switch in Leicester too, but the venture survived ('Local Radio Position on 31 May 1967' (Local Radio File D67–2 RD25)). The idea of Teesside as a possible site had by then collapsed.

<sup>2</sup> The speech is reproduced in *BBC Record*, 55 (Nov. 1967). For an account of the opening day see also M. Kelly, 'Blasting on Both Barrels', *Ariel*, 2 Nov. 1977.

The same point was to be made by Gillard in 1973, when there were twenty BBC local radio stations. 'Much has been made, and justly,' Gillard was to write then, 'of the fact that Local Radio enjoys a high degree of independence in the BBC. The outcome is an absence of uniformity which must make the system as difficult to administer as it certainly is to discuss. To a considerable extent, each station is *sui generis*, with a strong flavour of the parson's freehold.'<sup>3</sup> The same point might have been made also of the new universities of the 1960s. The White Paper, however, made a different point. It ended with a section called 'The broadcasting authorities: their common responsibilities', which emphasized, as Short had done in private talks with the BBC Chairman, that although Parliament had placed BBC and ITV 'in competition with each other' they had 'a common objective of public service'. The statement was to influence the future of local commercial radio.<sup>4</sup>

There was, perhaps, a particular sense of independence at Leicester in 1967 in that Leicester Corporation had defeated active opposition to a local radio station and had granted £104,000 towards the financial costs of running the new station with a staff of sixteen, headed by Maurice Ennals.<sup>5</sup> It was more than symbolic that on opening day the Postmaster-General was accompanied on the platform by Leicester's Lord Mayor, Alderman Sir Mark Henig, who described the involvement of Leicester Corporation in language that particularly appealed to Gillard. He saw in it, Henig said, 'a means of

<sup>3</sup> *The Listener*, 11 Oct. 1973.

<sup>4</sup> See below, p. 649. For all its generalizations, Cmnd. 3169 (1966) was a badly written White Paper, which in a year of financial squeeze gave cause for confusion in its section on finance. 'Since the essential purpose of the local station is to give expression to local interests and aspirations,' it stated, 'it seems right that its income should derive so far as is possible from local sources and not from a general licence fee. These would not include general subvention from the rates; however, the local authority, particularly for its educational services, might wish to contribute to the extent that programmes about services for which it has responsibilities could properly command its support. There are also in local life various other bodies which might well be prepared to make a financial contribution to the costs of the station, in consideration of the general promotion through its programmes of their objectives.' The reference to no rate subvention was particularly confusing. Something like 'sponsorship' was being suggested. ('Gillard, 'Record of Telephone Conversation with Mr. Lillicrap, GPO: Finance of Local Stations, on 3 Jan. 1967'; 4 Jan. 1967 (R78/608/1)).

<sup>5</sup> Leicestershire County Council had made no offer. (Ennals, *Radio Leicester*, a forty-five page account of its early history, 10 March 1969, which emphasizes the contribution the station made from the start in the surrounding rural areas.) The BBC's Board of Management (*Minutes*, 6 Nov. 1967) noted the 'uncooperative attitude of the *Leicester Mercury*': 'City firms 5 to 1 against Radio Station' one headline ran (13 March 1967).

strengthening interest and participation in the life of the local community at a time when this is becoming increasingly difficult due to the pace and pattern of living'.

Nevertheless, at the civic luncheon which followed the opening ceremony Henig regretted that the Government's failure to take 'a firm grasp' of the 'financial nettle' had meant that cities like Leicester had had to find funds in difficult financial circumstances, what Edwards was to call 'an economic blizzard'.<sup>6</sup> If the Government had been willing to add five shillings to the licence fee, what the BBC had been asking for, this would have produced a revenue of nearly £4 million, which would have made it possible to go a long way towards implementing the full BBC local radio programme. The BBC's request, however, had not been 'immediately acceptable' to the Government—Henig said that he appreciated the reason—and, anxious to see a start, the Corporation had declared itself willing to underwrite the cost on the understanding that after two years there would be a full evaluation.<sup>7</sup>

Short talked in his speech of between 200 and 250 local radio stations in five years' time, and were this figure to be reached, Henig observed, 'there would be some justification in asking the general body of licence holders to meet the cost in one way or another'.<sup>8</sup> The original nine stations had all been chosen because they could guarantee financial support. They were eight out of eighty communities which had been represented at a conference called by the BBC in January 1967.<sup>9</sup> Many of the eighty had expressed a desire to be granted a station, but had reported that they could not afford it. Henig, Chairman of the Association of Municipal Corporations, had been the co-chairman at the Conference with Greene and had also been the first speaker. Gillard had been a main speaker, drawing

<sup>6</sup> Edwards, loc. cit.

<sup>7</sup> The Corporation ceased to support Radio Leicester financially in 1969, but a civic message of congratulations was sent to the station by the Lord Mayor on its tenth anniversary (*Radio Times*, Midlands ed., 5–11 Nov. 1977). The Chairman of the Leicestershire County Council referred on that occasion to 'an atmosphere of suspicion' when the station began to operate. 'Many people had doubts about the effectiveness of the impact the new service would make.' By 1977 it was very much a part of life, not only in Leicester but in Leicestershire, and a new studio was being opened in Loughborough. See also M. Barton, 'Community Radio', *The Listener*, 4 Nov. 1976. Barton, then General Manager of BBC Local Radio, emphasized that one effect of local radio had been to enable ratepayers 'to put their Councillors on the spot'. See also M. Laski, 'Ten Years of Local Radio', *The Listener*, 10 Nov. 1977.

<sup>8</sup> *The Times*, 9 Nov. 1967, 'State aims at 200 radio stations'.

<sup>9</sup> Gillard, 'The Challenge of Local Radio', *Radio Times*, 2 Nov. 1967. See also Edwards, loc. cit.

attention to *Local Radio in the Public Interest*, but Greene also had taken a prominent part. Peter Lillicrap from the Post Office had talked on Local Broadcasting Councils. Richmond Postgate, Controller, Educational Broadcasting, and Pat Beech, Controller, Midland Region, were among the BBC representatives.<sup>10</sup>

Contributions from local authorities totalled £367,000 in the period from the opening of each of the eight stations to 31 March 1969. In the same period the BBC produced £455,000, more than half of total operating expenditure, and covered also the capital costs of the stations (£286,000). It did not charge local radio for the other BBC programmes that were supplied from the centre.<sup>11</sup> There was some industrial support. By 1968 fifty-two firms were contributing to Radio Stoke-on-Trent and thirty-seven to Radio Merseyside. One church in Nottingham contributed £100.<sup>12</sup>

Part of the running cost of the stations was borne, of course, by local 'performers' of various kinds, who, had they been 'performing' on the national network—and at other times some of them had been or were—would have been paid for their services. This was a point that worried most of the performers less than it worried the Association of Broadcasting Staff.<sup>13</sup> There was, indeed, a strong element of voluntarism in the local stations, expressed in their Local Radio Councils. The Chairman of Radio Leicester was a well-known Professor of History at the University, Jack Simmons. Another member was a clergyman, the Venerable Harold Lockley. Of the fifteen members, only three were women. Ten years later, when the size of the Council had been increased to twenty, a local reporter recalled that the people on the first Council had 'tended to be people so eminent in their own respective fields that few of them could actually find time to attend meetings'.<sup>14</sup>

Radio Sheffield, which opened on 15 November, had a Council of fourteen, of whom three were members of the City Council, one the

<sup>10</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Conference on Local Sound Broadcasting: Note of a Meeting, 27 Jan. 1967'. There is no record of those Corporations that opposed the BBC's plans. There were no applicants from Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, and only one came from the whole of Southern England (Edwards, loc. cit.). For Beech, see also below, pp. 660, 806–7.

<sup>11</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Papers*, 'The Local Radio Experiment', 2 April 1969.

<sup>12</sup> Edwards, loc. cit.

<sup>13</sup> The matter, which had historical resonances, was raised verbally by D. A. Hearn for the ABS and by Percy Jamett for the NUJ (Letter from D. A. Hearn to Briggs, 10 Sept. 1993).

<sup>14</sup> M. Brown, 'Now We Are Ten', *Radio Times*, Midlands edn., 5–11 Nov. 1977.

Bishop of Sheffield, and another the Vice-Chancellor of the University; while Radio Merseyside, which opened on 22 November, had a Council of eighteen, of whom four were members of the City Council. Both at Sheffield and at Merseyside only two members were women. There was a not dissimilar basic pattern in the composition of the other early Local Radio Councils that were set up, following the inauguration of Radio Nottingham on 31 January 1968, Radio Brighton on 14 February 1968 (the official opening, for it had begun broadcasting earlier because of a local emergency),<sup>15</sup> Radio Stoke-on-Trent on 14 March 1968, Radio Leeds on 24 June 1968, and Radio Durham on 3 July 1968.

All the first Council members were appointed by the Postmaster-General.<sup>16</sup> Each station also had educational responsibilities, and its advisory support included two education committees, one dealing with school broadcasting and the other with further education. The six hours of educational programmes were, like other programmes, locally geared. Radio Leeds, for example, presented a series on immigration, with particular reference to Leeds, while Radio Stoke-on-Trent broadcast a series designed to help parents understand how their children were being taught in different schools in the Potteries. Some of the professional broadcasters, who were to make their mark in national radio, were among the local radio professionals—among them over the years Jenni Murray, Kate Adie, David Harding, and David Waine.<sup>17</sup>

A lively article on Radio Leeds by its second Manager, Phil Sidey, made the most both of its informality and of its identity.

It is an odd day that sees less than 100 people visiting the studios, to broadcast or offer suggestions or abuse. The Lord Mayor may well call in—unheralded and greeted with a 'Hello, John'—to find out some detail of a coming Rugby League commentary; two or three clergymen may jostle for the Philips to do some tape editing before the purple-suited disc jockey gets there; a woman

<sup>15</sup> An extraordinary Brighton snowstorm demonstrated the value of local radio at times of local crisis—floods, pit disasters, air crashes, and so on, not to speak of electricity cuts and traffic jams. Gillard was told by a town clerk in the early 1970s that 'we could not do without this station now' (*The Listener*, 11 Oct. 1973).

<sup>16</sup> The appointment of members was to be transferred to the BBC in June 1971 ('Local Radio Councils: Annual Report', Dec. 1971 (Local Radio file D72-2)).

<sup>17</sup> Murray, who started with Radio Bristol, was later to be presenter of *Woman's Hour*; Adie from Radio Durham went on to become the BBC's Chief News Correspondent; Harding, Education Producer at Stoke, was later Head of Magazine Programmes, Radio; and Waine, first Manager of Radio Bristol, later became Head of Broadcasting, Midlands Region.



with a story about back street abortion may exchange words with a leading local politician in the hall.

A few weeks before, a listener taking part in his first broadcast had called out, 'I must have been mad to come here!' 'Much the same thought', Sidey added, 'afflicts the staff from time to time.'<sup>18</sup>

When the BBC's new Chairman, Lord Hill, visited Radio Merseyside to see for himself, the station offered to broadcast his favourite record. His choice was 'rather old-time', and Radio Merseyside did not possess it. The local disc jockey asked over the air if any listeners could oblige, and 'two sweet old ladies' called at the station to lend theirs.<sup>19</sup> Hill became a powerful advocate of BBC local radio and was to make a well publicized speech on the subject at Leeds University in March 1969. By then a campaign for local commercial radio was also in full force,<sup>20</sup> and Lord Aylestone, Hill's successor as Chairman of the ITA, was reported as saying that the ITA were ready in principle to undertake control of a national network of commercial radio stations.

After local radio had been in operation for six months in Leicester, Sheffield, Merseyside, and Nottingham, BBC Audience Research made an interim study of its initial impact.<sup>21</sup> As many as 80 per cent of the listeners considered that their station had made a good start: as many as a half of these believed, however, that there was room for improvement. Lack of VHF sets, it was stated, had proved a limiting

<sup>18</sup> *Ariel*, Dec. 1968.

<sup>19</sup> Edwards, loc. cit. After Hill became Chairman, Short wrote to him expressing appreciation of the work that the BBC had put into local radio and commending Gillard's contribution ('Short to Hill, 27 Nov. 1967 (R78/608/1)'). After Gillard's successor, Trethowan, had visited his first local radio station, Gillard asked him on his return for comments. Trethowan replied 'rather portentously', 'I have seen the future and it works' (I. Trethowan, *Split Screen* (1984), p. 124).

<sup>20</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 24 March 1969, which also noted an article by Sidey on a BBC Leeds Teenage Week (*New Society*, 20 March 1969). There was also a Hughie Green plan for local commercial stations on medium wave. For then current BBC views on VHF and medium-wave transmission, see a paper prepared by the Engineering Information Department, 'Local Radio Wavelengths', 1 July 1968.

<sup>21</sup> The Midlands Correspondent of *The Times* had provided an independent survey of his own as early as 8 Dec. 1967. He reported little demand for pop music. Sixty people were telephoning the station each day, and fifty letters were being received. 'On brief acquaintance the programmes seem a little staid. The argument that commercial stations could do better remains open.' Cf. an article by Allan Hall in the *Sun* nearly a year later, 3 Nov. 1968: 'This birthday baby should grow old gracefully.' Radio Leicester had scarcely been 'the smash hit of the year', yet it had established itself as a 'Very High Frequency Parish Pump'. . . My forecast is that [Ennals's] success at Leicester will persuade the government that local radio fills a need.' For an immediate verdict see *Sunday Telegraph*, 31 Dec. 1967. Simmons drew the attention of the Leicester Local Broadcasting Council to it (\**Minutes*, 1 Jan. 1968).

factor on listening, although local relay services, which the BBC had always treated with immense suspicion, increased the size of the audience where they existed.<sup>22</sup>

The largest audiences were obtained at breakfast time, as was the case in national radio, but midday and early evening listening was heavy.<sup>23</sup> News and news magazines, as Gillard had predicted, and sports programmes, about which less had been said, drew the largest audiences. Local record request programmes had attracted a substantial following, as had programmes involving direct audience participation.<sup>24</sup> There were four local weather forecasts a day and frequent news flashes and 'break-in interviews'.<sup>25</sup>

A much fuller survey was prepared in 1969 in the form of a confidential Audience Research Report concerned with the impact of local radio in the first eight radio districts. In each case a survey—or surveys—had involved about a thousand interviews. Stoke and Durham lagged behind in the numbers of VHF sets; and the numbers of people subscribing to radio relay were well behind in Merseyside and Leeds. About a quarter of the total population were current listeners to local radio, another quarter had listened at some time or other, but very nearly half had still never heard it. The proportion of non-listeners in Durham was high; in Leicester, Merseyside, and Stoke low. Breakfast time listening, before 8.30 a.m., was again a peak period, although the majority of owners of VHF sets still listened at that time to Radio 2 (34 per cent) and Radio 1 (25 per cent). The comparative figures for Radio 4 and Local Radio were 17 per cent and 23 per cent. On Sundays between 12.30 p.m. and 1.30 p.m. listening to all forms of radio was high. Radio 2 accounted for 43 per cent, Radio 4 for 10 per cent, and Local Radio for 12 per cent. Frequent listening to local radio was most common at the 'bottom end' of three status scales (social class, education, and occupation), even though it was in these status groups that ownership of VHF sets was least common.

Some local radio programmes attracted a relatively large audience, although they were to be succeeded, like Radio Leicester's *Coffee Break*, by other programmes, in this case *Crosstalk*, designed to

<sup>22</sup> In Brighton and Stoke, which were surveyed before the first six months were over, four out of five people owning VHF sets had listened to the local station at some time of the day.

<sup>23</sup> For the national pattern, see below, p. 737.

<sup>24</sup> *BBC Record*, 62 (Oct. 1968).

<sup>25</sup> Ennals, loc. cit.

increase the audience still further. Programmes had a tendency to overrun, but this concerned listeners less than managers. In all eight places the main reason given for liking local radio was its 'friendliness', just what Gillard would have hoped.<sup>26</sup> None the less, when listeners were asked whether or not they agreed with the statement 'There were quite enough radio stations already without opening Radio X', a sizeable minority of citizens in each place answered in the affirmative. An average of 11 per cent strongly agreed, and 20 per cent were 'inclined to agree'.<sup>27</sup>

There were enough positive features in such surveys—and even more in public and Press comment on local radio—for the BBC local radio stations to look to the future with optimism, and this was the mood in February 1969 when their Chairmen met collectively with the new Postmaster-General, John Stonehouse, who took office in July 1968 and was committed to reviewing 'the eight station experiment'.<sup>28</sup> They were unanimous in telling him then that 'the stations were providing a service of value to their communities', and that the experiment had shown, in Gillard's words, that local stations could be run 'under the BBC umbrella and without close control from the centre'.<sup>29</sup>

Further talks between the BBC and the Post Office were cordial, and there were no major difficulties when BBC and Post Office officials appeared before the Estimates Committee of the House of Commons on 10 March 1969 to answer questions on the experiment.<sup>30</sup> It was no surprise to the BBC, therefore, when Stonehouse wrote to Hill in August 1969 telling him that the Government now authorized 'the

<sup>26</sup> The statement that its attraction was the chance of 'hearing someone I actually know' was rated low.

<sup>27</sup> \*LR/69/941, 'Local Broadcasting 1967-9'.

<sup>28</sup> BBC representatives met representatives of the Post Office on 1 Oct. 1968 to decide on how to collect evidence for the review, and in Feb. 1969, after consultation with the BBC, local authorities and local organizations were asked for their comments. See also R. Boston's assessment in *New Society*, 5 Dec. 1968, where he concluded that the financial arrangements whereby councils contributed funds were suspect. From April to July 1968 Roy (later Lord) Mason was Postmaster-General. For Hill's views on Stonehouse, see Lord Hill, *Behind the Screen* (1974), pp. 131 ff. 'Lunch with PMG', he wrote in his diary on 20 June 1969, 'Stonehouse exhibits grand manner, part tycoon, part statesman.'

<sup>29</sup> \*Notes of a Meeting held on 5 February 1969, 7 Feb. 1969 (R78/609/1). Curran, Gillard, Ian Trethowan, Gillard's designated successor, and Hugh Pierce, Head of Local Radio Development, were present on behalf of the BBC. Dennis Lawrence and M. Morris represented the Post Office.

<sup>30</sup> On 25 March 1969 the Post Office wrote to the BBC saying that it hoped its report would be in the hands of the Postmaster-General by early June (\*D. G. C. Lawrence to Gillard, 25 March 1969 (R78/609/1)). On 22 May Hill sent a copy of the BBC's evaluation to the Postmaster-General (\*Hill to Stonehouse (R78/610/1)).

provision by the BBC of a general and permanent service of local radio broadly on the lines proposed by the Corporation'. Another twenty stations, 'including some stations in Scotland and Wales', would also be authorized during the following four years.<sup>31</sup>

In the first phase the BBC would now be allowed to open another twelve local radio stations, which would mean that local radio would then reach 75 per cent of the population, the kind of figure that Gillard had long envisaged. The decision, which was announced at a Press Conference on 14 August, had in effect been taken at a top-level meeting ten days before at which Wilson had been present. Among the matters discussed then and later was whether or not medium-wave facilities could be used as well as VHF.<sup>32</sup> While confirming that the BBC believed that VHF should be 'the prime system of transmission' for local stations, the BBC had asked for reconsideration of the case for the use of low-power medium-wave transmitters as a daytime reinforcement.<sup>33</sup> There was no mention of this possibility in Stonehouse's announcement on 14 August, but he told Hill later that he accepted the 'desirability' of such use and was considering how it could be arranged.<sup>34</sup>

In a discussion of the timing of the twenty stations programme, James (later Sir James) Redmond, the BBC's Director of Engineering, had argued for medium wave, but had been told that 'all the PMG's statements had been in terms of local radio on VHF'. Redmond warned also that channel spacing of the VHF stations would have to be 100 kilohertz, not 200 kilohertz. Stereo would not be possible, and adjacent channel interference would reduce service areas.<sup>35</sup> In early January 1970, Stonehouse, who by then had acquired the title of Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, agreed to medium wave, and said that he would announce his decision, which involved changes in frequencies, in Parliament on 19 January.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>31</sup> \*Hill to Stonehouse, 6 June 1969; Stonehouse to Hill, 13 Aug. 1969 (R78/610/1). See also above, p. 638.

<sup>32</sup> See above, p. 630, below, pp. 842-3.

<sup>33</sup> \*The BBC's Local Radio Proposals', 2 June 1969.

<sup>34</sup> \*Stonehouse to Hill, 17 Dec. 1969 (R78/610/1).

<sup>35</sup> \*Note of a Discussion with D. G. C. Lawrence on 8 July 1969', 9 July 1969 (R78/610/1).

<sup>36</sup> \*Stonehouse to Hill, 9 Jan. 1970 (R78/6). *Hansard*, vol. 794, written answers, col. 69, 19 Jan. 1970. Before the decision could be implemented, the general election intervened. (See below, p. 868.) In Aug. 1970 Christopher Chataway, the new Conservative Minister, told the BBC that only VHF could be used (\*Letter of 4 Aug. 1970 (R78/7)).

From the angle of the BBC, one of the main points in the Stonehouse letter of August 1969 was finance. It had become obvious by then both that local radio could not be paid for from a variety of sources in the ill-thought-out way that had seemed possible in 1966, and that continued dependence on local authorities would put 'the quick expansion of the service at risk'. 'The only certain method of finance would be from licence revenue.'<sup>37</sup> Stonehouse had deliberately kept Hill on tenterhooks, however, about an increase in the licence fee until at the end of the same letter he now informed him, with full Government backing, that he proposed that as from 1 April 1971 the BBC's licence fee should be increased by ten shillings to £6 10s.

There was to be a twist in the tail. After Wilson's Government set out both to increase the number of BBC stations and to formalize their organization,<sup>38</sup> it lost the general election before the proposed increase in the licence fee was implemented, and the new Heath Government announced in the Queen's speech that commercial radio would be introduced.<sup>39</sup> Meanwhile, the BBC's accumulated financial deficit had further increased, as had been anticipated, and in consequence a licence fee of £7.50 was now asked for.

Instead, in February 1971, the Government offered a new licence fee of £7, which was designed, it said, 'to meet the foreseeable needs of the Corporation until March 1975'. The tardy increase took place on 1 July 1971; meanwhile, the radio only licence had been abolished. A new White Paper in March 1971 went on to set out details of a plan for the creation of sixty commercial stations under the authority of the ITA, a plan which involved a change in its name. It

<sup>37</sup> \*Note of a Discussion, 16 April 1969, between F. Wood and D. G. C. Lawrence of the Post Office, now the shadow Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, and Curran and Gillard (Man. Reg. file B5-1, pt. 3). When in July 1968 there was talk of cutting Radio 3 to finance local radio, Gillard noted that if this were to happen, it would 'create consternation among the staff and the greatest internal criticism the BBC has ever known' (\*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Financing Local Radio from Existing Revenue', 3 July 1968). For BBC finances, see above, pp. 642-5, and below, pp. 724-5.

<sup>38</sup> \*Draft Note of a Meeting held at the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, 4 Dec. 1969 (Local Radio file D67-2 RD25), at which there was a free-ranging discussion of the composition and terms of reference of the Local Radio Councils. Five Chairmen were present. It was felt that the existing Councils should have a 'fresh start'. A proposal to increase their size to twenty was turned down, and membership of fifteen was generally agreed upon and accepted by the Minister. Local Authority officials would no longer be banned from serving on the Councils, but they would serve in a personal capacity.

<sup>39</sup> See below, p. 886. At a Board of Management meeting as early as Feb. 1969 (\*Minutes, 10 Feb. 1969) Gillard reported that Short had told him that the Conservative Party would make the question of commercial radio a general election issue and felt that it would be a 'popular plank'.

now became the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA).<sup>40</sup> Radio, like television, was to be under tutelage within what remained a 'common system' encompassing them both.<sup>41</sup>

#### 4. BBC Regions

By 1971 there seemed to have been a logic—some observers would have said a relentless logic—in the restructuring of BBC radio which had taken place in stages during the previous decade and which had led up to the introduction not only of BBC local radio but to the imminent start of 'independent local radio' as well.<sup>1</sup> None the less, the logic was seldom completely evident in advance, and during the decade there were conflicts of ideas and interests—struggles even—before acceptable answers were reached in Broadcasting House about the implications of change, particularly for the Regions. In their case the logic was missing. Constituted as they were, the Regions represented a pattern that had grown up over the years. The pattern rested on compromises, not on principles,<sup>2</sup> and it was to be reconstructed in the light of the recommendations made in *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, when all aspects of radio were under review.<sup>3</sup>

On paper there was to be no change in the organization and operation of English Regional radio until then. Yet throughout the 1960s the position of the Regions was never secure, and while money was found—by whatever means—for local radio, Regional development was always held back through manifest lack of funds. There was always more talk than money, often eloquent talk, as in 1965, when there was pressure from near the top for the BBC to acknowledge 'the need for a long-term programme of Regional development'

<sup>40</sup> Cmnd. 4636 (1971). See below, pp. 887–8. J. Potter describes the Authority's responsibility for the oversight of radio as 'unsought' and as a 'conspicuous distraction from the business of television' (*Independent Television in Britain*, vol. 3 (1989), p. 95).

<sup>41</sup> Lord Whitelaw described the evolution of the system and what to him were its limitations ('Twenty Years of Independent Television', *IBA Fraser Lecture*, 4 June 1985). J. B. Thompson, who from 1966 to 1970 was Editor of the *Observer* colour magazine, became first Director of Radio in the new IBA in 1973, and remained in the post until 1987.

<sup>1</sup> See below, pp. 886–7.

<sup>2</sup> See \*Policy Study Group, 3rd Progress Review, 21 April 1969 (R34/1581/3).

<sup>3</sup> See below, p. 769. The term 'non-metropolitan' broadcasting now began to be used to cover both local and Regional broadcasting. (See an article describing the changes in *Ariel*, Jan. 1970.)



which would take account of the spread of BBC-2 UHF television services and of the further extension of VHF radio services.<sup>4</sup>

A BBC Lunch-Time Lecture of that year by Hywel Davies, Head of Programmes, Wales, expressed enthusiasm for such further development and, while welcoming local radio, described how the Regions had resisted all talk of subdivisions except as 'an addition, not a replacement'. They had 'cherished their sense of entity'. Regional broadcasting was 'more than a newspaper', and Regional centres were more than 'studios of convenience'. Davies's most powerful plea was that Regions practise ingenuity instead of pleading poverty.<sup>5</sup>

Even in the beginning it had been impossible to state the case for local radio without taking account of Regional structures. It had been a necessary, as well as an interesting, feature of Gillard's article in the *Yorkshire Post* in 1963 that he laid stress on the 'Regional' as well as the 'local'. 'The local radio stations would be developed within the BBC's Regional system,' Gillard wrote, 'and the station manager at any centre would always be able to count on the assistance and backing of his regional controller.' He reiterated the point in his Lunch-Time Lecture when he stated firmly in March 1964 that 'whether local broadcasting comes or not, the regions will continue to be essential components of radio's future structure'.<sup>6</sup>

Regional broadcasting had been one of the major preoccupations of the Beveridge Committee, but it had figured only marginally in the report of Marriott's Working Party on the Future of Sound Broadcasting, the first of several Marriott Working Parties, that was set up in 1956.<sup>7</sup> 'The Regions are not significantly affected by the new pattern of programmes that we recommend', Marriott and his colleagues declared, adding, without mentioning that ITV was organized regionally, that 'it is evident that as time passes an increasing proportion of Regional effort will be devoted to television'.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> \*David Lloyd James, Special Assistant, Sound Broadcasting Direction, to Gillard, Director of Sound Broadcasting, 'Future Regional Broadcasting—English Regions', 17 Aug. 1965 (R34/731/7). Lloyd James referred to a meeting of 10 June 1965 when Adam, Director of Television; Gillard; F. C. McLean, Director of Engineering; Beech, Controller, Midland Region; and Edward Pawley, Head of Engineering Services Group, had been present (along with himself as *rapporteur*) to discuss co-ordination of sound and television rearrangements, and to a subsequent Note by McLean which suggested cost-sharing discussions with the ITA and a delay in the implementation of the plan proposed.

<sup>5</sup> Davies, loc. cit.

<sup>6</sup> Gillard, 'Sound Radio in the Television Age'.

<sup>7</sup> See above, pp. 39–48.

<sup>8</sup> \*The Future of Sound Broadcasting in the Domestic Services: Report of the Working Party', Jan. 1957, para. 58 (R34/1021).

When the Working Party wrote its Report, BBC Regional policy seemed well established, and it was certainly well known to Marriott himself as a former Controller, Northern Ireland, and to Gillard, who had already written his seminal memorandum on the subject. The two men got on well together. They both knew, for example, that while Regional Programme Heads had been able within the finances available to them to take their own initiatives in radio, they had never been given the right to make their own choice of when to 'opt out' of the television network. They knew, too, that opting out had always been restricted to the old Home Service, and that the pressures *not* to opt out of that had grown in recent years. In order to avoid criticism and friction in dealing with opting out, the Working Party made its point positively, and urged the Regions, above all, to concentrate on making contributions to the national networks, including the Light Programme. They should only opt out from the national networks, it stated, when the alternative programmes they were providing in place of the national programmes were genuinely and distinctively Regional in character.

It was a matter of 'principle' for the Marriott Working Party that 'calls upon Regions for network contributions' had to 'receive priority over purely Regional work', although for practical reasons, particularly 'the expected increase in Regional contributions for Television', each Region would need to 'receive at regular intervals, sufficiently far ahead, a stable indication of the calls to be made'.<sup>9</sup> To make the system work and to guarantee 'quality', it was proposed that the Heads of the Supply Departments in London, such as the Head of Drama, Head of Features, and Head of Recording Services, should regularly visit the Regions, more regularly than they were then doing.<sup>10</sup>

Gerald Beadle summed up what progress had already been made in 'Regional contributions to television' in a concise and informative paper of December 1958. Mobile units, 'mobile control rooms', had already televised events; studios had been opened—Cardiff, the latest of them, would be finished in 1959; smaller interview studios had been brought into operation in all Regions, including Northern Ireland; film cameras had been distributed; and there had been some relaxation of a 'network only' policy. None the less, Beadle concluded, 'in Television, because of its very high costs, the role of the

<sup>9</sup> \*Ibid., para. 59.      <sup>10</sup> \*Ibid.

regions must be mainly that of participants in production for the network, with a relatively small place for the exclusively local function.’<sup>11</sup>

This statement was fed into a paper prepared for a meeting of the General Advisory Council in January 1959 which dealt with Regional television more fully than the Marriott Working Party had been required to do. It acknowledged the claim of the Regions to develop television as well as radio. Yet, like Beadle’s note and like all BBC papers to follow, it stressed most of all the financial limitations which restrained Regional development. ‘The BBC would like to do more exclusively regional television’, the paper stated, ‘because it believes it to be socially valuable, but it cannot do so to the extent that it would wish because of the heavy additional costs’, capital costs as well as running costs.

The most promising development was a service of regional news and events. The Midlands Region introduced a ten-minute daily bulletin in 1959, and gave its fortnightly news magazine programme *The Midlander* a new name, *Scan*; while the West Region, in addition to daily bulletins, produced a fortnightly magazine programme *View*. In the North Region, where an experimental weekly breakfast-time magazine was introduced in radio, a news and interview studio was opened. The local television magazine programme there retained a regional title, *Points North*.<sup>12</sup>

The Marriott paper recognized, however, as Beadle’s paper had done, that Scotland and Wales as ‘national Regions’ had to be treated separately. Whereas in the English Regions a service of regional news and events was ‘likely to go far to satisfy reasonable ambitions, in both Scotland and Wales there is the desire to express a national culture through a wider range of television programmes. The Corporation recognizes these aspirations and sympathises with them.’<sup>13</sup>

It was following the discussion of the Marriott paper that Jacob found himself in the happy position in 1959 of being able to allot

<sup>11</sup> \*G. Beadle, ‘Television in the Regions’, 8 Dec. 1958 (T16/230/3). Beadle noted the effects of the organization of commercial television companies with a ‘special obligation’ to their own ‘territories’. Theirs, he argued, was ‘a wholly different job in theory from that of the BBC which is to provide the national Service’.

<sup>12</sup> Cmnd. 1174 (1960), *Annual Report and Accounts of the British Broadcasting Corporation 1959–60*, pp. 64–7.

<sup>13</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Papers*, ‘Regional Broadcasting’, 22 Dec. 1958. See also General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 19 Jan. 1959.

extra funds to the Regions.<sup>14</sup> The money, marginal money though it was and amounting only to around £54,000 per Region, was used mainly to support weekday magazines and local television news operations which had already been started and where the BBC was in obvious competition with the regional ITV companies.<sup>15</sup> It was designed, as Jacob put it, primarily for equipment rather than for bricks and mortar. Yet the Regions were planning new centres, which were opened during the 1960s, and even in relation to television news there was pressure, sometimes successful, to provide new studio facilities in 'area' centres other than Regional headquarters—in Newcastle, for example, and Plymouth. Bricks and mortar could not be entirely left out.

Some of the new funds were funnelled into specialized Regional programming, later to be described by Desmond Hawkins in Bristol as *specialités de la maison*—natural history, for example, in Bristol, agriculture and farming in Birmingham. Unfortunately, the North Region, for all the vigour of its spokesmen, had no such *specialité*. 'Industry' might have been one—and was still being mentioned as one in 1967—but the national network had no desire to allow industry, a national concern, to be the Regional preserve of Manchester.<sup>16</sup> It was London which continued to call the tune. Looking back from a vantage-point in 1965, and possibly with Granada's *Coronation Street* in mind, Hawkins speculated on a basic historical *if*. If BBC television had been constituted on a 'federal' basis, *Z Cars* would have been created by 'a BBC North Region of Granada-like strength'. 'The thought', he went on, 'remains as one of the fascinating might-have-beens of our professional lives. I suppose it lies

<sup>14</sup> \*Jacob to Beadle, 'Development of Television in the Regions', 22 May 1959 (T16/230/3). The Government, which had been deducting 12½% of licence revenue, reduced the proportion to 7½%. For the consequences of this 'windfall' sum, see \*P. Beech, 'Radio and Television Output, Midland Region', 15 Sept. 1967 (R78/595/1).

<sup>15</sup> It was unequal competition. There was no effective counter to Southern Television's news services from Southampton or to Anglia's news services from Norwich. Much of the Southern area was covered by the BBC from Bristol, and Norwich from Birmingham. In London, where there was no Regional BBC, there were two ITV companies.

<sup>16</sup> Industry, an anonymous author wrote, would have been the North Region's choice; 'programmes such as an Industrial Gallery and a serial play based on a domestic industrial situation have been proposed.' 'General opinion on this proposal in London, and even among some of the Regional staff, is that industry is not a subject which could be handled exclusively or even predominantly from our Region' ('Television Programme Specialization (North Region)', undated paper filed with 1967 Working Party on the English Regions (R78/595/1)).

buried under the financial tonnage of the great studios that sprang up in the Television Centre.<sup>17</sup>

The 'if' related to structures that were pre-Z Cars, pre-Pilkington, and pre-Greene, and by the time that the Pilkington Committee met, the Regional Controllers had not been entirely of one mind about how best to put to it their particular ideas about Regional policy. Indeed, they were not entirely of one mind in relation to the ideas themselves. At their monthly meeting in October 1960 they all agreed, however, according to Beech, who in 1964 became Controller, Midland Region, that 'the evidence of [Regional Advisory] Councils in association with the BBC should be strongly in support of the BBC's policy on the "main issues"'.<sup>18</sup> In other words, in radio they would support local broadcasting and the preservation of the monopoly, and in television they would support the idea of a second BBC channel on 625 lines.<sup>19</sup>

None the less, the Regional Advisory Councils were not rubber stamps, and leaving on one side the National Broadcasting Councils in the national Regions, which often chafed at London dominance, the North Region in particular, which had a long record of independence, was anxious to grind its own axes. Initially it produced a draft paper insisting that 'on grounds of size and resources alone, the North of England must have its own Regional system of broadcasting': it had 'a right to its own domestic programmes which express the particular character, interests and problems of its people'.<sup>20</sup> The paper went on to urge a redistribution of BBC finance to make this possible.

Wellington, then Director of Sound Broadcasting, raised no fundamental objections to this first draft, but Greene, anxious not to stir

<sup>17</sup> \*D. Hawkins, 'A Note on Regional Broadcasting', 17 Sept. 1965 (R78/595/1). Hawkins was then Head of West Region Programmes. It was 'becoming difficult', he added, 'for many of our colleagues to find any cogent reason for the existence of the regions, except in political terms of some cynicism'.

<sup>18</sup> Beech, who had joined the BBC in 1935 as a producer in the West Region and from 1954 to 1964 was Assistant Head of Programmes in Bristol, wrote a most useful, though inadequately and sometimes inaccurately dated, historical summary of Regional broadcasting, which was sent to Curran on 4 Oct. 1972: 'The Evolution of Radio in the BBC's English Regions' (R78/595/1).

<sup>19</sup> \*Regional Controllers' Meeting, *Minutes*, 5 Oct. 1960, state simply that evidence from the Regions should be sent direct to the Pilkington Committee via the Regional Controllers after it had been seen by the Board of Governors.

<sup>20</sup> \*Board of Management, *Papers*, 'Committee on Broadcasting: North Regional Advisory Council', 18 Oct. 1960. This incident is mentioned in Beech's 'The Evolution of Radio in the BBC's English Regions'. See also Beech, 'New Dimensions in Regional Broadcasting', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 8th ser., 19 March 1970.

any doubts in the minds of the members of the Pilkington Committee, did.<sup>21</sup> He boldly decided, therefore, to enter the lions' den and attend the next meeting of the North Regional Advisory Council at Durham in November 1960. Urging that the tone of the North Region's evidence should be modified, as well as its character, he asked that there be no references in it to budgetary allocations, and that more emphasis be placed on achievement than on problems.<sup>22</sup> The Council was persuaded to agree to his suggestions, shelving difficulties rather than eliminating them, just as the Pilkington Committee was persuaded to agree with his suggestions about organization and priorities.<sup>23</sup>

Unlike the Beveridge Committee, the Pilkington Committee was lukewarm in its approach to the claims of the English Regions. 'We cannot say of the English Regions, as we can of Scotland and Wales,' it concluded, 'that there is a strong and widespread demand for more programmes addressed to their special needs.'<sup>24</sup> Could it have reached such a confident conclusion, had it seen the first draft of the North Regional Advisory Council's paper? In 1968 one Pilkington member, Richard Hoggart, was asked by the BBC to provide a list of 'preliminary questions' concerning 'Regional' or 'Area' television for the General Advisory Council of the BBC. He did so, although he offered thoughts rather than questions, thoughts that had been silenced in 1960. Money was needed. Only if one Region were allowed to prove what it could do, given the money, could an answer be given to the question as to whether a country of 52 million people *required* 'as an act of professional policy rather than on historic or ethnic grounds, more than one main place for television production'.<sup>25</sup>

There was one element in the BBC's general evidence to Pilkington that was to generate further disappointment in the Regions later—and not only in Manchester. In presenting the case for a second television channel, it was stated specifically that 'the BBC's Regions,

<sup>21</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 24 Oct. 1960, state only that amendments were suggested, and that Wellington would speak to Robert Stead, Controller, North Region.

<sup>22</sup> \*North Region Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 8 Nov. 1960 (R6/52/3).

<sup>23</sup> \*The *Minutes* of the next meeting of the Council, 19 Jan. 1961, state: 'Members agreed that the final paper appropriately interpreted Council's views.'

<sup>24</sup> Cmnd. 1753 (1962), *Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960*, para. 108, p. 36.

<sup>25</sup> \*R. D. Pendlebury, Secretary for Advisory Bodies, to Adam, 'Regional Development: GAC Views', 8 Jan. 1968 (Man. Reg. file B3-4-4). Hoggart turned to universities for a possible analogy. He also stated that perhaps a powerful Regional Controller might 'break the spell'. 'Maybe this will happen under the new Controller in Scotland [Alasdair Milne].'



with their reserves of talent which can be enlisted and developed for network use, can contribute even more to two networks than one'.<sup>26</sup> This was not to happen. Nor was Kenneth Adam to live up to promises made in an eloquent oration delivered to the Radio Industries Club in September 1961. He was sometimes asked, he had said then, whether he really believed in Regional broadcasting any longer. The answer was—and 'he did not give it lightly'—that he did. He believed that 'regional broadcasting both in vision and in sound is wanted and that it can, and should, grow'. Moreover, *pace* Gillard, what it could offer was not only information but entertainment. Show business had revived in Glasgow, television drama was alive in Cardiff, and he 'would not be surprised if the next *nouvelle vague* came from Belfast'. There would be more opt-outs, and some of them would be timed in peak hours. 'Londonisation' had to be 'arrested'.<sup>27</sup>

A realistic analysis of the cost of pursuing such an ambitious policy had been made earlier in the year in a paper submitted by J. G. Francis, the BBC's Controller, Finance, who noted that the provision of a second television network and the introduction of colour would take up virtually all the available money for the six years following 1963–4 so that no further Regional expansion could be contemplated before 1970. If after 1970 there were to be a new increase in the BBC licence fee, 'it would seem that our capital expenditure may well diminish, and at this point in time funds might become available for Regional expansion'.<sup>28</sup>

The English Regional Controllers never saw this important paper.<sup>29</sup> Instead, they were further encouraged by the fact that the first White Paper to be published after Pilkington mentioned specifically that a second BBC channel would give the viewer the choice of more programmes 'drawn from regional sources'.<sup>30</sup> They also knew that Gillard had produced a paper in August 1961 on the pattern of regional, area, and local broadcasting in which he had stated categorically that the Region would have 'a continuing future, particularly as the basic unit for all non-journalistic forms of programme output', and that it would 'develop an increased significance in the spheres of administration, supervision and general co-ordina-

<sup>26</sup> Cmnd. 1819 (1962), p. 228.

<sup>27</sup> \*K. Adam, Address to the Radio Industries Club, 26 Sept. 1961 (R4/4/6/15).

<sup>28</sup> \*Francis, 'Have We a Policy for the Regions?', 31 Jan. 1961 (R6/S1/S).

<sup>29</sup> \*Beech, 'Evolution of Policy in the BBC's English Regions', p. 62.

<sup>30</sup> Cmnd. 1770 (1962), para. 39.

tion', as it assumed responsibility for 'a more complex, diversified and scattered operation'.<sup>31</sup>

This did not happen, for the vantage-points of Controllers were themselves changing during the early 1960s, and as Gillard himself fully recognized, circumstances were leading them inexorably to look more closely at the internal patterns of life within their own Regions and the differences within them between one 'area' and another. Indeed, they were now urging that, as a priority, Regional services in both radio and television should in future take account of 'the natural groupings of population within the main regional areas', and that, in particular, new 625-line UHF transmitters should be sited with this criterion in view. After meeting his colleagues, H. J. Dunkerley, Controller, Midland Region, before Beech, had already produced a paper on transmitter siting, suggesting that his own Region be divided into four 'Areas': West Midland, East Midland, South Midland, and East Anglia. In parallel, the North Region should be divided into five Areas: Lancashire and Cheshire, Cumberland and Westmorland, the North-East, Yorkshire, and Lincolnshire, and the West into four, centred on Bristol, Southampton, Plymouth, and the Channel Islands.<sup>32</sup>

Human geography, as well as engineering, was thus being brought into the Regional argument, and it was detailed geography too, the geography of boundaries and hinterlands. In the Midlands, it was suggested, the dividing line between West and East would run approximately along a line from Ashbourne to Banbury, while the boundaries between the East Midlands and East Anglia would be drawn approximately on a line running from the Boston Deep in the North through Wisbech and Cambridge to the county boundary of Essex and Northamptonshire. In the North Region there seemed to be a far more obvious boundary. 'It is quite clear that the Pennines are in every sense a dividing line.'<sup>33</sup>

Proposals for the redrawing of boundaries and the identification of 'Areas' within the Regions might have been sensible both in administrative and in programming terms—and Sir Harold Bishop, the

<sup>31</sup> \*Gillard, 'The Pattern of Regional, Area and Local Broadcasting', 21 Aug. 1961 (R34/731/6).

<sup>32</sup> \*Dunkerley to Greene *et al.*, 'Future Regional Broadcasting', 9 Oct. 1962 (R34/731/6). Dunkerley scaled down his proposals in a later note to Greene on 7 March 1963, admitting that the television scheme he had outlined was a long-term matter ('Future Regional Broadcasting: A Further Note' (R34/731/6)). The practicability of the scheme was corroborated in 1965 at a meeting held on 10 June at which Adam and Gillard were present (\*Lloyd James, loc. cit.).

<sup>33</sup> \*Lloyd James, loc. cit.

Director of Engineering, considered them 'reasonable'<sup>34</sup>—but they were treated by Wellington, for one, as 'potentially explosive'.<sup>35</sup> It was abundantly clear too in 1962 and 1963 that there were no funds available to increase Regional investment to make any new plan possible. The Board of Management agreed within three weeks of receiving the Dunkerley paper in the autumn of 1962 that 'an extension of area broadcasting during the next few years was unlikely because of, among other things, finance, the need to build up the national network and, in the case of Sound, the need to avoid any appearance of trying to get round the Government's decision on local broadcasting'.<sup>36</sup> Greene told the Regional Controllers of this decision at his meeting with them a few weeks later.<sup>37</sup> Local broadcasting was to come first. This, however, was not the end of the story. Rather, it was entering into a new phase. When the Regional Advisory Council in the North took stock of the position after Pilkington, with Sir James Duff, the BBC's Vice-Chairman, himself a Northerner, present as an observer, it decided to go on the offensive and embark on a campaign to advance the cause of the North of England through Regional broadcasting. The North, it claimed, was suffering economically and culturally from a 'drift to the South'. Broadcasting could counter it, but first the balance in broadcasting would itself have to shift. What his Council wished to see, Robert Stead, the North Region's Controller, reported, was 'a shift in the balance of power in broadcasting—from London outwards to the Regions in general and to the North in particular'. Stead himself spoke of a crusade.<sup>38</sup>

To press the case, the Council resolved to send a 'deputation' of five of its members to meet the Board of Governors in London, and Duff agreed to receive them. Before they were so received at a Board

<sup>34</sup> \*Bishop to Greene, 16 Oct. 1962 (quoted in Lloyd James, loc. cit.). 'It may not be possible to reconcile technical requirements with all the regional programme needs . . . but we should be able to go a long way in this direction.'

<sup>35</sup> \*Wellington to Marriott, 'Future Regional Broadcasting', 11 Oct. 1962 (R34/731/6).

<sup>36</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 22 Oct. 1962.

<sup>37</sup> \*Regional Controllers' Meeting, *Minutes*, 11 Nov. 1962.

<sup>38</sup> \*Stead to Greene, 'North Region Advisory Council: The Crusade', 7 Nov. 1962 (R6/51/5). Stead, who had joined the BBC's North Region as a Talks Producer in 1946, became Head of Programmes in 1948. He was the BBC's Representative in Australia from 1953 to 1958, when he succeeded Tom Chalmers as Controller, North Region. He stayed in the post until 1969. Chalmers had an even greater experience of the BBC abroad and in the Regions. He had joined the BBC in 1936, and worked first as a Senior Announcer in Belfast. Controller of the Light Programme from 1948 to 1950, he was seconded to the Nigerian Broadcasting Service as Director of Broadcasting from 1950 to 1956, when he became Controller, North Region. From 1958 to 1962 he was on secondment as Director of the Tanganyika Broadcasting Corporation.

meeting, however, both Wellington and Adam had queried both their analysis of the situation and the statistics on which it was based. Their own analysis, however, was not without its flaws. Wellington dismissed too quickly the claim of the North Regional Advisory Council that the North Region's 'contribution to the networks' could 'only be achieved by a staff living and working in the Region', while Adam's 'very strongly held view' that it was not 'physical resources that the BBC in the North lacks, but cultural' was based on imperfect knowledge.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, it flatly contradicted what he himself had said earlier.

With five television producers, the North had offered a distinctive, if limited, contribution to network entertainment, though not as striking as that of the West or, indeed, the Midlands, both of which had made the most of specialization. Harry Worth's comedies and *The Good Old Days* had won and kept national audiences. John Ammonds was an able television Light Entertainment producer. So, too, was Ray Lakeland in Outside Broadcasts, and there had always been a northern dimension to *Grandstand*. What was challenging was that Sir Reginald Streat, the Lancashire businessman who drafted the North Region's submission to the Board, was fighting on a far broader front. Indeed, his submission began with the fighting words 'This is no parish pump exercise'. Its object, Streat went on, was to counteract the 'image of an attractive South and an unattractive North'. 'Our case is a call to BBC Governors to use their unique powers to attack, as no other agency can, the imbalance of North and South, not in the interest of the North, but in the national interest.'<sup>40</sup>

Unfortunately Streat could not attend when the submission was read to the Board on 6 December 1962, but whether his absence made any real difference to the outcome is uncertain.<sup>41</sup> As Louis Allen, a lecturer at Durham University, who later became Chairman of the North-East Advisory Council, put it equably, 'either one saw

<sup>39</sup> Wellington and Adam, quoted in \*Board of Management, Papers, 'Request by North Regional Advisory Council for Meeting with the Board', 16 Nov. 1962. Adam had consulted Stuart Hood, who was then Controller, Programmes, Television. Hood stated simply that 'the reason why Television Service [London-based] does not ask for more programmes from the North is that there is little sign of initiative in the programme field on their part' (\*Hood, 'North Region', 12 Nov. 1962 (R6/51/5)). There was obviously much heated talk in Television Centre about relative Regional contributions before the 'deputation' met the Governors in Dec. See, e.g., \*Board of Management, Minutes, 19 Nov. 1962.

<sup>40</sup> \*Streat's Notes for Meeting with BBC Board of Governors: 6th December 1962 (R6/51/5).

<sup>41</sup> \*Board of Governors, Minutes, 6 Dec. 1962.

the case or one didn't.' Certainly no dramatic results followed the meeting. One of the Governors, Robert Lusty, who at Duff's request took the Chair at the meeting, welcomed the actions of 'a forceful and articulate Regional Council',<sup>42</sup> but Greene clearly did not 'see the case'—in itself a proof to Allen of 'the tremendous "London inertia" of the organization'. Beech, writing later, was to draw a quite different conclusion from that implied in Lusty's welcome. He felt that 'the fact that the Council had gone to the Governors over the heads of the output Directors soured North relations with London for ten years'. Moreover, because Stead had supplied his Council with statistics supporting the case it was propounding, he personally became 'tarred with the same brush'.<sup>43</sup>

Whether a different approach would have been any more successful is itself open to question, for, as Beech himself points out, the financial situation of the BBC deteriorated to such an extent in 1964 that it seriously affected not only the North Region—and the other Regions—but BBC output as a whole.<sup>44</sup> In such circumstances, the Governors, harassed by other matters, including reactions to BBC programmes, were not ready for structural reorganization; and when circumstances changed, it was local radio, not Regional radio, that was once more at the top of the agenda.

The Governors had not seen the further paper from all three English Regional Controllers written by Dunkerley in March 1963 and briefly noted by the Board of Management.<sup>45</sup> In it the Controllers emphasized that they saw local radio as 'a single-community service operating as an additional programme over a wide output range'; but they also expressed concern that 'staff expansion now contemplated in London will be so large as to remove reasonable chance of Regional expansion as BBC 2 spreads around the country'.<sup>46</sup> The Board of Management decided not to discuss this paper until they had seen a report that was commissioned from Paul Findlay, Head of Television Administration Department, who had been asked to look into the North Region's allegations of under-provision.

<sup>42</sup> \*Lusty to H. S. Magnay, 7 Dec. 1962 (R6/51/5).

<sup>43</sup> \*Beech, 'Evolution of Radio in the BBC's English Regions', p. 77.

<sup>44</sup> See above, pp. 536 ff.

<sup>45</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 11 March 1963.

<sup>46</sup> \*Dunkerley to Greene, 'Future Regional Broadcasting: A Further Note'.

In a frank and lucid report that began with history, Findlay looked back to Gillard's seminal paper of 1955,<sup>47</sup> noting how in all the English Regions news output in radio had increased substantially since the early 1950s (by 172 per cent), while Variety and Features and Drama output had fallen—by 84 per cent and 63 per cent. The trend was nation-wide, and there was the same emphasis on topicality in television.<sup>48</sup> Yet television staff in the Regions were able to gain little access to the national television network, where there was more material to choose from than planners could use, and they were often considered in London 'as amateurs playing in a professional league'.

Given that the cost of the Regions to Television was about £1½ million a year, plus a capital expenditure in the next five years of about £5 million, Findlay rightly deduced that the 'improvement of professional relationships between the Regions and London' was 'an essential condition for the raising of Regional programme standards'. Yet 'on the Sound side' he had heard few complaints of excessive programme control. Some staff were inclined to 'look back with nostalgia to the days of greater opt-out freedom, but nobody argued that the clock should be put back'.<sup>49</sup> In the North, a 'generally unsatisfactory attitude' on each side exacerbated tensions, but more generally too, the Regions as a whole were isolated in terms of staff, professionalism, operations, and general thought from the central body of the Corporation.

The most urgent requirement, Findlay concluded, was 'integration'.<sup>50</sup> Regional staffs were in need of an overhaul. Standards had to be raised. Studios had to be improved. A 'pilot fund' ought to be introduced to help find and introduce new talent. There should be closer co-operation between Regional Programme Heads and London

<sup>47</sup> See above, pp. 624–7.

<sup>48</sup> The North Region itself had placed what it called 'an increased emphasis on topicality in both broadcasting media' (Cmnd. 1503 (1961), *Annual Report and Accounts of the British Broadcasting Corporation 1960–61*, p. 50). In the West Region (*ibid.*, p. 53), the West Regional News as such had disappeared from television and VHF, to be replaced by three localized news bulletins. Output had increased four times in five years. In the Midlands Region, a news magazine from East Anglia, *Outlook*, was introduced in Dec. 1960.

<sup>49</sup> \*P. Findlay, 'Problems of the English Regions (with Special Reference to the North Region)', 14 May 1963, incorporated in Board of Management, *Papers*, 'North Regional Enquiry', 2 June 1963. For Regional News, see \*Audience Research Report VR/63/147, 'Regional News (February 1963)', 21 March 1963.

<sup>50</sup> The same word was being used in External Services.



Programme Heads. In particular, there should be a voice in London to present the Regional case in discussions about output.<sup>51</sup>

In Findlay's list of detailed suggestions, any that involved extra money, like the pilot fund, were quickly ruled out.<sup>52</sup> So, too, was his suggestion that 'a study should be made of broadcasting requirements in terms of the social structure of the country [as a whole] with a view to showing what further development should take place in the field of Area Broadcasting (Sound and Television) over, say, the next ten years'. 'This has already been done by the Regional Controllers', Greene noted; 'No action possible because of money.'<sup>53</sup>

None the less, Greene himself recognized the need both for improved devolution and for greater integration. He knew that he was dealing not only with issues raised by the North Region but with issues affecting the Regions as a whole. His first decision, what he called 'a pragmatic solution', was to ask Gillard, who was just about to take up his responsibilities as Director of Sound Broadcasting, to be the Director responsible in London for the Regions 'not as Director of Sound Broadcasting but as Gillard'.<sup>54</sup> It was a managerial decision that was approved by the Board of Management in September 1963 at a meeting when Stead and Grahame Miller, the new North Regional Programme Head, were present, and Gillard set out at once to institute regular inter-directorate meetings with Television to discuss matters of mutual interest.<sup>55</sup>

Greene's second decision was in line with past decisions. He chose once more to meet the North Regional Advisory Council, fortified by

<sup>51</sup> 'Problems of the English Regions', 14 May 1963.

<sup>52</sup> Findlay, who stated clearly that he was commending ideas for attention, not recommending them, had much to say of the Manchester Studios, 'the smallest, least attractive and probably least well equipped of all the English Regional Studios'. They would have precluded the production of a series like *Z Cars* had there been the desire to launch one. He noted that a new studio and modern equipment were promised, but that these were four or five years ahead. Findlay's report impressed Greene ('Greene to J. H. Arkell, Director of Administration, 7 June 1963 (part of Board of Management, *Papers*, 'North Regional Enquiry', 2 June 1963)).

<sup>53</sup> 'Greene to Arkell, 7 June 1963. Findlay also wrote a confidential paper 'Local Broadcasting Stations in North Region' (quoted in 'Lloyd James, loc. cit.). His appointment had been welcomed in the Regions, and in other papers he had thoughtful comments to make on other Regions, dwelling, e.g., at some length on broadcasting in East Anglia. Of the West Midlands he noted that, 'despite Black Country feelings on the matter', there could be 'no doubt' that Birmingham was the provincial capital. For regional boundaries and the history of the concept of 'regionalism', see Briggs, *Collected Essays*.

<sup>54</sup> 'Greene to Arkell, 7 June 1963. He also asked Stead to comment on the report. In general Stead welcomed it, while resisting any suggestion of diminishing the authority of Regional Programme Heads over their own staff.

<sup>55</sup> 'Board of Management, *Minutes*, 2 Sept. 1963.

the support of the Governors to whom he had submitted a paper setting out his conclusions on Findlay's report.<sup>56</sup> At the meeting, which was held in Leeds, he dwelt most on the BBC's financial limitations, and made no concessions whatever on any of the larger issues that Streat and his colleagues had raised earlier. Nor did he make any concessions on the question of developing 'Areas' within the huge North Region. The North Regional Council was not impressed, but it conceded reluctantly through its new Chairman, Niel Pearson, that 'finances are a fact of the Corporation's life'.<sup>57</sup> It was decided that there was no point in attempting to meet the Governors again.<sup>58</sup>

In 1964 the most melancholy outcome of the protracted discussion about Regions and their role, at least from the Regional vantage-point, was the irrelevance of their output to the television schedules of BBC-2 given that BBC-2 operated on 625 lines. Greene had stated in September 1962 that the BBC would be 'falling short of the Government's expectations' if it did not allow 'for a considerable increase in Regional contributions to the two national networks',<sup>59</sup> but Adam, who had been even more optimistic in 1961, now warned in an address delivered at Leeds University in November 1962 that it would not be possible for the new BBC-2 channel 'to draw much on Regional material' in its early stages.<sup>60</sup>

Finally, Leonard Miall's Working Party on BBC-2, which was visiting all Regional headquarters while Findlay was reporting, dashed any hopes of the provinces gaining a larger share of programme time even on BBC-1. 'Present financial circumstances rule out the provision of extra staff and facilities which would take up fully the engineering slack in the Regions.'<sup>61</sup> There were to be no new producers, and there were to be only modest increases in programme services, particularly design and supply.<sup>62</sup> One radical new proposal

<sup>56</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 10 Oct. 1963; *Papers*, 'North Region Enquiry: Note by the Director-General', 4 Oct. 1963.

<sup>57</sup> \*Pearson to Greene, 20 Jan. 1964 (R6/51/6).

<sup>58</sup> In 1969 Pearson, still Chairman, was to tell the General Advisory Council that if Manchester did not secure the necessary new regional headquarter premises, the whole of his Council would resign (\*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 15 Jan. 1969). This was the last meeting which Greene attended as Director-General.

<sup>59</sup> \*Greene to Adam, 'The Second Television Programme', 17 Sept. 1962 (T16/315/1).

<sup>60</sup> Adam, 'The Opportunities of BBC-2: Planning the BBC's Television Programmes': Address at Leeds University, 13 Nov. 1962 (extracts reproduced in *BBC Record*, 15 (Nov. 1962)).

<sup>61</sup> \*\*Working Party on Regional Contributions to BBC 1: First Report', 8 March 1963 (T16/230/6).

<sup>62</sup> The planning implications of the Working Party's findings were set out in a paper by Miall, then Assistant Controller, Programme Services, Television, 'The Regions and the

was offered—the suggestion that School Television, ‘an important entity which does not need to be in London’, should be transferred to Manchester. This, it was claimed, would have symbolic as well as practical significance, since such a transfer would serve as ‘a valuable reminder to the rest of the country of the North’s traditional concern for education’.<sup>63</sup>

The idea was radical enough for Adam to forbid any mention of it outside the Working Party, but he wrote about it to Arkell and to Greene.<sup>64</sup> In the event, no action was taken after Findlay warned that the idea, however ingenious, would not appeal to Manchester. ‘The North Region would be required to house a unit over which it could have little control and to which its producers could not normally contribute.’<sup>65</sup>

Discussions on the Regions—and, indeed, on local radio—were to be subsumed in the larger discussions that were to culminate in the production of *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, the theme of the next chapter. Yet there was one final burst of interest in late 1964 and 1965, when ‘regionalism’ was in the news while the Government was drawing up a National Plan which involved the division of the country into economic planning zones.<sup>66</sup> Whatever Normanbrook’s or Greene’s views as to whether the Chief Planner, George Brown, should be allowed to make a national broadcast about the final version of the Plan in September 1965,<sup>67</sup> Greene felt that it would be useful if Brown would ‘come and discuss these matters’ with colleagues inside the BBC, since the Plan ‘might well affect not only the

Immediate Future of Television: Prospects for 1964–65’, 10 Jan. 1964. The North Region was allotted ten adult education programmes, twenty-four puppet shows, and another Harry Worth series. Bristol lost all its network drama, which led to the resignation of Patrick Dromgoole, one of its drama producers. He took with him the writer Peter Nicholls. Sydney Newman, who was not interested in ‘one-off’ Regional drama, accepted the idea of staff from the London Drama Department producing in the Regions, as at Birmingham (\*‘Regional Development 1964/1966’, *Minutes*, 3 March 1964 (T16/230/6)), and the Midland Region got an increase of thirty-five posts in drama, which enabled it to produce a twice-weekly serial.

<sup>63</sup> \*‘Working Party on Regional Contributions to BBC 1: First Report’.

<sup>64</sup> \*Adam to Greene, ‘Working Party on Regional Contributions to BBC 1’, 20 March 1963; Adam to Arkell, ‘Working Party on Regional Contributions to BBC 1’, 9 April 1963 (T16/230/6).

<sup>65</sup> \*Findlay, ‘Problems of the English Regions’, incorporated in Board of Management, *Papers*, ‘North Regional Enquiry’, 2 June 1963.

<sup>66</sup> *The Times*, 5 Nov. 1964, reporting an important speech in Parliament by George Brown, described the Government’s regional economic plans which would ‘take their place in a coherent national framework and would be drawn up with people in the regions’. There would be Advisory Regional Councils and a Scottish Planning Board.

<sup>67</sup> See above, p. 549.

location of regional centres and transmitting stations but also the pattern of area and local broadcasting in television and sound'.<sup>68</sup>

It is not clear whether Brown visited Broadcasting House or Television Centre, but there was some sign that the atmosphere in the BBC had changed when in 1965 David Lloyd James was sent round the English Regions to produce an up-to-date survey of Regional aspirations.<sup>69</sup> In January 1965, Hywel Davies had given his Lunch-Time Lecture on the role of the Regions in British Broadcasting, in which he argued that the BBC could not 'exist without strong regional support' and that 'the fundamental obligations of a Region' were 'towards its community rather than towards central organisation'. Davies claimed, too, that 'scientific audience research' was not a prime need in a Region 'because you are always rubbing shoulders with your "samples"'.<sup>70</sup> Later in the year, Desmond Hawkins produced his memorable paper for the Society of St. George which included his reference to the post-war historical might-have-been.<sup>71</sup> He spoke of arguing out with himself problems that he had lived with for many years.<sup>72</sup>

Hawkins gave five reasons why in his view the BBC should remain committed—as he called it—to Regional broadcasting. First, it was attempting 'to respond to the proper local pride of nations and provinces and counties by decentralising its activities with at any rate more zeal and skill than one might find in other forms of mass communication'. Second, it was seeking to 'recruit talent . . . not abundantly available in London and to cultivate the distinctive "flavours" of local culture where they exist'. Third, 'more recently', it was making 'some demonstration of local competition with the ITV companies'. Fourth, it was attempting 'to maintain contact with a reasonably well-disposed and widespread public opinion' from which it could draw support, 'notably when it is endangered by hostile interest or scrutinised by official committees of enquiry'. Fifth, it was

<sup>68</sup> \*TV Controllers' Meeting, *Minutes*, 15 Dec. 1964. There was no clear lead at that time from industry as to how to relate centre to periphery, a point noted by Beech from a Midlands vantage-point in his Lunch-Time Lecture, p. 3. The pattern varied. Following the nationalization of gas in 1949, twelve autonomous Area Boards were set up (R. Self-Cohen, *Nationalisation in Britain* (1961), p. 125). In British Railways the heads of the six railway regions that replaced the old companies had been told that they were not to be general managers but only representatives of the Railway Executive (see M. R. Bonavia, *The Birth of British Rail* (1979), p. 71).

<sup>69</sup> \*Lloyd James, loc. cit.

<sup>70</sup> Davies, loc. cit.

<sup>71</sup> See above, pp. 653–4.

<sup>72</sup> \*Hawkins, 'A Note on Regional Broadcasting', 17 Sept. 1965 (R78/595/1).

exercising 'patronage', and offering employment throughout the United Kingdom.

Later in the paper, Hawkins noted an 'erosion' of the 'traditional Regional structure', and behind the erosion changes in ways of thinking. 'The present organisation of the BBC', Brian Smith had written recently in an independent Acton Society publication, 'can hardly be said to contribute to the development of regional loyalties, or even to serve those that already exist.'<sup>73</sup> 'Area' development within Regions was a different matter. In radio and television 'every area' could 'tell its own story of impressive audience figures, heart-warming support by letter and phone call' in relation to local magazines. Regions should offer 'mothership' for such area schemes, while at the same time 'rally[ing] some provincial alternatives to what otherwise would be a monolithic standard of taste and judgement'.<sup>74</sup>

Some of the issues that had concerned Lloyd James, Davies, and Hawkins were considered separately by a Working Party on the English Regions (Television), which was established under a Board of Management Minute in January 1967, and later by the high-level internal study group, working in association with the business consultants McKinsey and Company, in the preparation in 1968 and 1969 of the inevitably highly controversial paper *Broadcasting in the Seventies*.<sup>75</sup>

The Working Party, chaired by Adam, focused on the appeal of 'Area' as opposed to 'Regional' television, mainly but not exclusively in news, on the need to advance further Regional specialization in programme-making for the network—and on the importance of developing Regional 'colourization'. Other recommendations included an increase in opt-out time for the Regions and a Television Study Committee for the English Regions reporting to the Director of Television. The Working Party also had its own contribution to make to the semantics of broadcasting. 'At present in BBC terms an "Area" is a sub-division of a "Region". In our view these terms are the wrong way round. The present English geographical "Regions" are arbitrary . . . the present Areas have . . . more identity and intrinsic cohesiveness. . . . We recommend that this interchange of titles be considered.'<sup>76</sup>

<sup>73</sup> B. Smith, *Regionalism in England* (1965). Cf. D. Read, *The English Provinces, 1760–1960: A Study in Influence* (1964), pp. 255–60. See also R. E. Dickinson, *City, Region and Regionalism* (1947), and C. W. Gilbert, 'The Idea of a Region', *Geography*, vol. 45 (1960).

<sup>74</sup> \*Hawkins, loc. cit.

<sup>75</sup> See below, pp. 721 ff.

<sup>76</sup> \*Report of the Working Party on English Regions, 29 Nov. 1968 (R78/593/1). The Committee included Huw Wheldon, Paul Fox, David Attenborough, Beech, Hawkins,

The Working Party passed on its conclusions to a Policy Study Group, which also had at its disposal McKinsey's initial thoughts on BBC structures.<sup>77</sup> In management terms the Regions were 'apparently less economic than London'. Moreover, the decision to build a new Manchester Regional headquarters, where an All Saints site had been identified in 1958, had not been a good one,<sup>78</sup> even though the idea was stoutly supported in Manchester. It presupposed a 'major continuing role for the Regions in both television and radio', and this was not *prima facie* obvious.<sup>79</sup> The Policy Study Group, discussed fully in the next chapter, had a dynamic of its own, but it was obvious at this early stage in a protracted review just how difficult it would be to secure consensus.

In face of opposition, Gillard had himself given evidence to a Public Enquiry in Manchester in favour of the idea of building the Manchester Centre. Indeed, he had stated there that if the BBC was 'to provide the broadcasting service envisaged in its Charter, it must be much more than metropolitan . . . Successive Committees of Enquiry, over the last forty years, have commended the BBC's efforts in this direction and recommended their intensification . . . It is the view of the BBC . . . that broadcasting in the North can never be fully effective . . . until there is a single, modern, integrated fully equipped headquarters in Manchester.'<sup>80</sup>

What was proposed in *Broadcasting in the Seventies* about the future role of the Regions—and it was part of a package—was to be somewhat modified before the policies were put into effect in April 1970 as a result of representations made by the BBC's Regional Advisory Councils and by its General Advisory Council.<sup>81</sup> Representations, however, were somewhat different from dialogue, and the

Joanna Spicer, Findlay, and Redmond. The Working Party had among its papers an interesting report on 'Independent Television in the English Regions', written by Colin Shaw, then working in Television Planning Department, 7 June 1968 (R78/S95/1).

<sup>77</sup> See below, pp. 743 ff.

<sup>78</sup> The BBC had recognized the importance of new premises as early as 1952. In 1961 began to draw up plans for the All Saints site. In Jan. 1964 Manchester Corporation asked for modifications, which were made between then and 1966. In June 1966 there were Press rumours of the BBC's withdrawal from the site, and on 10 Nov. 1966 Normanbrook and Greene told a Press Conference on BBC economies that the scheme would have to be deferred. In Jan. 1967, after a public inquiry, the site was compulsorily purchased by the BBC and Manchester Corporation. See BBC evidence to the public inquiry, esp. evidence of Gordon Thripp, Central Services Planning Officer, and J. H. Arkell, Director of Administration (\*R78/1245).

<sup>79</sup> See McKinsey and Co. 'Improving the Management of Resources', 1968.

<sup>80</sup> Quoted in \*Beech, 'Evolution of Radio in the BBC's English Regions', pp. 159–60.

<sup>81</sup> See below, pp. 762–4.



feeling persisted in 1968 and 1969 that in television, in particular, the Regions were regarded as an appendage rather than as a part of the service.<sup>82</sup> Meanwhile, as far as radio was concerned, some of the Regional Councils made it abundantly clear that for them local radio by itself was not enough. 'They would wish to record a warm welcome to the idea of developing 40 local radio stations,' the Midland Regional Council stated in 1969, 'but they could not accept the idea that this should be the sum total of non-metropolitan radio.' It was essential 'to preserve at area or regional level an opportunity for local staff to foster and give airtime to musicians, authors, actors, and so on, in addition to reflecting local life in the current affairs field'.<sup>83</sup>

The old English Regions, each with its medium-wave transmitter, were to cease to exist after April 1970. So, too, were radio opt-outs, which had allowed them to substitute their own programmes for those on the 'national network'. Eight new Regions were to be created, however, 'making better sense in sociological/demographic terms' than the larger old Regions that they would displace. There was to be a suggestion, too, that there might be another three. There was also to be a three-tier structure, incorporating the forty local radio stations that were by then envisaged and three 'network production centres', located at Birmingham, Manchester, and Bristol, headquarters of the old Regions and still Regional centres under the new system. It would be their task to maintain a flow of programme material into both the national television and the national radio networks.

In response to pressure from the Regional Advisory Councils, the Heads at the Production Centres were to have responsibility for radio as well as television. They were also to be provided with funds to encourage Regional talent. There was also to be a new post: that of Controller, English Regions. Like his National Regional colleagues, the Controller would have direct access to the Director-General.

There was, however, the usual sting in the tail. The viability of the new *Broadcasting in the Seventies* plan—and the sections on local and Regional broadcasting were only part of it—depended, as every previous plan had done, not only on Government backing, but on assured financial resources. These were not forthcoming, and despite a strong commitment, it proved difficult fully to implement the plan

<sup>82</sup> \*Beech, loc. cit., p. 176.

<sup>83</sup> \*Midlands Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 10 April 1969.

within a short period.<sup>84</sup> In 1974 there were still only twenty local radio stations, and schemes had not been completed for broadcasting premises in the headquarters of two of the new Regions—Leeds and Plymouth.<sup>85</sup>

There were no public obsequies on 4 April 1970, but there were melancholy letters in *Ariel*, the first of them appearing before the full changes had been agreed. The writer of the first of them—'Reg-Rader' in Bristol—observed that when he heard Gillard and Beech supporting the changes on the grounds that the old Regional boundaries made little sense, he recalled how these were 'the very two men under whose ambitious leadership we worked so hard to extend the boundaries of the old West Region'.<sup>86</sup> A few months later, Eileen Molony, a Further Education Producer in Bristol, wrote a letter complaining of redundancies and, 'for the benefit of the historian', noting the manifold problems which, during the previous few years, had been faced in a Region which had 'welcomed most of the London Programme Departments during the War', which had transmitted the early *ITMA* broadcasts, and which had uncovered such talent as Deborah Kerr, Cliff Michelmore, and Johnny Morris.<sup>87</sup> When this letter was written Gillard had left the BBC. He retired on 8 December 1969. In the meantime, Beech had become first Controller, English Regions, and had set up his headquarters 'on a transitional basis' not in London, but in Pebble Mill, Birmingham.

## 5. Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland

Everyone inside the BBC appreciated both in 1970—as in 1960—that Scotland and Wales, as 'national' Regions, were in a different position from the English Regions.<sup>1</sup> The mildest way of putting it was

<sup>84</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Papers*, 'The Broadcasting Role of the English Regions', 12 Dec. 1972.

<sup>85</sup> *BBC Handbook 1975*, p. 56. See below, pp. 997–9.

<sup>86</sup> *Ariel*, Jan. 1970.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, May 1970.

<sup>1</sup> Gillard wrote in his note on 'Regional, Area and Local Broadcasting' that 'the National Regions are now such a special case that an English Regional Controller does not feel he is qualified to include them even in such a tentative context as this' ('The Pattern of Regional, Area and Local Broadcasting', 21 Aug. 1961). There had been some resistance in the Scottish National Region to the use of the term 'opt-out' to describe programme items aimed only at Scottish listeners. See W. H. McDowell, *The History of BBC Broadcasting in Scotland, 1923–1983* (1992), pp. 87–8.

that 'the sense of a separate culture was stronger'. Just as important, there was a constitutional difference between the 'national Regions' and the rest. After the Beveridge Committee had made strong recommendations on the need for regional devolution, National Councils had been created in Scotland and Wales. There were also National Governors for Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, who sat on the main Board in London. Their talents differed, but they were often influential figures who were as likely to challenge BBC programming policies as to accept them. 'Governing the BBC' would have been a less complex task had they been similar in status to the Chairmen, however distinguished, of the English Regional Advisory Councils.

The National Broadcasting Councils were conscious of their privileged status, as their Reports and their evidence to the Pilkington Committee demonstrated. The Broadcasting Council for Scotland, for example, stressed its 'statutory duty to control the policy and content of the Scottish Home Service' and 'to pay full regard to the distinctive culture, interests and tastes of the Scottish people'.<sup>2</sup> There was a religious and moral dimension to the culture, it went on to explain. The Act of Union had established the Presbyterian Church of Scotland as the National Church, and both in television, for which the Council was not then responsible, and in radio the Church of Scotland in Scotland had to be treated in the same way as the Church of England was in England.

Sundays were special days, and it was undesirable to present on Sundays—or at other times when family viewing was general—'plays which condoned or appeared to condone moral laxity'. More positively, Scotland demanded, as the Scottish Press was demanding, the broadcasting of its own national events in television as in radio—Hogmanay, the General Assembly of the Church, the Royal Highland Show, the National Mod of the Gaidhealach, and, not least, state visits.<sup>3</sup> Throughout the evidence, the social was related to the constitutional. The voice was that of the Scottish Establishment. The Annual Reports, which noted the great events, bring this out clearly with Burns Night, St Andrew's Day, and the Edinburgh Festival added to this list.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Cmnd. 1819 (1962), p. 321.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 324.

<sup>4</sup> The Report of the Broadcasting Council for Scotland, 1959–60, in Cmnd. 1174 (1960), pp. 35–41. Lord Reith attended the fortieth anniversary of the BBC in Scotland in 1963.

There was a difference between Scotland and Wales on the one hand and Northern Ireland on the other, even though they each had representatives on the Board of Governors in London. The position of Northern Ireland, 'the most contrary region', was constitutionally different from that of the other two before, not after, it became a storm centre of political, religious, economic, and social disturbance after 1968.<sup>5</sup> There was no National Council there, as there was from 1 January 1953 in both Scotland and Wales. The decision not to create one in Belfast was taken after the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, Sir Basil Brooke (later Lord Brookeborough), had taken the unprecedented step of inviting the then Controller, Northern Ireland, Andrew Stewart, to attend a Northern Irish Cabinet meeting when the matter was being discussed.<sup>6</sup>

The Council in Belfast continued after 1953 to be called the BBC Northern Ireland Advisory Council, and it had exactly the same powers as before. The Pilkington Committee had very little to say about Northern Ireland except that its representations showed 'little dissatisfaction with the programmes provided to meet local needs and did not question the structure of either of the broadcasting organisations'.<sup>7</sup> It bracketed Northern Ireland, therefore, not with Scotland and Wales, but with the English Regions: 'there is no demand for more regional programmes at the expense of the national programme.'<sup>8</sup>

The Minutes of the Scottish and Welsh Broadcasting Councils were seen by the Board of Governors in London and by the Board of Management, ensuring that channels of communication were kept open formally; and while the National Governors usually took full advantage of their position to press their Council's views, from time to time other representatives of the National Regions were also invited to attend London meetings. The first Chairman of the Broadcasting Council for Wales, Lord Macdonald of Gwaenysgor, a

<sup>5</sup> The phrase 'the most contrary region' provides the title for the admirable monograph by R. Cathcart, *The Most Contrary Region: The BBC in Northern Ireland, 1924-1984* (1984). In his paper 'Television in the Regions' (8 Dec. 1958), Beadle for a different reason described Northern Ireland as 'an exception in most respects to the general pattern', adding that this was much to be regretted. The reason he gave was that it was 'impossible to feed the network with live material from Northern Ireland except at a quite prohibitive cost'.

<sup>6</sup> Cathcart, *op. cit.*, p. 165. For Stewart, see above, pp. 33-4. At that time the Northern Ireland Region shared a radio wavelength with England's North-East, and resources in Belfast were severely limited.

<sup>7</sup> Cmnd. 1753 (1962), para. 107.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 138.

former Labour MP, who remained a Governor of the BBC until 1960, was a doughty spokesman;<sup>9</sup> and at least one of his successors, Professor Glanmor Williams, who was a Governor from 1966 to 1971, contributed actively—and cogently—to BBC discussions on every subject of importance, whether Welsh or not. The voice of Wales was always heard.

By contrast, Northern Ireland was less well understood. There had been special difficulties in relation to it during the Second World War and in the years after 1945, including what Cathcart calls 'tension between the BBC elsewhere and the BBC in Northern Ireland'. As the then Regional Controller, Robert McCall, put it in 1958:

Broadcasting in Northern Ireland has a number of special stresses with which to contend. The majority and the minority of the population are divided by fixed ideas based on religious belief and political ideal . . . As a result, an impartial BBC comes under careful scrutiny from both sides since open discussion of two sides of problems, except in the Northern Ireland parliament, is rare outside of broadcasting.<sup>10</sup>

That was only one side of the difficulty. The other was that independent reporting of what was happening inside Northern Ireland by BBC programme makers from outside the province was made almost impossible because of Northern Irish sensibilities.<sup>11</sup> And once open disturbances had begun in 1969 with the rise of the civil rights

<sup>9</sup> See above, p. 13. In an address to Cardiff Business Club in Feb. 1953, Macdonald, a President of the National Band of Hope Union, talked enthusiastically of the Wales that the BBC must always keep in mind: 'Wales as we know it today, the Wales of song and sport, of the Eisteddfod, of the drama and the delyn, of the pulpit and the platform; the Wales of youth, the Wales of the aged, the Wales of the business-man and the financier in Cardiff, the Wales of industry and of the far-flung farming communities, Wales in its entirety, with all its variations and differences—that's the Wales the BBC must keep in mind. That's the Wales whose highest interests it must serve' (quoted in R. Lucas, *The Voice of a Nation? A Concise Account of the BBC in Wales, 1923–73* (1981), p. 176). Cf. Davies, loc. cit., pp. 9–10: 'What is Welshness? It is a wine you can never chill; it is a welcome you can seldom outstay . . . The one extravagance of the Welsh is words.'

<sup>10</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'The BBC in Northern Ireland', 28 May 1958.

<sup>11</sup> When Alan Whicker produced a number of film reports on Northern Ireland in 1959, he was treated as an interloper descending on the Province and adding to its troubles (Cathcart, op. cit., p. 8). None the less, the peculiarities of Northern Irish sensibilities should not be exaggerated. There was strong resentment in Scotland about an Edinburgh item in a *Panorama* programme transmitted on 27 Feb. 1961 (\*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 9 March 1961; \*G. M. Menzies, Honorary Secretary of the Progressive Group of Edinburgh Town Council, to Andrew Stewart, Controller, Scotland, 14 March 1961 (ibid., *Papers*)). Sir David Milne, the Scottish Governor, told the Governors that a deputation from Edinburgh's City Fathers was expected. The very next *Minute* dealt with Welsh sensibilities. Mrs Rachel Jones criticized a networked St David's Day programme, *Once There Was a Time*.

movement, a development which had not been generally foreseen, the British Government was anxious at every stage not to worsen the situation, as it saw it, by allowing the activities and purposes of the IRA to be treated as if it were one political group against or among several. There were practical difficulties too. The small news staff in Belfast was unable to cope with the massive demand for new coverage.<sup>12</sup>

Political questions could never be ignored in Scotland and Wales either, for in both countries various versions of nationalism, organized and unorganized, introduced into the political and cultural mix a significant element that was missing in England even when Manchester was at its most belligerent. In Wales, for example, the new Broadcasting Council was drawn at once into the thorny question of whether or not the BBC should transmit political broadcasts specifically relating to Wales—either in Welsh or in English. Should they be broadcast, the question went on, by all political parties, and not just by the Conservative, Labour, and Liberal parties?

After the Council had made proposals that the answers to both questions should be yes, it quickly found itself forced to retract. Indeed, having received them, the Postmaster-General, then Hill, took the unprecedented step in 1955 of banning everywhere 'any controversial party political broadcast on behalf of any political party, other than any series of controversial political broadcasts arranged by the Corporation in agreement with the leading political parties for broadcasting throughout the United Kingdom'.<sup>13</sup>

Fortunately, the Welsh Broadcasting Council's resolution was not shaken,<sup>14</sup> and it gave full details of what had happened in the evidence that it presented to the Pilkington Committee.<sup>15</sup> It was not until December 1964, however, that the Party Political Broadcasting Meeting in London agreed to allow strictly limited political broadcasting time to Plaid Cymru, and, at the same time, to the Scottish

<sup>12</sup> Waldo Maguire, 'Northern Ireland Crisis', *Ariel*, Sept. 1969.

<sup>13</sup> Direction to the BBC, 27 July 1955. This directive 'constitutionalized' the 1948 *aide-mémoire*. Hill, who accompanied his Directive with a letter, quoted Clause 15(4) of the BBC's Licence and Agreement, dated 12 June 1952. For the *aide-mémoire* and its role in English broadcasting, see above, p. 92, and Appendix E.

<sup>14</sup> According to Gwynfor Evans, who wrote a pamphlet on the subject (*The Wicked Ban: Radio and TV Veto against Wales* (1959)), the Council 'stood with splendid determination and refused to be browbeaten'. They went on to arrange political discussion programmes in which representatives of the minority parties stated their views. They also collected protests about the directive, and corresponded with R. A. Butler on the subject between 1958 and 1960.

<sup>15</sup> Cmnd. 1819 (1962), pp. 339–41.



National Party,<sup>16</sup> which had submitted evidence on its own broadcasting claims to both the Beveridge and the Pilkington Committees.<sup>17</sup> Other nationalist bodies were involved in pressure politics also. Thus, the Saltire Society in Scotland, in its evidence to the Pilkington Committee, insisted that it was not asking for 'a larger quota of material built round a Scottish parish pump'. It demanded a Scottish perspective on both local and national events.<sup>18</sup>

There were other matters of concern besides 'nationalism' in the three national Regions, if only because they were each placed geographically on the edges of the national network. The most serious was the fact that between 1945 and 1963 Northern Ireland had to share the same wavelength for its Regional programme with England's North-East.<sup>19</sup> The most vocal was the reaction in Scotland in 1967 to the launching of Radios 1 and 2. Reception of Radio 2 on 1,500 metres in the long waveband was very poor, and the Postmaster-General was driven to duplicate it on a 202-metre medium wavelength from sub-stations serving Edinburgh and Glasgow.<sup>20</sup> In Wales the difficulties of transmission caused by its mountains were illustrated in two revealing maps printed in the *BBC Handbook* for 1968.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> See above, p. 554. The first Plaid Cymru broadcasts on television and radio were on 25 Sept. 1965. When the Council was arguing its case in the early stages, it had been attacked from the right by David (later Sir David) Llewellyn, who in Jan. 1956 complained of 'a distinct bias in the Welsh Region of the BBC in favour of Welsh Nationalism and Plaid Cymru' (*Hansard*, vol. 548, col. 618, 30 Jan. 1956). A Committee headed by Sir Godfrey Ince examined the charge, and decided that there was no evidence to support it. 'The BBC staff in Wales', it added, 'are fully conscious of their obligations and carry out their task to the best of their ability in an impartial manner' (Cmnd. 39 (1956), *Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Welsh Broadcasting 1956*, p. 22).

<sup>17</sup> In Cmnd. 8117 (1951), p. 437, the Party complained generally that the BBC was treating Scotland literally as a region, rather than as a nation. At the same time (p. 440), it complained specifically that television had not yet reached Scotland, even though it was 'the invention of a Scot'. In a pamphlet *Broadcasting in Scotland: Report by a Special Committee of the SNP* (1957), it described a separate Scottish Broadcasting Corporation as a 'necessity', and in the Party's evidence to the Pilkington Committee (Cmnd. 1819-1 (1962), p. 942) it reiterated that 'if Scotland is not to be submerged in a stream of Anglo-American ideas and culture, it is imperative that a Scottish Broadcasting Corporation be formed to control the services at present provided by the BBC'. The Broadcasting Council for Scotland in its own evidence to Pilkington recommended that it should be free to make 'fair arrangements for Scottish party political broadcasts in sound and television to the extent of about sixty minutes in each year and additional to the United Kingdom party political series' (Cmnd. 1819 (1962), p. 322).

<sup>18</sup> Cmnd. 1819-1 (1962), p. 938.

<sup>19</sup> For a highly apposite verse on the shared wavelength, see Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, p. 94.

<sup>20</sup> Cmnd. 3779 (1968), *Annual Report and Accounts of the British Broadcasting Corporation 1967-68*, p. 115.

<sup>21</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1968, pp. 128-9.

Throughout the whole period there were 'areas' in all three countries where reception was difficult. Stewart reported a pertinent conversation with the Duke of Edinburgh in 1964. 'Reception at Balmoral is terrible', the Duke began. 'I thought, Sir, you had a special aerial rig up the hill.' 'That's the telly: it's the wireless.' 'May I pursue this, Sir?' 'At your own risk—we can get Luxembourg.' The report of the conversation ended very properly. 'I arranged for EIC Operations to visit Balmoral and he has made recommendations.'<sup>22</sup>

One of the most curious situations in broadcasting in the national Regions during the 1960s arose in Scotland in October 1967 when Alasdair Milne, who had just refused to take up a post as Director of Programmes with Yorkshire Television, returned to the BBC (after an initial talk with Huw Wheldon) as Controller Designate, Scotland, the youngest Regional Controller in BBC history. He had been interviewed for the post by Lady Baird, the National Governor, as well as by Greene; but the National Broadcasting Council for Scotland had not been consulted, and there were protests about this.<sup>23</sup> There was a further complication. Several years before, Milne had been turned down as Head of Programmes in Glasgow after Stewart had made it clear that he did not want to have 'a young man in a hurry' at his side.<sup>24</sup>

In the autumn of 1967 Stewart had no control over the appointment of his successor, but the arrangement made for Milne to take up residence in Glasgow and start work with the BBC there before Stewart retired was calculated to create difficulties. Stewart was not due to go until July 1968, and Milne, described in the *Scotsman* as a 'tiger at the gates',<sup>25</sup> must have been seen in that light by Stewart also. In the event, Milne took over long before the nine months were over, for after Greene had learnt that following his retirement Stewart was proposing to become a Director of Scottish Television, the BBC's competitor, Greene, with no demurs, asked him to go. He had never had much use for him, and his decision was in character.<sup>26</sup>

Milne himself, keen on the job and anxious to cultivate programme quality and thereby to increase Scotland's contribution to the BBC

<sup>22</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, Report on Scotland included in the 'Report by the Director of Sound Broadcasting, July–Sept. 1964', 29 Sept. 1964.

<sup>23</sup> Cmnd. 3779 (1968), p. 115.

<sup>24</sup> See A. Milne, *D.G.: The Memoirs of a British Broadcaster* (1989), p. 48. Milne had been supported by Stuart Hood, who had a low opinion of the then Glasgow BBC regime. See *Spectator*, 17 March 1967, and his chapter 'The Backwardness of Scottish Television', in K. Miller (ed.), *Memoirs of a Modern Scotland* (1970).

<sup>25</sup> *Scotsman*, 14 Oct. 1967.

<sup>26</sup> In Oct. 1965 Greene met representatives of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh, when he was appalled to be told that the BBC should revert to

network, took over on 1 January 1968 after attending the traditional BBC Hogmanay party held that year in Cumbernauld New Town. He stayed in Glasgow until September 1972. He succeeded in his purposes, and strengthened the links between Glasgow and London. He also enlivened news programmes, and encouraged drama serials. In comedy *The Stanley Baxter Show* belongs to this period: it was a show of high quality.

In each of the national Regions, whatever its particularities and whoever led it,<sup>27</sup> the most significant development of the period between 1955 and 1965 was the same—the rise of television—although the chronologies were different in each Region, as were the technical considerations influencing coverage and the economic, political, and cultural consequences of the new medium.<sup>28</sup> It was not until 1962, however, that the National Broadcasting Councils were belatedly given responsibility for television as well as radio. Even before the Pilkington Committee was appointed, Beadle had recognized that it seemed ‘logical’ that the Councils ‘should have authority over the content of the programmes mounted exclusively for their own people’<sup>29</sup> and the Governors now accepted that this was so.<sup>30</sup>

In Wales, where television first arrived in the south only in 1952—from a Wenvoe transmitter—the Broadcasting Council organized a competition to find the most suitable Welsh word to describe it: three people out of several hundred picked the winner, *teledu*.<sup>31</sup> It was not until 1958, however, that the number of combined television and radio licences in Wales exceeded the number of licences for radio alone. *Welsh Sports Parade* had an angle (and

what it had been in the 1920s—not even the 1930s, the 1920s (H. Greene, *The Third Floor Front* (1969), p. 92).

<sup>27</sup> In Wales J. H. Rowley succeeded the long-serving Alun Oldfield-Davies as Controller in March 1967.

<sup>28</sup> Technology, geography, culture, and religion were interrelated. Gaelic speakers in Scotland tended to be concentrated in inaccessible regions; Welsh-language speakers in a number of remote parts of Wales faced difficult reception conditions. The language question was different in the two countries, however, before and after the Hughes Parry Welsh Language Act of 1965. None the less, the Gaelic Department in Glasgow was producing five radio programmes a week in 1961, and the first Gaelic programme on television, *Music of the Gael*, was broadcast on 7 March 1962.

<sup>29</sup> \*Beadle to Greene, ‘Powers of Scottish and Welsh Councils’, 21 Jan. 1960 (T16/233/4). He was commenting on a request from the Broadcasting Council for Scotland dated 10 Nov. 1959. See also Broadcasting Council for Scotland, Report for 1959–60, in Cmnd. 1174 (1960), pp. 35, 39, 40.

<sup>30</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 21 Feb. 1963.

<sup>31</sup> Lucas, op. cit., p. 178. Nine years later Saunders Lewis delivered the Annual Radio Lecture *Tynged yr Iaith* on the perils facing the Welsh language.

loyalties) of its own. So, too, did *Dechrau Canu*, *Dechrau Canmol*, programmes of congregational hymn singing from chapels in South Wales.<sup>32</sup>

In Northern Ireland, television developed slowly until the BBC was confronted with competition from Ulster Television in October 1959. McCall had reported to London in 1958 that the Ulster audience was 'sensitive about sound broadcasting and television being a potential source of evil to their way of life'.<sup>33</sup> In Scotland, where television arrived in 1952, there was initial caution too. There was also a demand from the start that the Broadcasting Council should be responsible for television as well as sound. 'Without parity of responsibility in television output, . . . the intention of Parliament [as expressed in 1952] is now defeated.' There had to be a single policy too in Scottish television and radio.<sup>34</sup> 'It should be clearly understood', the *Glasgow Herald* had written in 1952, that 'the occasion heralds television in Scotland, not Scottish television'.<sup>35</sup> None the less, when five years later Scottish Television provided the first competition, in August 1957, competition was to be strongest in relation to the network programmes it transmitted and not in relation to its Scottish-originated output.<sup>36</sup>

'Scottish-originated output' entered the BBC's network system through Glasgow for there was no television studio in Edinburgh until 1963.<sup>37</sup> A new Glasgow studio, opened in February 1964, was the first to be equipped to operate on 625 lines, but since the reach of BBC-2 had not by then stretched to Scotland, the first 625-line programmes made in Scotland had to be sent to London for retransmission. A landmark date was 1965, when a five-year television development programme was launched. There were now to be five regular Scottish television programmes each week. More time was to be devoted to light entertainment and drama.

In 1964 viewers throughout Britain had seen *Highway in the Sky*, a film produced by the BBC's Film Unit about the Forth Road Bridge,

<sup>32</sup> Cmnd. 1503 (1961), p. 29.

<sup>33</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'The BBC in Northern Ireland', 28 May 1958.

<sup>34</sup> Cmnd. 1174 (1960), p. 40. The same point had been made firmly by Lord Balfour, the National Governor, in a note circulated by Jacob at the Chairman's request on 3 Dec. 1959 (\*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'The Broadcasting Council for Scotland and Television in Scotland').

<sup>35</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, 14 March 1952.

<sup>36</sup> McDowell, *op. cit.*, p. 127. Border Television began to operate on 1 Sept. 1961, and Grampian Television on 30 Sept. 1961.

<sup>37</sup> Aberdeen had acquired its first television studio in 1962.

which won an appreciation index of 87, and a wide range of programmes from the eighteenth Edinburgh Festival, including the Tattoo.<sup>38</sup> The following year, the year of the 200th transmission of the popular *White Heather Club*, no fewer than twenty-eight programmes were broadcast from the Festival. There was a link with older times when the BBC sponsored a competition for the composition of a new pibroch. It was won by an 88-year-old.<sup>39</sup>

In Wales forty musical works and thirty plays were commissioned by the Welsh Region between 1960 and 1965.<sup>40</sup> The most striking development, however, was the increase in the amount of broadcasting in the Welsh language. When BBC Wales, the Welsh Television Service, which had been recommended by the Pilkington Committee, was created in February 1964, of the fourteen hours of programming seven were in Welsh.<sup>41</sup> The proportion was maintained, as it was in radio also. The biggest audience of the 1960s was for the televising of the Investiture of Prince Charles as Prince of Wales on 1 July 1969. Indeed, the BBC programme in colour was seen by 500 million viewers throughout the world.<sup>42</sup>

The life of the National Regions was never completely insulated from the wider world, if only because emigrant families from Scotland, Wales, and Ulster were scattered throughout the Commonwealth, the United States, and other parts of the world. 'The world can be as much the parish of a region as of a metropolis', Hywel Davies declared in his lecture of 1965.<sup>43</sup> There were often close personal links, too, in the BBC's own ranks. Thus, McCall, born in Scotland, who had moved from the post of Assistant Director, Television Broadcasting, to become Controller, Northern Ireland, had spent much of his life in Australia, and had worked in external

<sup>38</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report by the Director of Television, July-Sept. 1964', 28 Oct. 1964.

<sup>39</sup> In 1968 the BBC produced an authoritative book and programme on piping, *Piobaireachd*.

<sup>40</sup> Davies, loc. cit., p. 8.

<sup>41</sup> Some non-Welsh-language speakers complained then and at other times of what they called an 'imposition' (Cmnd. 2503 (1964), *Annual Report and Accounts of the British Broadcasting Corporation 1963-64*, p. 117), but it was noted in 1965 (Cmnd. 2823, *ibid.*, 1964-65 (1965) p. 137) that 'the tide has long turned', and that complaints were now few. In Nov. 1968 supporters of the Welsh Language Society in Llandaff occupied a BBC newsroom in Bangor for several hours. In 1970 an experiment was carried out in the subtitling of two Welsh plays in English.

<sup>42</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1970, p. 39.

<sup>43</sup> Davies, loc. cit., p. 14. 'The most rewarding way of considering the establishment of a Welsh National Theatre', he explained, 'is to appraise similar institutions in the smaller countries of Europe.'

broadcasting in Bush House from 1940 to 1941 and again from 1946 to 1952.

## 6. Bush House

External broadcasting, at last brought under one roof in Bush House in 1957,<sup>1</sup> was beginning to be transformed during the late 1950s and 1960s, although as a result of limitations on funding the BBC's slide down the international league table of providers of broadcasts to other countries continued during the 1950s and 1960s. The decline had been obvious at the time of Suez, when cuts were proposed while the crisis was at its height;<sup>2</sup> and following a review, there were further cuts during the late 1950s, involving a curtailment of services in Persian and in Japanese and in English for Europe, and the total elimination in March 1960 of the Thai Service<sup>3</sup> and of a number of well-established language services for Europe, all for a saving of £9,765.<sup>4</sup>

There was a concomitant increase in broadcasting by Communist countries, much of it in English. Between December 1950 and March 1961 the output of Soviet external broadcasting nearly doubled, from 533 to 1,005 hours; that of the Eastern bloc countries rose from 412 to 1,119 hours; and that of China from 66 to 697 hours.<sup>5</sup> The Voice of America lagged behind, with only a slight rise from 497 hours to

<sup>1</sup> In that year the General Overseas Service moved to Bush House from 200 Oxford Street.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 124. Details of earlier comparative output are set out in Appendix A to GAC Paper 214, 'The BBC's External Services', 4 Jan. 1957. See above, p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> Having agreed that this Service should go, the Foreign Office asked three weeks after its abolition for it to be restored because the King of Thailand was visiting Britain and the Foreign Office wished his subjects to learn about his visit. The audience had already been lost (\*Curran interviewed by Miall for the Oral History Project, Jan. 1978). The service was restarted on 3 June 1962.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 134. The details are set out in successive editions of the *Annual Report and Accounts of the BBC*. When the well-established language services for Portugal, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway were dropped in 1957, the savings per service were just over £10,000, with a further economy on overheads of £18,000. A French for Africa service began in 1960. In 1962 the North American Service ended, and in 1963 the Portuguese Service was resumed. See also G. Mansell, *Let Truth be Told* (1982). In *Prospero*, Dec. 1982, the BBC's newsletter for retired staff, Mansell wrote about the problems he had faced in writing his history.

<sup>5</sup> External broadcasts from China began in 1945, initially from a very small transmitter. Early broadcasts were intended for South-East Asia and the Far East, and in 1956 the range was expanded to include Europe and the Near and Middle East. In 1957 broadcasts to North and South America were added, and in 1959 to Africa and the Pacific.



632, and the BBC dropped well behind, its total hours falling from 643 to 592.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile Nasser stepped up Egyptian external broadcasting to the Arab world and beyond. Like the leaders of the Soviet Union, he encouraged broadcasting in the vernacular languages of Africa, then not often heard on the radio waves.<sup>7</sup>

From 1962 onwards the decline in BBC weekly programme hours was arrested, and by 1968 a figure of 700 hours was reached. Meanwhile, the number of languages in use had risen again, to forty. Yet by then countries in the Communist bloc had increased their external broadcasting hours in spectacular fashion, particularly between 1966 and 1968. By 1968, a year of international crisis, the Soviet Union was broadcasting for more than twice as many hours as the BBC, and was using twice as many languages (seventy-nine compared with forty). Other Eastern bloc countries followed similar expansionist policies. Even Albania increased the number of hours of its external broadcasts from 200 hours a week at the end of 1966 to more than 400 hours in 1968.<sup>8</sup>

Relations between the external broadcasting of the BBC and the external broadcasting of other countries provide the first of the three main themes of the story of Bush House during the 1960s and early 1970s. There were alternating phases of conflict and of contact. Sometimes a sense of coexistence was strongest: at other times there was a brutal awareness of continuing cold war. Sometimes there were diplomatic exchanges, followed by visits of friendly delegations; at other times there was jamming of BBC (and other Western broadcasts), both in the Soviet Union and in other Communist countries, as there had been since the cold war quickened in 1949.<sup>9</sup>

As a provider of speedy and accurate news in often tense circumstances the BBC fulfilled some of the purposes that it had fulfilled

<sup>6</sup> Cmnd. 1503 (1961), p. 62.

<sup>7</sup> D. M. Boyd, 'Development of Egypt Radio: "Voice of the Arabs" under Nasser', *Journalism Quarterly*, vol. 52 (Winter 1975), and *idem*, *Broadcasting in the Arab World* (1982). See also S. W. Head (ed.), *Broadcasting in Africa* (1974).

<sup>8</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1969, p. 100. The BBC's Albanian Service was abolished in 1967 on the day Curran moved to Bush House as Director, External Broadcasting. In Oct. 1964 the Chinese completed a 200-kilowatt transmitter to be used by the Albanians near Durazzo ('Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report by the Director, External Broadcasting, Sept.-Nov. 1964', 24 Nov. 1964).

<sup>9</sup> There are few detailed studies of the general situation, but see the American study by M. Lisann, *Broadcasting to the Soviet Union* (1975). See also B. S. Murty, *Propaganda and World Public Order* (1968). Memories could be cast on one side. Thus, in 1965, when the President of the Hungarian Radio and Television visited London, an agreement on exchanges of programmes and facilities was signed ('Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 14 March 1965).

during the 'hot war'. Thus, for example, the news of the fall of Khrushchev in 1964 was broadcast by BBC radio before it was broadcast by any of the Soviet information media. As for truth, while the BBC had few links with Vietnam, its Vietnamese Service was listened to day by day by all sides during the Vietnam War. An American correspondent captured by the North Vietnamese and later released described how he watched his captors listening night after night to the BBC's service. When he asked his leader why, he was told: 'This is the BBC. This is not propaganda.'<sup>10</sup>

Whether 'the truth' could be heard depended on the kilowatt power available to the broadcasters and on the conditions for good reception. The second theme of the period, therefore, was the effort, called for in most of the reviews of external broadcasting, to improve listener audibility. 'In looking to the future', the Annual Report for 1959-60 stated, 'the BBC sees as its first task the extension and improvement of transmitter coverage in areas where reception, whether of sound or television programmes, is unsatisfactory or non-existent.'<sup>11</sup> Whether it could discharge that first task depended on the willingness of Government to provide the funds either specifically or out of overall grants-in-aid which implied diverting funds from programming.

For financial reasons the effort to improve transmission started late, after several other countries had built high-power transmitters, and the pace of investment in what was inevitably a long-term programme slackened at a critical time during the late 1960s. The first requirement was to scrap a number of obsolete transmitters in the United Kingdom. The second was to build new stations overseas, the first of them a high-power, short-wave relay station on Ascension Island in the South Atlantic. Equipped with four 250-kilowatt transmitters, it was in full service by the spring of 1967, and at once it gave improved coverage for both Africa and Latin America. In the Far East work began on the modernization of the relay station at Tebrau in Malaysia, and was completed in 1972 with the installation of four 280-kilowatt and four 100-kilowatt short-wave transmitters.

<sup>10</sup> Cmnd. 4824 (1971), *Annual Report and Accounts of the British Broadcasting Corporation, 1970-71*, p. 69. The BBC Monitoring Service had noted how in Aug. 1964 the Voice of America had doubled its output in Vietnamese, the third increase since Feb., and how the Soviet Union had increased its output in Khmer for Cambodia by two hours a week from 1½ to 3½ ('Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report by the Director of External Broadcasting, Sept.-Nov. 1964', 24 Nov. 1964).

<sup>11</sup> Cmnd. 1174 (1960), p. 27.

In the Middle East and beyond, after the retreat from Aden, a new medium-wave relay station at Masirah in the Arabian Sea off the Muscat coast, opened in 1969, provided improved coverage for Pakistan, Northern India, Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Persian Gulf. There was evidence here too that, like the transmitter on Ascension Island, the Masirah transmitter significantly increased the listening audience.<sup>12</sup> In Cyprus the small transmitter at Sharq al Adna that had been employed during the Suez crisis was supplemented in 1969 by a new 50-kilowatt medium-wave transmitter.

The size of the British capital programme still did not compare with the capital programmes of the BBC's competitors, most of whom built high-power transmitters from the start. As late as 1970, when the first phases of the authorized programme of capital development were nearing completion, less than half the forty-six high-power transmitters in the United Kingdom had an output of 250 kilowatts.<sup>13</sup> Yet the Foreign Office and those whom it called upon to advise it were still seeking to direct funds from programmes to transmitters without taking full account of the consequences.<sup>14</sup>

One major diversionary change early in the 1960s had followed from the major review of 1959. It was initiated by an Inter-Departmental Working Party chaired by J. A. Bergin, a civil servant under Hill in the Office of the Duchy of Lancaster.<sup>15</sup> In September 1961 Bergin specified areas where economies might be found, which would enable more money to be spent on transmitters; and among these were the closing of the BBC's New York Office and the withdrawal of the North American Service in the United States.<sup>16</sup> The changes, it was remarked at the time, would bring about an annual saving of £42,000, of which only £7,000 accrued from the closing of the Service.<sup>17</sup> It was the Service that went in 1962—and with it much

<sup>12</sup> The Ascension station not only transformed broadcasting to African countries, notably Nigeria and Ghana, but led to a partial restoration of the cuts in the Latin American Service in 1967. Tangye Lean wrote enthusiastically about the effects of its opening (*BBC Handbook, 1967*, p. 19). Listeners who wanted the BBC had hitherto had to depend on the direct signal from London 'which arrived by two or three hops'. 'Ascension puts in a signal with one hop, louder, clearer, and on frequencies which can be received on many of the cheap transistors.'

<sup>13</sup> Cmnd. 4520 (1970) *Annual Report and Accounts of the British Broadcasting Corporation, 1969-70*, pp. 68, 89. The rest were 100-kilowatt transmitters. There were also medium-wave relay stations in Malta and in Berlin (D. A. V. Williams, 'BBC External Services Engineering', *Sound and Vision Broadcasting*, Spring 1971).

<sup>14</sup> See below, pp. 709-11.

<sup>15</sup> The Committee brought together the Foreign Office, the Commonwealth Relations Office, and the Colonial Office.

<sup>16</sup> \*Bergin to J. B. Clark, 13 Sept. 1961 (E2/750/2).

<sup>17</sup> \*Clark to Bergin, 12 Oct. 1961 (E2/750/2).

American goodwill. Many of the programmes that were made for the Service were 'tailored', and the end of the Service meant a further loss of rebroadcasting by American radio stations. In the last year of operations a record number of rebroadcasts—13,889 station hours—was attained.<sup>18</sup>

The Office remained, for after Bergin had been transferred to the new Department of Technical Co-operation, headed by Dennis Vosper, and continued on behalf of his Committee to press for cuts, the BBC instituted a review of its own of overseas Offices.<sup>19</sup> Some remained within External Services. Others—among them New York—were transferred from the External Services to the Corporation as a whole. A Working Party, chaired by Oliver Whitley, then Controller, Staff Training and Appointments, and including Curran, then Head of External Broadcasting Administration, recommended the transfer of the New York office to an Overseas and Foreign Relations Department within the Director-General's orbit. The transfer took place on 2 July 1962.<sup>20</sup> Responsibility now passed to Harman Grisewood, and the Head of the Department was Donald Stephenson.<sup>21</sup>

The third theme of the period—an increased trend towards 'globalization'—was registered in the work of the Overseas and Foreign Relations Department, and it was a theme that was to outlast the cold war and, indeed, the end of the Soviet Union and empire in the late 1980s. Communications spanned the world. So, increasingly, did television, which defined the ways in which the world was perceived.<sup>22</sup> Yet radio, organized nationally, remained the dominant medium in external broadcasting after it had ceased to be so in domestic broadcasting. It was still impossible in most parts of the world to switch television channels and to receive other countries' broadcasts, and there was far more listening to radio than ever

<sup>18</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1963, p. 70.

<sup>19</sup> \*Donald Hodson, Controller, Overseas Services, to Clark, 'Suggested Savings to Retain Threatened Services', 18 Dec. 1961 (E2/750/2). With the exception of the Beirut and Berlin Offices, Hodson did not think that the External Services got 'results commensurate with the Grant-in-Aid contribution' to them.

<sup>20</sup> \*Greene to all notice-boards, 'H.O.F.R.'s Department and Staff Overseas', 2 July 1962 (Central file: Office Routine: Duties Departmental: Chief Assistant to DG: Overseas and Foreign Relations, File 3). The Working Party produced two reports, one on New York and one on other offices. External Services retained offices in Berlin, the Far East, the Middle East, and Latin America. The Delhi office was transferred to Overseas and Foreign Relations in 1963.

<sup>21</sup> See also below, pp. 716–7. From July 1963 the Department was located in Henry Wood House.

<sup>22</sup> See below, pp. 713–5.

before. In the Soviet Union, where the only English newspaper on sale was the Communist *Daily Worker*, later the *Morning Star*, there was ample evidence of moving round the radio dial to pick up 'the BBC'.<sup>23</sup>

While there were significant changes in the league table in the positions of countries engaged in external broadcasting, there were even bigger changes in the composition of the world audience that all the providers, whatever their objects or ideologies, were seeking to reach. Radio sets became cheaper, and far more people in the developing world were buying them. In the words of the *BBC Annual Report* for 1959–60, 'the development of transistor receivers, cheap and easy to run, is perhaps the most important single factor in recent years which has helped on this expansion of overseas audiences'.<sup>24</sup> Because of this, external broadcasters, whatever their national base, knew that there were more opportunities, if they could only grasp them, than there were problems to overcome.

In the Soviet Union itself, where there was light jamming of BBC broadcasts in the period between Suez and 1960,<sup>25</sup> the number of sets capable of receiving them had gone up four times by 1960, alongside an even bigger increase in receiving sets of all kinds. By 1955 there were 6 million of the latter, and by 1960 there were 20 million, along with 5 million television sets.<sup>26</sup> Jamming ceased early in 1960, but only for a few months, after which it was intensified.

The decision to change, taken like all such changes in the Soviet Union at the highest level, followed a much publicized U-2 intelligence plane incident in May, news of which was made public while Eisenhower was meeting Khrushchev in Paris.<sup>27</sup> Jamming was inten-

<sup>23</sup> See J. Monahan, 'Broadcasting to Europe', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 2nd ser., 9 Oct. 1963. At the British Trade Fair in Moscow in 1961 many listeners identified themselves.

<sup>24</sup> Cmnd. 1174 (1960), p. 25.

<sup>25</sup> Jamming of BBC broadcasts, which had stopped in 1956 after the Khrushchev and Bulganin visit to Britain, had resumed with the Hungarian uprising later in the year. See above, p. 105. During Khrushchev's visit to the USA in Sept. 1959, Soviet jamming of the Voice of America stopped, and when the BBC's Washington Correspondent, Christopher Serpell, asked him why the BBC continued to be jammed, he was told that it was because of the line that the BBC had taken during the Hungarian Revolution. There was no jamming of the BBC's 'English by Radio' series or of *Music to Russia* (Cmnd. 1174 (1960), p. 76).

<sup>26</sup> The annual registration and subscription tax on receivers was abolished in 1962, and replaced by a one-time surcharge on the purchase price (Lisann, op. cit., pp. 4–5).

<sup>27</sup> According to *ibid.*, p. 10, the decision to jam in 1960 was taken before news of the U-2 incident, and was related to early moves against Khrushchev. Jamming had been discussed in Jan. 1961, when an official British delegation led by Joseph (later Lord) Godber visited Moscow. It had no results (*Hansard*, vol. 633, cols. 593–4, 30 Jan. 1961). For an attempt at a defence, see a letter from Georgi Zhukov to the *Observer*, 29 Jan. 1961.

sified during the collapse of the Paris Summit Conference and the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, rising to 80 per cent of output. There was Cuban jamming, too, of Spanish-language American stations, many of them broadcasting anti-Castro propaganda. The Soviet decision to stop jamming in 1963 was associated with the break with China and the conclusion of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty with the West.<sup>28</sup> The Director-General of Soviet Radio, Mikhail Kharlamov, told Greene that it had been technically inefficient, and that it did not prevent foreign listening. The politics was plain, however, when, after June 1963, the jamming began to cease not only in the Soviet Union but in other East European countries as well, with Romania leading the way.<sup>29</sup> The economics was equally plain. The cost of jamming, which involved more than 2,000 transmitters, was more than the entire cost of BBC external broadcasting.

It had always been ironic that while Soviet propagandists were expanding their external services throughout the world, they were at the same time sharply criticizing foreign broadcasters whom they described as seed-sowers of bourgeois ideology or, worse still, 'hostile' *provocateurs*. Among their targets were the broadcasters of the BBC, of Deutsche Welle, West Germany's official external services station, and of the Voice of America and Radio Liberty, both of which were financed by the United States, the former directly, the latter operating, it was claimed, 'essentially as a free press does in the United States'.<sup>30</sup> The Soviet Press also devoted considerable attention to another American-backed service, Radio Free Europe, although this enterprising service did not broadcast direct to the Soviet Union.

Within this list the BBC was always at pains to insist on its own, separate identity. It was different in content and tone from the American stations, official and unofficial, and it wanted to make the most of its difference. Above all, it wanted to make the most of its independence. Greene, whose first post-war job with the BBC had been that of running the East European Service, was personally more interested in establishing amicable, but independent, relations with

Greene himself replied in a letter on 5 Feb. 1961. 'No one who values good international relations and good broadcasting will be happy', he wrote, 'until this nuisance is banished altogether from the air.' In 1962 there was Chinese jamming of BBC services in Kuoyu and Cantonese.

<sup>28</sup> For Chinese broadcasting see J. Howkins, *Mass Communication in China* (1982).

<sup>29</sup> The way had been prepared by an Anglo-Soviet cultural agreement. Hungary and Czechoslovakia ceased jamming in 1964, to be followed by Bulgaria (*Ariel*, Aug. 1964).

<sup>30</sup> Presidential Study Commission on International Radio Broadcasting, *The Right to Know* (1973).



broadcasting agencies in the Commonwealth and Eastern Europe than he was in chairing the European Broadcasting Union as Jacob had done—and as Curran was to do after him.<sup>31</sup> He was particularly anxious to win a reputation for professionalism, a point also stressed by Curran, and both men were doubtless gratified when in 1967 Vladimir Osipof, former *Isvestia* correspondent in London, wrote an article in *Journalist* on his return to Moscow stating that one of the factors which most drew Russians to listen to the BBC was its 'professionalism', matched only by the *New York Times* and the *Daily Mirror*.<sup>32</sup>

As far as the content of broadcasting was concerned—and it had its critics on the British Right—the BBC's policy was well described in 1964 by Maurice Latey, Head of the East European Service from 1959 to 1969.<sup>33</sup>

We are speaking to people who are fed [up] to the back teeth with slogans and dogmas. They certainly do not tune in to the BBC to get counter-slogans and counter-dogmas. If we tried to thrust any ideological line down their throats we should not only be misrepresenting the nature of British society—an open or plural society in which many ideologies compete; we should also alienate the most valuable part of our audience . . . the technical intelligentsia.<sup>34</sup>

Latey's deputy from 1964 to 1969—and subsequent successor—was Alexander Lieven, educated neither in Britain nor in Russia but in Ireland; he had joined the BBC as Russian Programme Organiser in 1960. Together Latey and he supervised Russian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Yugoslav, and Slovene Sections.<sup>35</sup>

The Programme Organiser of the Russian Section from April 1964 was Gordon Clough, who had joined the BBC in 1958, and in later years was to become well known to British listeners as an authoritative presenter of the *World at One*, *The World This Weekend*, and

<sup>31</sup> For Greene's views on the importance of Commonwealth links, see his interview with Karl Miller reported in *The Listener*, 28 March 1968.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in C. Curran, 'Broadcasting from West of Suez', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 7th ser., 6 Nov. 1968, p. 16.

<sup>33</sup> Latey had been European Talks Organiser before heading the East European Service.

<sup>34</sup> M. Latey, 'Broadcasting to the USSR and Eastern Europe', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 3rd ser., 11 Nov. 1964. 'We cannot, of course, tell the people of Eastern Europe what they ought to do about their problems; this is none of our business.' Some critics of BBC policy thought that it was. Some American broadcasts did not hesitate to tell them. Latey added that 'our purpose in broadcasting [to Eastern countries] is not to drag them away from Russia. Obviously no one wants to re-create the balkanized and strife-riven Eastern Europe which was ripe for a conqueror before the war.' Latey had accompanied Macmillan on his visit to Russia in 1959.

<sup>35</sup> Lieven became Controller, European Services, in 1972, serving in the post until his retirement in 1979.

*Round Britain Quiz*; and in his words, the Section was trying to present its picture of Britain to people living in the Soviet Union so that, if they found themselves in Piccadilly Circus, they would not be surprised at anything going on around them.<sup>36</sup> 'We are', Clough said, 'a sort of Home, Light and Third combined.'<sup>37</sup> Other members of the Section included Mary Seton-Watson, member of a family devoted to the history of Eastern Europe, Victor Gregoriy, Janis Sapiets, and Mrs Dimitrievitch. There were sixteen Russian Programme and Language Assistants in all and eight Russian typists.

From time to time, official Russian visitors to Britain met members of the Service. In reverse, the first official visit of a seven-man BBC delegation to the Soviet Union had taken place in April and May of 1956 just after Khrushchev and Bulganin's trip to Britain.<sup>38</sup> It had been headed by J. B. Clark, Director, External Broadcasting, and included television and radio represented by Miall and Gillard; engineering, represented by R. T. B. Wynn, then the Chief Engineer, and Neville Watson; and news, represented by Arthur Barker and Anatol Goldberg, the latter a news analyst in Bush House whose voice was well known to his Russian hosts and whose 'sweet reasonableness' in dealing with Russians and Russian broadcasts both evoked admiration and provoked criticism.

Goldberg, who had joined the BBC's Monitoring Service in 1939, worked for the Russian Language Section for thirty-five years, and devoted all his energies and imagination to it. According to his own account, he believed in addressing not 'disaffected elements' in the Soviet Union but 'intellectuals'.<sup>39</sup> There was an unbridgeable gulf between Goldberg and his critics, among them Peter Wiles, an economics professor, who accused the Russian Service of 'moral compromise and appeasement'. Goldberg made no apologies. 'The line we have adopted since Stalin's death has been to welcome any change for the better and to suggest openly or by implication that the politically minded Soviet citizen should ask for more.'<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup> *Ariel*, July 1964.

<sup>37</sup> In 1962 a family series had been started called *The Lvovs*, about an imaginary Russian family which had settled in Britain. In 1964 there were potted versions of Gilbert and Sullivan. Sport was a favourite item with Soviet listeners.

<sup>38</sup> See above, p. 78.

<sup>39</sup> 'Notes on Russian Broadcasts', n.d. (E12/926/1).

<sup>40</sup> See his obituaries in the *Daily Telegraph*, 6 March 1982, and *The Times*, 9 March 1982. There was a later attack in the *Spectator* (30 Oct. 1959) on BBC broadcasts to Yugoslavia attributed by Latey to a known 'émigré group' ('Latey to Monahan, 'Brief on Spectator Correspondence', 5 Jan. 1960 (E12/926/1)), and Greene turned defence into attack when he described the criticism as 'an extraordinary mixture of untruths, half truths, trivialities and faction squabbles' (*Spectator*, 18 March 1960).

The visit to Moscow in which Goldberg joined was an attempt to register just how feasible it was to offer such support. When in Moscow dinner-table talk Clark had referred optimistically to the opening of the garden gate, his host had replied quickly that its opening would be possible only provided that the key remained in the pocket of the gardener. There were exchanges of a similar kind at various times, some involving Greene himself. He enjoyed meeting Russians and there was more than a touch of mischief in the way that he handled them. There was nevertheless underlying seriousness.

Anecdotes abound. When in the early 1960s a Soviet official, invited to lunch at Broadcasting House, said that he liked *That Was the Week That Was*, his host asked him whether there was any 'satire of that sort' in the Soviet Union. Yes, he replied, 'the famous magazine *Krokodil*, for example'. 'But could someone get up on Moscow Television and parody Mr. Khrushchev as *TW3* parodied Mr. Macmillan?' After a moment, 'No' was the answer. 'No, that would not be possible. The people does not satirize the people.'<sup>41</sup> On another occasion Greene was asked at a dinner at Television Centre by the Soviet Ambassador whether he had thought of inviting Kharlamov, the powerful Head of Soviet broadcasting, to London, and after he had replied that he would be delighted to do so, the Ambassador added that he supposed Greene would now have to get permission from the Foreign Office. 'Not a bit of it,' Greene told him. 'I promise you I'll write to Kharlamov tomorrow, and send you a copy, without saying a word to the Foreign Office.'

The punchline was the Ambassador's, not Greene's: 'Now I really begin to believe that the BBC is independent of the Government.'<sup>42</sup> When Kharlamov came to London, there was another Soviet punchline. After the Soviet broadcasting chief had been talking to a Minister about exchange of programmes, he said to Greene, 'Now I begin to see how independent you are, otherwise the Minister would not have been so ignorant.'<sup>43</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Latey, loc. cit.

<sup>42</sup> \*Hugh Greene interviewed by Frank Gillard for the Oral History Project, March 1977.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. Kharlamov, a friend of Khrushchev, fell with his leader in Oct. 1964. He was replaced by Nikolai Mesyatsyev, less of a political schemer, whom Greene met on a visit to Moscow in May 1965. Greene called the visit useful. Agreement in principle had been reached on programme exchange and on visas, but not on colour television. Mesyatsyev was 'a tough and inflexible Communist', but Greene felt that his word could be relied upon in relation to the areas of agreement (\*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 13 May 1965).

Such anecdotes now have an uneasy, flavour about them, for the personalities involved in the interviews on the Russian side were more complex characters—and sometimes more sinister—than the anecdotes suggest. Yet one last anecdote concerning the Russian Section raised a basic question. When in 1967 George Brown, then Foreign Secretary, visited the Soviet Union on the eve of the Six Days' War in the Middle East, he was held up by bad weather, and the BBC was formally asked by the Foreign Office to cancel a broadcast of readings of *Letters to a Friend* by Svetlana Alliluyeva, Stalin's daughter, which had been acquired from the United States and had already been trailed. Brown believed that if the BBC went ahead with the broadcast, which had originally been planned for a day after he got back, he would not be able to talk to his Russian counterpart Gromyko on critical matters relating to the Middle East. Greene, impressed by the national interest argument, compromised, and the broadcast, while not cancelled, was postponed for a few days.

According to Mansell, this was the one occasion during the period covered in this chapter when, after serious pressure had been applied by the Foreign Office, the BBC thought it right to yield in the 'national interest'. There were many examples, however, of Foreign Office concern—for instance in 1960, when Murray, later to become a BBC Governor, wrote to Greene about Algeria, describing sharp French reactions to a proposed 'Radio Link' which would include an Algerian nationalist leader. The reactions, he reported, were strong enough to imperil a visit by Macmillan to De Gaulle.<sup>44</sup> In the same year, Turkish protests about the BBC's reports of statements about Turkey in the British Press were passed on with the comment that while it was regular practice for the BBC to broadcast such reports, 'many listeners to the External Services are unable to distinguish between comment by the BBC and comment which they may hear on the BBC'. The letter referred to 'serious implications', but added blandly that it was stating a problem without making any suggestions for its solution.<sup>45</sup>

The Foreign Office did not interfere with the presentation of the news as such, which through its busy newsroom was at the heart of all operations in Bush House. Nevertheless, Government views reached Bush House by secret telegram and telex, giving official views on a variety of topics, and from time to time the Foreign Office

<sup>44</sup> \*Murray to Greene, 3 March 1960 (E2/782/2).

<sup>45</sup> \*Murray to J. B. Clark, 11 May 1960 (E2/782/2).

complained, as it did in February 1968, when Curran was asked to discuss with the Foreign Office recent news broadcasts in Arabic and Persian relating to the Gulf. This had always been a sensitive area even before Suez.<sup>46</sup> Confronted with a Minister of State, Goronwy (later Lord Goronwy) Roberts, who was concerned both about the timing and about the effects of 'sensitive' news, Curran reiterated, as his predecessors had always done, that any system designed to suppress or postpone items of news would be 'wholly contrary to the tradition' of news reporting that had been established 'from the earliest days in the BBC's external services'. The Minister, who knew less of the tradition than Curran did, was in Curran's opinion 'clearly taken aback' by what had transpired.<sup>47</sup>

There was no dispute between Foreign Office and BBC later in 1968 when what had been called the 'Prague Spring' ended and the Czechoslovak crisis broke. Indeed, after it was over, Wilson paid 'a particular tribute' in the House of Commons to the BBC, not only for 'the service' which it had given 'in bringing home to everyone of us in this country the conditions under which life has been lived in Prague', but also for the way in which it had 'carried in the opposite direction a message of hope, and a clear and honest statement of the facts, and of the world's opinions to the people of Czechoslovakia'.<sup>48</sup>

Immediately after the first news of the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Soviet and other Warsaw Pact troops was monitored by the BBC at Caversham at 2 a.m. on 21 August, all three sections of the BBC—radio, television, and External Services—went into action. By 2.05 a.m. news staff had been gathered from their homes, and camera crews and programme staff followed. The World Service was the first external service in the world to broadcast news of the invasion at 2.22 a.m. A commentary by Latey was broadcast in the Russian Service in Russian at 4.45 a.m. and in English in the World Service at 6.15 a.m. Under great pressure, broadcasts to Czechoslovakia were increased from 2 hours 15 minutes a day to 3 hours a day, and further increases were made later, extending also to the Russian, Polish, and Bulgarian Sections. All planned programmes were dropped, news bulletins were extended, and messages of solidarity from a wide range of British organizations were transmitted to the

<sup>46</sup> See Briggs, *The Golden Age of Wireless*, p. 374.

<sup>47</sup> \*Curran, 'Record of Conversation with Mr. Goronwy Roberts, 7 Feb. 1968' (Ext. Servs. file: Foreign: BBC Foreign Office Liaison 1956-68).

<sup>48</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 769, col. 1280, 26 Aug. 1968.

Czech and Slovak peoples. Some of these were rebroadcast by Free Czechoslovak Radio.<sup>49</sup>

The Russian reaction was jamming, although the first broadcast at 4.45 a.m. went out untouched. Old jammers were brought back into use. The Monitoring Service, also under heavy pressure, collected information about this and almost every aspect of the invasion.<sup>50</sup> It went on to record sadly how Czech radio and television 'fell to the bureaucrats' after the invasion was over.<sup>51</sup> Many of the people who had been in charge during the Prague Spring had fled to Britain.

Both at times of crisis and in apparently quiet times, external broadcasting often raised questions of principle. But it also raised questions of strategy. In the light of political, social, economic, and cultural change abroad—and, just as important, the decline and fall of the British Empire—the scope of the BBC's external services required reassessment during the late 1960s.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, it was at the end of the 1950s, in September 1959, before Greene became Director-General, that an overall official review, involving Government and BBC and under the aegis of Hill, took the first critical decisions relating to the General Overseas Service.

In future, 'the interests of expatriates and listeners of British stock' were to be of 'less importance' than they had been since the start of the old Empire Service in 1932. 'The main target' of the General Overseas Service, which the BBC wished to have restored to a twenty-four-hour operation, was now to be 'the listener who under-

<sup>49</sup> The story is well told in *BBC Record*, 61 (Sept. 1968).

<sup>50</sup> See M. Sokolowski, Senior Sub-Editor in the Monitoring News Bureau, 'How the Invasion News Broke', *Ariel*, Sept. 1968. 'No need to wake up the Monitoring Service. We are used to sleepless nights . . . At Caversham, we live on crises.' Five days after the invasion the Monitoring Service reached its twenty-ninth anniversary. The birthday passed unmarked at Caversham except for the flying of the BBC flag. For the history of the Service on the eve of the crisis see J. Campbell, 'Listening to the World', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 5th ser., 18 Jan. 1967.

<sup>51</sup> *Guardian*, 30 April 1969.

<sup>52</sup> See also \*Lean, 'Information after Imperialism', lecture to the Royal Commonwealth Society, 9 Feb. 1967 (E2/655/1). On 1 Aug. 1966 the Colonial Office was merged with the Commonwealth Relations Office to form the Commonwealth Office. The Foreign Office and Commonwealth Office combined on 1 Oct. 1968. Colonial and post-Colonial responsibilities remained a preoccupation of the BBC, which seconded staff to Commonwealth broadcasting organizations and carried out training programmes in Britain. See Owen Reed, 'Training for the World's Broadcasters', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 5th ser., 16 Nov. 1966. He reported in a section called 'Climate of Professionalism' that in the previous nine years the African Service alone had provided training attachments for seventy African nationals (p. 8).



stands English but is not of British descent'.<sup>53</sup> There was to be both a redeployment of resources and a shift in outlook. Unfortunately, the citizens of the United States, the largest group of English speakers outside Britain, did not figure directly in the picture after the closing of the North American Service.

Nor did the changes that were made between 1959 and 1965 involve as yet any overall strategy designed to treat the world as one. External broadcasting as a whole remained sectionalized, before and after the old General Overseas Service, successor to the Empire Service, became the World Service in 1965;<sup>54</sup> and the overall structure did not change substantially between the 1959 review and the late 1960s, when a greater element of functional separation of responsibilities was introduced.<sup>55</sup> Engineering Operations and Maintenance, each with their own hierarchies, were handled separately, as was Monitoring, and there remained a basic division between Overseas Services and European Services, each with its own Controller.

Within each of them foreign-language services ('vernaculars') developed separately, although their names and purposes changed, with the biggest change coming in 1961, when the African, Caribbean, and Colonial Service, which had existed under that name since 1958, gave way to an African Service.<sup>56</sup> Meanwhile, in 1959 a separate Arabic Service had been carved out from the Eastern Service. The Latin American Services remained separate, and within the cluster of European Services there were distinctions between the Central European, East European, and South European Services, with the French (later French-language) Service<sup>57</sup> and the German Service retaining their separate identities.

<sup>53</sup> 'The General Overseas Service of the BBC', Sept. 1959 (E2/803/2). The paper, which distils other papers, also laid down that in future 'no consideration' was to be given to the 'Forces Audience', which had been treated with particular care 'during the Mau Mau rebellion, the Suez campaign, the intervention in Jordan and at various times before the settlement in Cyprus'.

<sup>54</sup> A useful paper prepared for the Rapp Committee, dated 30 Oct. 1964, described the General Overseas Service as it then was. It covered almost all aspects of the Service, including its appeal to businessmen overseas (\*RAP/11 BBC External Services Review: The General Overseas Service (E2/751)).

<sup>55</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1970, p. 16. This point was emphasized by the new Director-General, Curran, who had also written an interesting introductory chapter in 1969 for the *Handbook* called 'Czechoslovakia—a distraction?', in which he talked of the 'total role of the External Services'.

<sup>56</sup> The old name 'Colonial Service' had changed to African, Caribbean, and Colonial Service in 1958.

<sup>57</sup> In June 1960 broadcasts in French specially designed for Africa began.

In both the Overseas Services and the European Services, broadcasting in English was handled separately from broadcasting in foreign languages. In the former there were three sections—General Overseas Service, Overseas Regional Services, and Overseas Talks and Features—and in the latter a section called English Talks and English Service. There were separate sections dealing with External News Services, Programme Operations, Audience Research, Transcriptions, and English by Radio, the title of which was extended in 1963 to read English by Radio and Television.

The Transcription Service, specifically provided for in the Government's Grant-in-Aid, selected 'the best programmes in content, production and technical standards from the output of all services': it was thought of as complementary to the General Overseas Service.<sup>58</sup> In 1960–1 it supplied 70,000 records, comprising over 900 separate programmes, to a wide range of overseas countries.<sup>59</sup> The figure for 1964–5 was 1,000 programmes, nearly two-thirds of which consisted of Drama and Features, serious music, talks, schools and children's programmes. A new Topical Tapes Service, introduced in 1962, served 400 stations in forty countries.<sup>60</sup> Meanwhile, English by Radio, described in 1961 as the 'largest language-teaching service in the world',<sup>61</sup> seemed to be a gateway to the General Overseas Service. 'For those who graduate from English-by-Radio the GOS is an excellent conversation course.'<sup>62</sup>

The African Service, which was transformed during the 1960s, and which broadcast daily in English to East and West Africa and offered special programmes in English for Eastern Africa, also broadcast in Hausa, Somali, and Swahili. There was bound to be discussion about whether it should concentrate on English, speaking to Africa in a 'united voice', or whether it should develop on 'regional' lines, using vernacular languages. There were other questions, too, arising out of the power of Egyptian external broadcasting in Africa: the number of

<sup>58</sup> 'GOS Relationships with other Overseas Services', n.d., but prepared for General Overseas Service Review 1959 (E2/803/1).

<sup>59</sup> Cmnd. 1503 (1961), p. 70.

<sup>60</sup> Cmnd. 2823 (1965), pp. 73–4. In 1960–1 more than 150 stations in the USA were subscribing to the Service.

<sup>61</sup> Cmnd. 1503 (1961), p. 70.

<sup>62</sup> \*'GOS Relationships with other Overseas Services', c.1959. See also C. Dilke, 'English by Radio and Television', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 4th ser., 13 April 1966. Dilke, who became Head of English by Radio and Television in 1963, had produced his first pilot film on English that year. An outside company was used. Ronald Waldman, then General Manager of BBC Enterprises, was a co-sponsor.

hours it broadcast weekly in English, Arabic, and various vernacular languages increased from 301 in 1960 to 540 in 1970.<sup>63</sup>

Eliot Watrous, the energetic Head of the African Service from its inception, was fully aware—even before the Service separated out from the Colonial Service—not only of Egyptian competition but of ‘constitutional changes directed at self-government’ throughout Africa—what Macmillan called on his visit to South Africa in 1960 the ‘wind of change’. It was for this reason that Watrous asked for a ‘regional programme’ in East and Central Africa built around a daily half-hour programme in English.<sup>64</sup> It would provide the same kind of service that West Africans had long enjoyed. He also asked for a half-hour programme in French for French-speaking inhabitants of West and Central Africa.<sup>65</sup>

Within the new African Service the cluster of services that he had called for passed under his hands, although the French Service to Africa remained under the control of the Head of the French Language Service. An important change was that the South African Service was now detached from the Pacific Services and the Overseas Regional Services Department through which it had hitherto been managed. If the world was not yet one, Africa was on the way to becoming one. There was further consolidation in 1964, a year of triumph for Watrous, who arranged for a copy of a Swahili production of *Julius Caesar* by Patrick Edwards to be sent to President Nyerere in Tanganyika (as it then was) with a view to Tanganyika purchasing copies of it for distribution to schools there.<sup>66</sup>

In Watrous’s empire, Rhodesia was to be a special case. After Ian Smith’s unilateral declaration of independence on 11 November 1965, the Wilson Government, in unprecedented circumstan-

<sup>63</sup> D. R. Browne, *International Radio Broadcasting: The Limits of the Limitless Medium* (1982), p. 358. The Colonial Office had asked the BBC in 1956 how much it would cost to start broadcasting in Somali, having learnt that Cairo Radio was about to start broadcasting to Somalia (\*Gordon Waterfield, Head of the Eastern Service, to Oliver Whitley, Assistant Controller, Overseas Service, ‘Broadcasts in Somali’, 10 July 1956 (E1/1364/1)). The introduction in 1957 of broadcasts in Somali, Swahili, and Hausa led to the first rethinking about the BBC’s African programmes and their organization (\*B. Moore, Head of African, Caribbean, and Colonial Services, ‘African Language Expansion’, 18 July 1957 (E1/1364/1)). See also \*J. B. Clark to H. C. Greene, Controller, Overseas Services, ‘African Language Programmes’, 6 Sept. 1956 (same file).

<sup>64</sup> \*Watrous to Hodson, Controller, Overseas Services, ‘English for Africans in East and Central Africa: A Regional Programme’, 6 Oct. 1959 (E1/1364/1).

<sup>65</sup> \*Watrous to Hodson, ‘African Service—Implications of Expansion’, 25 Nov. 1959; Hodson to Clark, ‘African Service: Possible Expansions’, 4 Dec. 1959 (E1/1364/1).

<sup>66</sup> \*Watrous to Edwards, ‘Julius Caesar in Swahili’, 27 April 1964 (E1/1364/1). Chalmers (see above, p. 658n) was then in charge of Radio Tanganyika.

ces, asked the BBC from 25 November to undertake a special broadcasting operation to white Rhodesians, a small minority who held power in Southern Rhodesia, to try to persuade them that unilateral independence would isolate them from Britain and the rest of the Commonwealth and the world.<sup>67</sup> Relays of BBC news broadcasts from Salisbury, the Southern Rhodesian capital (now Harare, capital of Zimbabwe), had already ceased, and with Greene's approval the Government decided to install a 50-kilowatt medium-wave transmitter just south of the Rhodesian border at Francistown in Botswana to get its message across.

The British Government, doubtless inspired by Richard Crossman, who long before becoming a Cabinet Minister had been a wartime specialist in 'black' broadcasting, talked of an aggressive exercise in psychological warfare. On this occasion, however, the BBC's memories stretched back less to the Second World War, when Crossman had been involved in intelligence work, than to the Voice of Britain broadcasts during the Suez crisis.<sup>68</sup> The Francistown broadcasts were prepared and presented by a newly formed Rhodesia unit in Bush House, formed four days after UDI. Tannoys linked directly with the newsroom kept it in touch with latest developments.<sup>69</sup> The Unit had Frank Barber, formerly the West African Programme Organiser, as its programme manager. He was joined by John Wilkinson, who had had an interesting BBC past and was to have a distinguished BBC future.<sup>70</sup>

The Francistown signal was too weak to be heard in most of Southern Rhodesia, a sign of the technical difficulties confronting would-be British broadcasters everywhere, but it was strong enough to goad the Smith government into banning public listening to its broadcasts and resorting to selective jamming. *The World and Rhodesia*, broadcast five times a day not from Francistown but as a

<sup>67</sup> Wilson's speech condemning Smith's move was relayed from Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania, and South Africa (\*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 18 Nov. 1965).

<sup>68</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 18 Nov. 1965. Greene had made strenuous efforts to ensure that the BBC had full charge of 'technical and editorial functions'.

<sup>69</sup> *Ariel*, Jan. 1966. The origin of the word 'tannoy', a public address loudspeaker system, is uncertain.

<sup>70</sup> Wilkinson had joined the Colonial Service in Nigeria in 1949, and in 1952 was transferred to the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation. In 1958 he became African Programme Organiser of the BBC, and after an attachment to *Panorama* in 1963 he became Assistant Head of the African Service in 1964. In 1969 he became Head. From 1977 to 1980 he was Secretary of the BBC, and from 1980 to 1985 Director, Public Affairs. On retirement from the BBC, he became Director of the One World Broadcasting Trust in 1986.

programme in the World Service beamed on Central Africa, seemed to Smith to be 'a political arm of the Socialist Government'. Nor was Smith alone in this reaction. There was support even in some sections of Bush House for the view that the British were resorting to propaganda. Only one in ten of the letters reaching the BBC from Southern Rhodesia was favourable.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, the *Financial Times* was not conscious of bias. 'It takes more than a little local difficulty to swerve the BBC from its belief in balance. . . . It is hard to see Bush House, that bastion of Reithian ethics, as a sinister mind-bender.'<sup>72</sup> J. B. Clark, retired from the BBC since 1964, defended the programmes in *The Times*, as did Tangye Lean.<sup>73</sup> All the BBC spokesmen stressed the BBC's independence.<sup>74</sup>

In a very different African war, that which began in Nigeria after the Eastern region announced its secession on 30 May 1967, the BBC found it even more difficult to avoid accusations of bias. Nigerian troops invaded Biafra, as the new republic proclaimed itself, on 7 July 1967, and the war, which divided sections of British opinion, lasted until Biafran capitulation on 12 January 1970.<sup>75</sup> The BBC's *Annual Report* for 1969/70 described how, along with other media, the BBC 'suffered from the Federal Government's disenchantment with the Western Press and broadcasters as a whole', while this was 'matched' by Biafran suspicion that the BBC was the 'voice of the Federal Government'. The *Report* concluded, however, that, in spite of the recurrent two-way criticisms, there was evidence that listening to the BBC increased in Nigeria during the war, and that 'individual Nigerians and journalists inside and outside Nigeria regarded the BBC broadcasts as being the most authoritative source of information'.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Tangye Lean, then Director, External Broadcasting, reported this to the Governors on 16 March 1966 (\*Board of Governors, *Minutes*).

<sup>72</sup> *Financial Times*, 14 March 1966.

<sup>73</sup> *The Times*, 11, 14 Dec. 1965. In reply to a correspondent from Botswana, Curran stated that, 'while there is no doubt that the regime found BBC broadcasts objectionable—not surprisingly since these broadcasts were directed against the censorship which was denying the facts to Rhodesians—there was never any question of the BBC applying different editorial standards to these broadcasts' (quoted in Mansell, op. cit., p. 251). The Service closed down on 16 Aug. 1969 (Cmnd. 4520 (1970), p. 68).

<sup>74</sup> Lean told the Governors that he believed that the opposition would be satisfied with whatever result emerged from any analysis of the scripts of the broadcasts (\**Minutes*, 2 March 1966). The Governors sent a message of congratulations to the staff. One section of the BBC had had difficulties behind the scenes. There were sharp differences between BBC engineers and the Diplomatic Wireless Service that was operating the transmitter.

<sup>75</sup> In the same week there were clashes between Communist rioters and police in Hong Kong.

<sup>76</sup> Cmnd. 4520 (1970), p. 69.

## 7. The BBC World Service

By the time that Francistown was in action and the Biafran War was being waged, the BBC External Services had made what proved in retrospect to be the biggest of the changes of the 1960s. In May 1965 the General Overseas Service became the World Service, a change which was more than symbolic in character. The new service was headed by R. E. Gregson, who had been the Head of the General Overseas Service since 1958. Educated at Liverpool University, where he studied classics, Gregson joined the BBC North Region in 1948, where he had founded the programme *Gardeners' Question Time*.<sup>1</sup> Formidably knowledgeable about both programming and engineering, he believed, as he put it in an important paper on 'The Position of English in International Broadcasting', undated and unsigned, that 'the antithesis of English Service and Foreign Language Service' was false. 'The success of one', he stated, 'increases the audience for the other.' By far the largest part of the BBC's world audience was to be found in countries where English was either the official language or one of the customary languages. There were 350 million people in the world who spoke English.

Gregson's paper was written at a time when remarkable educational developments were taking place in the teaching of English as a foreign language.<sup>2</sup> Mueller's *The World's Living Languages* (1964) put the total of those having acquired English as a foreign language at 240 million, while Max Adler estimated in 1965 that 54 per cent of the world's population used English as the first foreign language in business.<sup>3</sup> Gregson's paper concluded by emphasizing that 'a language which seeks to be all things to all men, as English does, must retain a great capacity for development. It must be, as it is, flexible in adopting new words and in altering usage.'<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In 1955 he became Assistant Head of Overseas Talks and Features. From 1965 to 1969 he was Head of the World Service, and from 1969 to 1973 was its Editor. In 1973 he began an eight-year stint as Controller, Overseas Services.

<sup>2</sup> See R. Yglesias, 'Education and Publishing in Transition', in Briggs (ed.), *Essays in the History of Publishing* (1974), pp. 382–8. Two 1964 BBC talks on language on Network Three by Professor Simon Potter (21, 28 Dec.), called *Man and his Environment*, were noted in Bush House. He presented a 'kaleidoscopic picture' of the world's great language 'changing from year to year'. Another book which had an influence on discussions concerning English was W. Stannard Allen's *Living English Structure* (edns. from 1947).

<sup>3</sup> M. Adler, *The Business Languages of the World* (1965).

<sup>4</sup> 'The Position of English in International Broadcasting', n.d. (R. E. Gregson Papers).



The same view had been held by Donald Stephenson, who from 1956 to 1958 had been Controller, Overseas Services.<sup>5</sup> While recognizing the need for broadcasting in vernacular languages, he wanted the General Overseas Service to speak with a single voice. Like Gregson, he insisted that despite what was often said in Bush House itself there was no conflict, financial or operational, between broadcasting in the English language, increasingly recognized to be one of Britain's greatest assets, and broadcasting in vernacular languages. The two tasks were complementary. In an expanded General Overseas Service the same frequencies could be used at different times of the day, with 'spot on dial' tuning at last being insisted upon whenever practicable to save listeners from frequent retuning.

In line with the decisions of 1959, which themselves did not mark a sudden change in policy, and with what happened subsequently between 1959 and 1965, there was less dependence in the new World Service on material from the BBC's domestic services, material designed largely, if not entirely, for expatriates. 'We can no longer be merely an image of Home Service or Light Programme', Gregson reiterated. 'The planning staff has been increasingly occupied in the task of seeing that . . . programmes originated for us are appropriate to our needs.'<sup>6</sup>

There was a corollary. Within the new schedules the system of automatic repeats round the clock was abandoned as a greater degree of 'topicality' was introduced into the World Service. 'We are, above all, a topical service,' Gregson insisted, just as Gillard had insisted when he discussed local radio;<sup>7</sup> 'and at all stages in the progress from the conception of a day's programmes to the actual transmission, we are prepared to alter our intentions to include the topical.' 'All these changes', he added, 'need to be communicated, as they are made, to

<sup>5</sup> Stephenson too had a Regional background in British broadcasting. After serving as Arabic Editor, 1939–40, BBC Director in New Delhi, 1944–5, Director, Eastern Services, 1945–8, and Head of the General Overseas Programme, 1948; he had been Controller, North Region, from 1949 to 1956.

<sup>6</sup> Gregson to All World Service Staff, 'World Service Reorganisation', 20 April 1966 (Gregson Papers). The note indicated that already only one-tenth of World Service output was taken from the domestic services as against a previous figure of more than one-half. There was one successful example, however, of collaboration between the World Service and the Light Programme. *Records Round the World* was said to be the only programme in the world 'which linked up an entire domestic audience', in which immigrants were an increasingly significant element, with 'the whole world' (Gregson to D. Hodson, Controller, Overseas Services, 'The Pattern of the World Service', 20 Dec. 1966 (Gregson Papers)).

<sup>7</sup> See above, p. 632.

those affected by them.<sup>8</sup> Behind the programmes there was a daily timetable of meetings in Bush House which was very different from that in Broadcasting House or Television Centre. It took shape during the 1960s, and involved constant review. There was even a voluntary informal meeting for heads of section at the end of the day.<sup>9</sup>

Within the review process different attitudes to programmes other than news were expressed. For example, between 1964 and 1966 the amount of 'pop music' broadcast from London had been greatly increased; and when the World Service came into being, Gregson wished to reduce it in the light of comments that he had received from listeners. It was 'especially unprofitable', he believed, 'to mix "pop" to a marked extent with serious ingredients in a single programme'.<sup>10</sup> In this connection, it is interesting to note that Latey had given pop music prominence in foreign-language programmes to Russia and the Eastern bloc countries in 1964, and that 'pop' retained its appeal in the late 1960s and afterwards. Request programmes drew letters from young listeners, who sometimes recorded them on tape: 'the dancing lessons in the cha-cha and the Madison have evoked a lively response from young Russians and we are at present broadcasting a series of "do-it-yourself" jazz lessons.'<sup>11</sup>

Gregson, author of most of the key documents about the World Service, had been personally responsible for the first moves towards External Services reorganization in the mid-1960s, moves which demanded on his part not only imaginative vision but tenacity of purpose. He had to overcome many 'anxieties' before the reorganization of which he dreamed became possible. Gregson also had to overcome what he considered to be outdated thinking 'at the top' on

<sup>8</sup> 'World Service Reorganisation'. 'Senior members of World Service staff', he added, 'should make it their business to see that those working under them are given every opportunity to be informed about the audience, programmes and development of the World Service.' With this in mind he inaugurated a monthly meeting for senior staff on Monday afternoons at 3 p.m.

<sup>9</sup> Oral evidence, John Wilkinson to John Cain, noted 16 Dec. 1986.

<sup>10</sup> Gregson to Hodson, 20 Dec. 1966.

<sup>11</sup> Latey, loc. cit., p. 11. He added that 'on the more serious side' the Polish, Czechoslovak, Hungarian, and Yugoslav Services were running essay competitions in 1964 for the Shakespeare Quatercentenary, and that there had been 300 entries, most of them from Hungary and Czechoslovakia. The number of entries doubled after a microphone announcement that early writers would be sent a photograph of the Beatles ('Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report by Director, External Broadcasting, Sept.-Nov. 1964', 24 Nov. 1964). Meanwhile, the Russian Section was launching a 'University of the Air'.

the part of the 'Three Musketeers' of Bush House—Tangye Lean, James Monahan, and Donald Hodson.<sup>12</sup>

Like Greene, Gregson was convinced that news and current affairs broadcasting should be at the centre of external broadcasting, and, like Greene, he believed in recruiting young producers—with differing ideas and experience—and giving them ample scope to display their talents. He also wanted to use a wide range of outside contributors with a variety of experience who were not members of the BBC staff. Bush House had to be on the national, as well as the international, map. And there was a still bigger task. Above all, Gregson sought to break down divisions of thinking—and of interest—between European and Overseas 'camps' inside the organization, divisions of thinking and of interest which went back to the Second World War, a war which Gregson considered had at last faded into the historical background.<sup>13</sup>

Monahan's perspectives were inevitably different. As Controller of the European Services, he was bound to recall the BBC's contribution to the cause of European freedom during the War, and he knew from experience how sensitive the regular editorial meetings of the different language services could be. He was equally concerned, however—and rightly so—with Britain's future in Europe. What, he asked, would be the repercussions of Britain's cut in European foreign-language services on the current debate about the European Common Market? 'Having had and neglected the opportunity to be Europe's leader,' he argued in 1964, '[Britain] is now—or was very recently—a snubbed suppliant for entry.' The cuts had suggested that Britain cared little about a new Europe in the making. Any restoration of

<sup>12</sup> For Lean, see above, p. 387. Monahan had joined the German Talks Department of the BBC in 1941 on a temporary contract for a year. After Army service he switched to the French Service, and became Head of the West European Service in Oct. 1946. He was Controller, European Services from 1952 to 1969, Controller, External Broadcasting Services, from 1969 to 1970, and Director of Programmes, External Broadcasting from 1970 to 1971. After retiring from the BBC in 1971, he continued his other career as a ballet critic. He died in 1985. Hodson joined the BBC in 1940 as a Sub-Editor in Overseas News, having previously worked for *The Economist*, the *Financial Times*, and the *News Chronicle*. He became Talks Editor in 1945, and was Assistant Controller, European Services from 1952 to 1958, when he became Controller, Overseas Services. In June 1969 he was appointed Controller, Programmes, External Broadcasting, and from 1971 to 1973 was Director of Programmes, External Broadcasting. He died in 1988.

<sup>13</sup> Despite the 1959 decision to cut broadcasts to the Forces, Gregson could still complain in 1966 that he had 'trouble keeping the Forces element down' (Gregson to Hodson, 20 Dec. 1966). He clearly realized also that there were problems in getting World Service English into Europe, because the old European Services had had their own English input produced centrally.

European language services, he believed, would be a sign of interest and of involvement.

Monahan knew, moreover, that there was still an audience for broadcasts from London. Before the cuts of 1957, 120,000 people had listened 'in the vernacular' each day in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. The figure for France, which had not been cut at that time, was still between 100,000 and 150,000 in 1963, a record year for listeners' letters. There were 80,000 West Berliners who heard the German Service daily, and 100,000 in the rest of the Federal Republic.<sup>14</sup>

Audience research figures for external broadcasting were more difficult to assemble and to analyse than they were for domestic broadcasting, but a small department of five, headed until 1970 by Asher Lee, used both postal questionnaires and surveys in addition to scrutinizing correspondence.<sup>15</sup> In 1965 there was a post-bag of 200,000 letters.<sup>16</sup> In 1968 a World Service Listener Panel was using a questionnaire which began by asking for how long the person being questioned had listened to the BBC. Two questions covered what the listener had thought to be the 'outstanding broadcast of the year' and 'the most disappointing'. In 1969/70, 250,000 letters were received, 16,000 of them from Nigeria, 26,000 from French-speaking Europe.<sup>17</sup>

Monahan was just as interested as Gregson was in seeking to learn more about his regular listeners, who they were and why they were listening; but because of decentralization of the surviving European vernacular services, each determined to maintain its own identity, he was not drawn into the same kind of review of programme presentation and programme planning that Gregson was. The institutional focus, therefore, was usually on the reorganization of the General Overseas Service, which entailed the splitting of the department into two sections concerned with these two functions. The presentation staff included six senior announcers, now called

<sup>14</sup> Monahan, loc. cit. The reverse side of the picture was apparent in Feb. 1963 when the BBC's Overseas and Foreign Relations Department was overwhelmed by correspondence from European Broadcasting organizations seeking BBC studio facilities to broadcast on the future of Britain's negotiations to enter the EEC (\*Note by Stephenson, Head of Overseas and Foreign Relations, 30 May 1963).

<sup>15</sup> The department was the successor to a wartime Intelligence Department which had employed sixty people (\*Jacob, Controller, European Services, 'European Intelligence Staff', 30 Oct. 1947 (E3/100/1)).

<sup>16</sup> *BBC Handbook, 1965*, p. 101.

<sup>17</sup> Cmnd. 4520 (1970), p. 74.

Duty Presentation Officers, who were responsible for continuity. There was also a small programme requests unit. Programmes, Gregson believed, should be shorter: 'where we used to have . . . a concert lasting ninety minutes we now have three different programmes.'

Pre-recording too was affecting the pattern, and was to affect it still more in the future; but as far as planning was concerned, Gregson put his trust not in the computer, as his successors were to do,<sup>18</sup> but in the electronic typewriter which allowed first drafts to be modified instead of being completely retyped. Under his new system, continuity schedules which had previously been produced by an External Operations Department were now produced by the electronic typewriter as the last documents in a sequence.<sup>19</sup>

When Gregson prepared his paper of 20 April 1966 'reorganization', as he explained, was not yet complete. Instead, it was entering a 'critical phase' as systems of 'interlocking and overlapping periods of coverage' were introduced in the daily output schedules.<sup>20</sup> A few months later, he sent a note on the emerging pattern to Hodson, in which he talked also of his '*modus operandi*'. Arranging programmes round the clock would have been 'impossibly difficult if the whole world was in a single time zone with all our transmitters covering it the whole time'. There was, in fact, a kind of regionalization within the new service. 'Thus the main period of listening for the Indian subcontinent has a concentration of "serious" programming, the Western Hemisphere has one of the "High quality" programming (with a minimum of pure pop music) and the Afro-Middle East-Mediterranean breakfast period is current affairs and "Light".'

At every point, audiences had to be estimated and assessed. 'Relative to a world in which education has barely scratched the surface of illiteracy, our audience is fairly well educated.' 'Common sense, as well as statistics', suggested that the listener to the World Service was 'aged twenty-five and over' rather than a teenager. It was essential to know 'the kind and degree of appreciation' that there was for 'each one of our programmes in any part of the world'.<sup>21</sup> It was essential, too, to publish details of programmes in advance. From April 1963 onwards a new look *London Calling*, expensive to produce

<sup>18</sup> See below, p. 821.

<sup>19</sup> 'World Service Reorganisation', 20 April. 1966.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Gregson to Hodson, 'The Pattern of the World Service', 20 Dec. 1966.

and with a print run of 75,000, had won applause in different parts of the world. Over 2,000 letters were received by September 1963 requesting extra copies, some from unlikely places like the Ghanaian Embassy in Budapest and the Japanese Embassy in Khartoum.<sup>22</sup>

One of the first objects of the reorganization that Gregson had carried through was 'co-ordination of output' in English.<sup>23</sup> He observed, however, that in pressing his opinion that 'the main vehicle of English broadcasting to any area', including Europe, should be the World Service, he had confronted opposition inside the European Service that he could only compare with the Victorian maiden aunt's attitude to sex. The possibility of there being any such thing was not admitted. There was clearly a limit, he knew, to what he could do.

Bush House itself was a place where hierarchies mattered less than anywhere else in the BBC and where everyone was entitled to an opinion; and when two successive Directors of External Broadcasting—Curran and Whitley—pushed reorganization further forward, they did so surrounded by piles of other people's papers. Hierarchical or not, therefore, it always posed challenges. Congratulating Curran on his move there, Andrew Stewart, writing from Glasgow, called the Bush House world 'hard, complex, subtle, maddening, ingrown and shifting'.<sup>24</sup> Reorganizing structures, Curran appreciated, was related directly to making changes in key posts, a task which became possible after Hodson and Monahan retired. In functional terms, a clear-cut distinction was drawn by Curran in 1969 between 'Programmes' and 'Services', and a new central supply department was created under Latey to guarantee 'the most effective and economical use of resources'.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> \*'Overseas Audience Research Report: "London Calling", Reaction to the New Edition', 30 Sept. 1963 (E12/770/3). One unsolicited letter to the Editor came seven years later from Sir William Haley, then living in Jersey. 'May an old journalist and an old BBC hand tell you what a fine job you have made of it' (9 Nov. 1970 (Ext. Servs. Reg F111-4-4 File 1)). By then the print run had risen to 120,000.

<sup>23</sup> A paper by Curran, \*'Reorganisation of the External Services', 8 Nov. 1968 (Ext. Servs. file D78-6-1), outlined the co-ordination policy which was discussed at the External Services Liaison Committee of the same day. Gregson produced his own paper describing why a co-ordinated English network had been introduced and how it would work: 'Integrated English Network: Staff', 16 Dec. 1968 (Gregson Papers).

<sup>24</sup> Stewart to Curran, 11 Nov. 1966 (Curran Papers).

<sup>25</sup> \*Curran, 'Reorganisation of the External Services', 23 Dec. 1968 (D78-6-1); G. Hicks, 'External Services Publicity', Review of Reorganisation, External Services, n.d. (same file). In an interesting paper, one of many, which dealt with reorganization, Austen Kark, Head of the South European Service, had focused on the relationship between supply and output. He rightly saw it as 'all important'. 'It resolves itself into the question of who controls whom (a) editorially and (b) financially.' Kark questioned the need for a separate supply division (\*Kark to F. L. M. Shepley, Assistant Controller, External Broadcasting



A new Head was appointed also for the African Service, with Wilkinson taking over from Watrous, who had done much to build up the Service in the 1960s, and who was now given a more general role. He became Chief Assistant, Talks and Features, alongside Elizabeth Barker, Programme Editor, Current Affairs, and Konrad Syrop, Programme Editor, General. For a brief spell in 1969 the Programme Editor, English, conceived of by Gregson as 'a single Regional champion',<sup>26</sup> was Douglas Muggeridge, who had been Chief Publicity Officer Overseas when the new *London Calling* appeared, and who was soon to move to Broadcasting House as Controller, Radios 1 and 2. He was later Director of Programmes, Radio, and Deputy Managing Director, Radio, before returning to Bush House as Managing Director, External Broadcasting, in 1981. Lord Hill had met him at a dinner in Hong Kong in 1967, and had been greatly impressed by his powers of argument.<sup>27</sup>

Such moves of people within the BBC made it clear that External Services continued to be thought of, as Greene had thought of it, as an integral element in 'one BBC', even though finance, content, and, increasingly, style were quite distinct in Bush House from other BBC centres. In staffing terms, external services were directly related to other services, as was demonstrated in the careers of Stephenson and Wilkinson—or McCall and Chalmers—and in the moves of Curran and Whitley from Broadcasting House to Bush House. This was one of the great strengths of the BBC.

Curran had already been a runner-up for the Director's post when Lean was appointed in 1964, having made it clear to Greene then that he could not run the service with Lean as a subordinate.<sup>28</sup> When Lean left without having settled all his affairs, Curran was appointed very much as a Greene nominee, without this time attending an Appointments Board.<sup>29</sup> Lean had been interested primarily in the writing and the making of programmes.<sup>30</sup> Curran was more interested in Whitehall. Having become Director-General, he also became

Services (European), 'Review of Re-organisation—Suggestions for an Agenda', 12 Nov. 1969 (D78-6-1).

<sup>26</sup> Gregson, 'Integrated English Network: Staff', 16 Dec. 1968.

<sup>27</sup> Lord Hill, *Behind the Screen* (1974), p. 114.

<sup>28</sup> Curran interviewed by Miall, Jan. 1978.

<sup>29</sup> Greene told him: 'We saw you last time, none of the others will do. It's early days, probably earlier than you want and earlier than I want, but you're going to go and do it. And the Board has agreed' (ibid.). Lean then wished to withdraw his resignation, but Greene would not reverse track.

<sup>30</sup> There is a brief account of him by Monahan in *Ariel*, Jan. 1967.

deeply interested in the European Broadcasting Union, taking over the Chairmanship in 1972 on the day Britain entered the EEC.

In Gregson's opinion, Curran's reorganization was based more on managerial than on editorial criteria, and many problems were left over for Whitley. Yet for Curran, the right editorial criteria were fundamental. Moreover, he liked to expound them both from Bush House and from Broadcasting House. He related them too to the political context, national and international, never pretending that external broadcasting could be divorced from the 'political course of the country'.<sup>31</sup> When he objected to the draft of an official report by Sir Harold Beeley, it was because he thought that parts of it missed the main point.<sup>32</sup> Broadcasting to overseas audiences, he claimed, was mainly about politics. 'And when it isn't directly about politics, then it is about the background to politics, the life of the country, the way we think, the way we behave, the way we look at other peoples.'<sup>33</sup>

Beeley's was one of a succession of official reports produced during the 1960s, all of which, whatever their language or their degrees of confidentiality, seemed from a BBC vantage-point to be more concerned with hamstringing the BBC's external services than with guiding and supporting them in their tasks. The Treasury loomed larger in the background than the Foreign Office. Most of the Reports were concerned generally with 'Overseas Information Services', including the Central Office of Information and the British Council, and not simply with broadcasting. A few of them scarcely dealt with broadcasting at all.<sup>34</sup> Yet they were all studied intently in Bush House. Fortunately, their outcomes were sometimes less momentous than their authors expected.

The Hill Report of 1957 'averted the worst' in a dangerous situation, and it began with the stirring words: 'As a nation Great Britain has a great deal to offer in the shaping of world society.' It failed, however, to answer key questions about the scale of external broadcasting that had been raised by Jacob.<sup>35</sup> One of the positive recom-

<sup>31</sup> Curran, 'Broadcasting from West of Suez'.

<sup>32</sup> See above, p. 622.

<sup>33</sup> Curran, loc. cit.

<sup>34</sup> For the background, see J. B. Black, *Organising the Propaganda Instrument: The British Experience* (1969).

<sup>35</sup> Cmnd. 225 (1957), *Overseas Information Services*; Mansell, op. cit., pp. 234 ff. See also above, p. 135. As a result of redeployment, the net increase in current expenditure was £58,000 (£258,000 in new services, with cuts of £200,000 in existing services). This contrasted with £500,000 required to restore cuts made during the early 1950s.

mendations in it—that the General, Overseas Service should become a round-the-clock service—was not achieved for more than a decade. There was a brief section in it on television, but it dealt more with the Central Office of Information than with the BBC, and it concluded that it was ‘too early to define a hard and fast policy’. Clearly this view was held inside Bush House. Lean reminded the Foreign Office in 1961 that ‘in the nature of things’ television could not ‘penetrate the barriers of sovereignty’, that it scarcely existed in the ‘great neutralist territories’, and that there were ‘many times more radio sets than television sets in the world’.<sup>36</sup>

The BBC did not benefit substantially from a further White Paper of 1959, based on Hill’s continuing enquiries.<sup>37</sup> In line with a House of Commons statement on 3 November 1958,<sup>38</sup> it argued that ‘an even more intensive effort’ was needed to ensure that ‘British ideas, policies and objectives’ were widely known and understood: ‘we have continuously to demonstrate the merits of a free society as compared with its totalitarian counterpart.’ Yet, as far as the BBC was concerned, it largely reported what had happened, rather than sketched out new possibilities. It noted the ‘reappraisal’ of overseas services that was being carried out by the BBC itself, and supported development of African broadcasting through grants from the Colonial Development and Welfare funds to African countries, including Kenya and Tanganyika. Special attention was also paid to Aden.

Priority was given to education. ‘The largest single factor common to the many and varied countries of Asia and Africa is the desire for education. Britain should be ready to make her contribution to meeting these demands.’<sup>39</sup> Ironically, in 1964 Libya, then a kingdom, had invited the BBC to advise it on the extension of its radio service and on the planning of a television system, and when the development work had been completed, a twelve-strong BBC outside broadcast team, including a news crew from Alexandra Palace and engineers from Birmingham, flew to Tripoli for the launching of the Libyan Television Service.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>36</sup> \*Lean to D. L. Stewart, Foreign Office, 6 Oct. 1961 (E2/782/2).

<sup>37</sup> For Hill’s methods and attitudes in relation to the inquiry, which involved world travel as well as detailed analysis of facts and figures, see Lord Hill, *Both Sides of the Hill* (1964), pp. 179 ff. ‘On the BBC’s autonomy,’ Hill wrote (p. 188), ‘I had no doubt that it should remain absolutely unimpaired and the Government accepted this view. By the time I reported, the temperature was lower and the critics saner.’

<sup>38</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 594, cols. 579–80, 3 Nov. 1958.

<sup>39</sup> Cmnd. 685 (1959), *Overseas Information Services*, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> The BBC had been involved in the building and studio plans, and twenty-six programme staff and engineers had been employed in making the arrangements for the launching (*BBC Record*, 63 (Dec. 1968)).

The Plowden Report on Representational Services Overseas, which appeared in 1964, the year when Sir Beresford Clark retired as Director of External Broadcasting, barely touched on broadcasting, and the BBC did not give evidence to it.<sup>41</sup> Yet six months after it appeared, the Foreign Office approached Greene about the setting up of an *ad hoc* committee 'to take a new look at the capital and current expenditure requirements of the External Services'. On this occasion Clark's successor, Lean, joined a small confidential committee chaired by Sir Thomas Rapp, a retired diplomat. Education was certainly not its concern. It was asked rather to take a new look at the External Services 'against the background of increasing Soviet and Chinese efforts in the field of broadcasting, the changing international scene, and the state of play in the present plans for improving reception and audibility by the establishment of new radio stations'.<sup>42</sup>

The Committee began by considering a BBC paper on major capital re-equipment, and later turned to other BBC papers on world audiences in different parts of the world. All in all, it collected 400 pages of documentation before making twenty-two recommendations, many of them technical, like the refurbishing and modernizing of transmitting facilities, some negative, like the abolition of the Albanian and Hebrew Services, and some positive, like the expansion of the services to Africa and the Far East.<sup>43</sup>

The BBC co-operated fully in this internal inquiry, although it did not find its proceedings 'comfortable'. Rapp was a genuinely independent-minded Chairman, but the Government Departments involved in the review cast doubt on the 'reliability' of audience research, rather than examining broadcasting issues in strategic terms.<sup>44</sup> Ironically, there was no British map that showed the distribution of languages in the world, and it was only in the last stages of the Committee's life that a 'magnificent atlas' mapping the world by languages was discovered. It had been published in Moscow in 1964, and was bought from Collett's bookshop in Museum Street.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Cmnd. 2276 (1964), *Report of the Committee on Representational Services Overseas*.

<sup>42</sup> \*J. Nicholls (Foreign Office) to Greene, 28 Aug. 1964 (External Services file C28A).

<sup>43</sup> The Albanian Service survived until 1967, and the Hebrew Service until 1968.

<sup>44</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report by Director of External Broadcasting, Sept.–Nov. 1964', 24 Nov. 1964. Lean's Report noted *inter alia* that the net cost of the Transcription Service, which provided about ½ m. station hours of medium wave broadcasting overseas, was £290,000 out of the Grant-in-Aid.

<sup>45</sup> \**Ibid.*

The Rapp new look meant looking for savings, a very old occupation; and while there was a forward-looking suggestion in the Report that radio (and television) could project British trade and industry better than they were doing, the Committee concluded cautiously that just how to do so required further detailed study. Later investigators were to return to the subject, for obviously if the political context was always relevant, as Curran recognized, so too was the economic context. The future of the British economy was at stake, and the Foreign Office itself and its representatives abroad had to pay greater attention to it.

A further confidential internal inquiry, chaired by Beeley, followed in 1967, and was carried out with speed.<sup>46</sup> By then Lean, who was always more interested in programmes than in diplomacy, had given way to Curran, who used the opportunity to present a picture of the BBC's external services which looked back to 'first principles' and summed up 'all our practice and experience'.<sup>47</sup> Taking the opposite line to the approach suggested in some earlier reports, Beeley affirmed that British external broadcasting could not and should not be 'narrow casting', and that it had to employ languages other than English: 'there are many areas where the influential few know only their own vernacular'.

The partial restoration in 1967 of cuts in the BBC's South American Service may or may not have been influenced by this inquiry. Yet Beeley, who stressed the need for continuity and reaffirmed the standing of the BBC's services overseas, doubted the value not only of the Hebrew Service, which had still not been abolished, but the Italian Service and the Japanese. He still placed emphasis mainly on broadcasting in English.

Beeley also urged, as did most of the writers of such reports, that high priority should be given to the modernization of relay stations, and in his case he appreciated fully that capital costs should be treated as a separate non-recurrent provision and considered in their own right, and not as an alternative to programme costs. This gave 'unexpected relief' to the BBC.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, Beeley had one important practical proposal of his own to make in this connection.

<sup>46</sup> Beeley was at that time Ambassador and Alternate Delegate at the Disarmament Conference at Geneva.

<sup>47</sup> See above, p. 622. 'The BBC's External Services: A Valuation', 7 April 1967 (E2/655/2). Hodson had prepared for Curran a draft paper on vernacular languages, 25 May 1967.

<sup>48</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Papers*, 'The External Services after the Beeley Enquiry', 11 March 1968.

Capital expenditure, he urged, should be authorized for a four-year period, and within that period any item in the investment plan which had to be delayed or abandoned could be replaced by another. This proposal, warmly welcomed by the BBC, was accepted in principle by the Government in 1968.<sup>49</sup> It was part of Beeley's philosophy that 'stability and continuity of effort in Information work' was greatly to be desired, and that the Information budget should provide in real terms for a stable level of effort until 1971-2.<sup>50</sup> His thoughtful Report was unpublished. Any lessons drawn from it were drawn behind the scenes.

Looking back over twenty years, stability had certainly not been the main feature of external broadcasting. Services had come and gone; investment had been patchy. Only one vernacular service (Malay) had remained continuously at the same level throughout the period, and only three services (Japanese, Latin American Portuguese, and Latin American Spanish) had remained unchanged in output during the previous ten years. There had been more stress in the BBC itself on flexibility than on stability: the pattern of output had not followed stereotyped lines.<sup>51</sup> That in itself had been good. What had not been good had been the often arbitrary spending cuts. External broadcasting was not alone, however, in having to adapt itself to stops and goes.

Beeley's was not the last word. The demand for reviews was insatiable, and the long-delayed devaluation of the pound in 1968 forced a further re-examination of the costs of overseas representation. This time the task was delegated to an impressive 'three-some'. The Chairman, Sir Val Duncan, Chairman of the Rio Tinto Zinc Corporation, was joined by Andrew Shonfield, ex-Reith Lecturer, frequent broadcaster, and future Director of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, and by Sir Frank Roberts, a lively and experienced diplomat, who himself in later years was to chair the European Institute of the Media.<sup>52</sup> Broadcasting was not the main

<sup>49</sup> A statement to this effect was made by William (later Lord) Rodgers, then Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office (*Hansard*, vol. 757, cols. 6-7, 22 Jan. 1968). See also Cmnd. 3779 (1968), pp. 10-11.

<sup>50</sup> \*Curran, 'The Beeley Review', 18 May 1968 (E2/655/2). On 11 March 1968 Kenneth Lamb, then Secretary of the BBC, had prepared a paper for the General Advisory Council, in which the recommendations about stability were described as 'particularly helpful in buttressing morale after the decisions of late 1966, which had inevitably recalled, for some, the cuts of 1957' (\*Papers, 'The External Services after the Beeley Enquiry').

<sup>51</sup> \*R. W. P. Cockburn, Controller, Administration, External Broadcasting, to Curran, 'Beeley Review: Output over Last Twenty Years', 14 April 1967 (E2/655/2).

<sup>52</sup> Shonfield wrote an account of the preparation of the report in *New Society*, 28 July 1969, which was concerned more with research than with principles.



concern of the Committee, however, nor did the Press reactions to the Duncan Report deal with it much either. The focus was on the Foreign Office itself and on economic imperatives. As the *Daily Telegraph* put it, the Committee's enquiries all pointed to the importance of Britain's export drive and the need to gear Britain's diplomatic effort to it.<sup>53</sup>

The BBC, as 'an instrument of communication', was praised in the Report: compared with other instruments, it had 'the decisive advantage' that it had 'a worldwide reputation for telling the truth'. Its independence from Government control was deemed its main asset. Because overseas listeners believed in the credibility of its news reporting and comment, it was 'one of the most effective means of projecting British news and views'. Consequently, it should have high priority compared with official printed publicity and hand-outs. None the less, despite Curran's pleading, the Committee 'found itself unable' to recommend any increase in the Grant-in-Aid to the BBC above the £12 million which it was then receiving. This figure represented 10 per cent of the total costs of overseas representation.<sup>54</sup>

It was not merely this statement that disturbed the BBC. Bush House was deeply concerned about the Duncan Committee's views, which echoed views expressed in the Drogheda Report, that with likely levels of income there could be no hope of reaching mass audiences effectively, and that broadcasting should concentrate on 'the influential few'.<sup>55</sup> This meant concentrating on English-language broadcasting. Indeed, the role of vernacular-language broadcasting was to be severely restricted. What seemed especially unsatisfactory was that after the first draft of the Report had been prepared and seen by Curran, the Committee had paid no attention to the views on

<sup>53</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 17 July 1969. Curran commented that the Report had come out 'with a dull thud' (\*News and Current Affairs Meeting, Minutes, 18 July 1969).

<sup>54</sup> Cmnd. 4107 (1969), *Report of the Review Committee on Overseas Representation*, p. 103. Various newspapers picked out the passage from the Report praising the work of the BBC. None commented on the freezing of expenditure. The *Financial Times*, 17 July 1969, gave the fullest report and analysis. The *Guardian*, 17 July 1969, noted the BBC reference, and a leader in *The Times*, 17 July 1969, referred to the Committee's 'useful thoughts' on the BBC. No magazine or periodical critically considered the approach of the Report to broadcasting questions. Nor did Shonfield in his own, very limited, self-assessment. The *Spectator*, 26 July 1969, called it a 'shock report' because of its impact on diplomats, but did not mention the BBC. Writing later, Sir Frank Roberts recalled that he was 'shocked', although not entirely surprised, to find that the BBC, 'far from thanking us for our efforts, were dismissive of what they regarded as a group of amateurs expressing ideas on matters where they themselves were the experts' (F. Roberts, *Dealing with the Dictators* (1971), ch. 27).

<sup>55</sup> For the Drogheda Report see Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 493–6.

these points that the BBC had expressed. It stood by its own approach.

When Curran met the Committee on 22 May 1969, he had told them, in particular, that they had made no attempt to use audience research to assess the value of the vernacular services and, more seriously, that their technical recommendations were logically inconsistent with their policy recommendations. Why spend more on high-power relay stations, as the Committee recommended, when the more sophisticated English-speaking listeners in whom they put their trust were the most likely among all listeners to tune to the short-wave band? 'It would make no sense to have a shift manned at Ascension and all transmitters and frequencies to be deployed only for an English Service to Latin America.'<sup>56</sup> The whole point of the highly successful Ascension transmitter was that it carried other languages both to Latin America and to Africa.

Unabashed, the Committee continued to question all Latin American broadcasts in Spanish and Portuguese and all broadcasts in French to Africa, and even warned against the indefinite maintenance of seventy hours a week in Arabic, a target which had been of particular importance to the Foreign Office. Henceforth, no foreign-language broadcasts were to be transmitted, the Committee concluded, unless it could 'positively be shown that they are being listened to regularly by an audience (a) of significant size which would not listen to English, if the vernacular were not available, [and] (b) consisting of people whom it is particularly important to reach because of the influence they exert'. It was only through such a policy that annual savings could then be made which could be directed to other purposes, including improving audibility.<sup>57</sup> Diversion from programming to capital investment was the essence of the exercise. No attention was paid at all to audience reactions or to continuity.

The most eloquent response to the Duncan Report, which may have brought the BBC and the Foreign Office closer together, came from Whitley:

The main value of the External Services is not that they may help to sell tractors or nuclear reactors, nor even that they so influence people in other countries, nobs or mobs, as to be more amenable to British diplomacy or

<sup>56</sup> \*Curran to Hill, 'Note of Conversation with the Duncan Committee, 22nd May 1969', 28 May 1969 (Ext. Servs. file D1-4).

<sup>57</sup> Cmnd. 4107 (1969), p. 104. Even after the Report, the BBC had to wait to be told whether or not a Caribbean relay station would be opened (\*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 6 Nov. 1969).

foreign policy. Their main value is that because they effectively represent and communicate this British propensity for truthfulness or the adherence to the individual right to the perception of reality, they help to increase the instability of political systems based on the total inversion of morality and reality for ideological purposes. Countries which have such political systems are for that reason less amenable to British diplomacy, more difficult to trade with, and particularly if powerful or proliferating, liable to be a military threat to Britain, whose contrasted liberties constantly give the lie to their fictitious universe.<sup>58</sup>

Whitley believed in words as well as things. Yet, in the wake of the Duncan Report, the BBC through its External Services drew increasing attention to the promotion of British industry and exports, a theme which was of great interest not only to individual firms but to the CBI. It was not until 1974, however, that the *BBC Handbook* contained a section on such broadcasting, drawing attention to programmes like *New Ideas*, which publicized the latest original products from British manufacturers.<sup>59</sup>

The BBC itself contributed to the export drive through BBC Enterprises, a commercial operation which by the end of the 1960s had become one of the world's largest television exporters. In 1968, Radio Enterprises, founded three years earlier, with Rooney Pelletier as its first General Manager, had been amalgamated with Television Enterprises, which was then seven years old and had Denis Scuse as its first General Manager.<sup>60</sup> Pelletier had retired, and Scuse now took over both sides of the BBC's selling enterprise.<sup>61</sup> The record-selling business remained difficult, but television sales, which had risen in 1968/9 by nearly 17 per cent, now boomed. The first time that the

<sup>58</sup> \*Whitley to D. P. M. Cape, Foreign Office, 6 April 1970 (quoted in Mansell, op. cit., p. 256).

<sup>59</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1974, pp. 66–7. This edition of the *Handbook* reflected significant changes in the attitude to the Arabic Service. 'British manufacturers have become increasingly aware of the opportunities offered by the Arabic Service's magazine *Huna London*—a combination of the *Radio Times* and *The Listener*. The sale of advertising space has increased and now averages ten pages of every fifty-six page edition' (ibid., p. 67). In Nov. 1972 *Trade and Industry*, the Board of Trade's journal, devoted an eight-page supplement to showing how the BBC External Services could help British exporters.

<sup>60</sup> One of Greene's first actions on becoming Director-General had been to set up BBC Television Promotions ('Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'The Export of British Television Programmes: Note by DG', 21 Jan. 1960). Ronald Waldman, who had since 1958 been Business Manager, Television Programmes, became General Manager of the new department.

<sup>61</sup> In the *BBC Handbook*, however, Radio and Television Enterprises continued to be dealt with separately, and had different entries in the index. It was not until the 1973 *Handbook* that the index included 'Enterprises BBC'.

Soviet Union paid cash for a programme was in 1969—for *The Forsyte Saga*.<sup>62</sup>

In 1970–1 the gross income of BBC Enterprises rose by around 15 per cent to nearly £3 million. By then thirty countries, including Japan, had bought Kenneth Clark's *Civilisation*, and forty-eight *The Forsyte Saga*, while *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* was given full network transmission by CBS, a placing that would have seemed impossible even two years earlier. In Canada alone there was an increase of 80 per cent in gross BBC income. The volume of programmes sold to Western Europe fell, but with increased market prices, gross income increased there too.<sup>63</sup>

At the beginning of the story of BBC Enterprises, which was to attract Peter Dimmock as General Manager in 1972, there had been some rivalry between Television and the Overseas Services concerning which directorate should organize the export of programmes. Indeed, there had even been discussion concerning whether, like the Transcription Service, it should be financed out of a combination of licence money and grant-in-aid.<sup>64</sup> By 1970, however, there was no doubt that BBC Enterprises was expected to be a source of BBC income. Waldman had wished his department to be called BBC International.<sup>65</sup> It would have been an appropriate title in 1970 when the programme-selling enterprise was well launched. One of the biggest breakthroughs in 1970 itself was the start of *Masterpiece Theater* in the United States, this time on the Public Broadcasting System, which received a grant of nearly \$2 million from Mobil Oil. BBC classic serials and ITV programmes were introduced by Alistair Cooke. With Union Jack-bedecked opening titles, it none the less had the British credits removed by WGBH in Boston, which happily took the credit for itself.

One television programme in 1967 had been planned internationally in production and presentation, as well as in content—*Our World*, a programme in which the eighteen countries taking part

<sup>62</sup> *Ariel*, May 1969. In the same article Guy Carr, Promotions Manager, Television Enterprises, also discussed merchandising. *The Forsyte Saga* was dubbed into Russian, but much of the cash received by the BBC went to MGM, which owned the television rights to Galsworthy's novels (see above, pp. 587–8).

<sup>63</sup> Cmnd. 4824 (1971), pp. 30–2.

<sup>64</sup> See also, above, p. 133. In 1960/1 Hill, then Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, provided £17,500 from the Grant-in-Aid in order to supply some free television programmes to countries in the Commonwealth which could not otherwise afford them (\*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 28 March 1960).

<sup>65</sup> It was Robert Lusty who suggested the name BBC TV Enterprises (\*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 9 Nov. 1961).

aimed at circumnavigating the world by television. It was a programme that attempted to exploit new technological possibilities to the full, but the Duncan Committee, which was to note cautiously that 'its attention had been drawn' to the proposal that television by satellite may eventually become readily available to large numbers of people, completely ignored it. 'We agree that for planning in the long run this is a possibility which should not be ignored,' the Committee stated, 'but we have no doubt that for the period of time with which we are concerned [it is not necessary to take it into account].'<sup>66</sup> Why did not Duncan and his colleagues look back three years to what had been a planned 'global hook up'? It aroused mixed feelings. Their own feelings would have been pertinent.

The project had been planned since the late autumn of 1965, on BBC initiative—or rather, initiatives, for many people were full of ideas on the subject at the time. William Cave, Chief Assistant in Science and Features, a group headed by Aubrey Singer, had been in charge, while working in Presentation, of the first broadcast from Tokyo to Europe via the Relay satellite; Dimmock had been exploring the idea of a satellite programme on a long journey back from Vladivostok; Glyn Jones had just co-produced a programme called *VE Day Plus 20*, using satellites to link Field Marshal Montgomery and ex-President Eisenhower; and Singer himself had produced the first Telstar programmes from Europe to the United States.<sup>67</sup>

It soon became clear that such a project could best be carried out if it were from the start international, and the European Broadcasting Union was invited to launch it. Jones prepared an outline presentation for the EBU Programme Committee in Paris with the title 'Round the World in Eighty Minutes', and the project was approved and went ahead with Eddi Ploman of Swedish Television—and later Director of the International Institute of Communications—as its Project Manager. Singer was head of the team,<sup>68</sup> and Tony Jay, Montreux Golden Rose-winning script-writer, was Project Writer.<sup>69</sup> The programme ranged through time as well as through space. What was 8 p.m. on Sunday, 25 June, when the programme started in

<sup>66</sup> Cmnd. 4107 (1969), p. 105.

<sup>67</sup> *Ariel*, June 1967. For Telstar see also below, p. 845.

<sup>68</sup> In a note attached to his story of the English Regions, Beech had written: 'What a different story it might have been if, say, Aubrey Singer had been made Controller, North Region, round about 1960' (\*Beech to Curran, 4 Oct. 1972 (R78/592/1)).

<sup>69</sup> The members of the team were not all appointed at once: they were chosen at different stages. In the background was Joanna Spicer, who knew what planning meant and what the EBU could and could not do.

Britain, was 5 a.m. on Monday, 26 June, in Australia. Four satellite systems were used, and there were more than a million miles of telephonic communications.

It was decided at the first planning meeting held in Geneva that no politicians or heads of state would participate, that the whole programme would be live, that no recorded material would be inserted, that there should be programme balance, not geographical or political balance, and that no item should be included without the knowledge of everyone participating.<sup>70</sup> Yet it was easier to agree on such 'principles' than to prepare the programme. Producing *Our World* was fraught with difficulties at every stage, many of them political as well as diplomatic. The final script was agreed upon at a meeting in Montreal, but that was not the crucial agreement. A few days before the transmission took place, the Soviet Union and other members of OIRT (Organisation Internationale de Radiodiffusion et Télévision)—East Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia—withdrawn acrimoniously from the project after the Israeli Army started the 'pre-emptive' Six Day War against the Arabs.<sup>71</sup>

Our world was clearly not one world, and although Greene used all the authority he could muster in negotiations with Soviet television and the Russians, they broke down completely. There was unintentional irony in an article by Greene announcing the programme in the *Radio Times*. It was called 'History is Made This Week', and one sentence read: 'All too often pictures we receive of events abroad deal mainly with what divides mankind, the wars, the race riots, the revolutions. *Our World* is concerned with what unites the human race.'<sup>72</sup> The Soviet Union was to have shown live pictures of the earth's surface, using one of two satellites launched in February and April.

Press reviews of the programme as it went out did not suggest that it was as much of a landmark in broadcasting history as Neil Armstrong walking on the surface of the Moon. Indeed, George Melly, who called it 'interminable', looked to the past rather than to

<sup>70</sup> *Ariel*, June 1967; *Radio Times*, 22 June 1967.

<sup>71</sup> \*Henrik Hahr, Director, EBU, 'Our World', 26 June 1967 (E2/864/1). The telex confirming the withdrawal, 25 June 1967, began with the words: 'Following Israel's aggression, which was the result of a plot of certain imperialist forces, primarily the USA against the Arab peoples, the international situation has become seriously exacerbated . . . The world-wide television transmission has thus lost its original humanitarian idea.' OIRT was the East and Central European counterpart of the EBU. For the OIR and the split from it of the EBU, see Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 435 ff.

<sup>72</sup> *Radio Times*, 22 June 1967.



the future for his imagery. 'The programme struck me as a technological equivalent of one of those huge pre-historic monsters with a brain the size of a pigeon's egg, and after a time it became almost fascinating to see just how much banality the cameras of five continents could root out of the teeming world.'<sup>73</sup> None the less, more than 23 million people are estimated to have seen *Our World* on British television, half of them on BBC screens, half of them on ITV; and some well-known critics, like Peter Black, were favourable in their judgements.<sup>74</sup>

The members of the Board of Management themselves had mixed views,<sup>75</sup> and there was similar diversity at the Television Weekly Programme Review. Wheldon, Controller, Programmes, Television, thought the whole operation had been 'masterly'; Newman, Head of Drama Group, Television, while appreciating the enormous technical difficulties in making the programme, thought that there was no point in world communications if one had nothing to communicate.<sup>76</sup>

'Communication' was one of the catchwords of 1967—'environment' was still to come—and it was used in many different contexts, including discussions of the BBC's relations with other national and international organizations concerned with broadcasting. Between 1955 and 1957, a small department called External Services Liaison had dealt with the BBC's relations with foreign broadcasting organizations and with the reception of foreign visitors. Renamed Overseas and Foreign Relations in 1957, it was headed by Cyril Conner, and was part of External Services. It moved to the centre of the BBC in 1963.<sup>77</sup>

Conner acted as the Director-General's alternate on the Administrative Council of the European Broadcasting Union, and also assisted the Director-General in the work of the Commonwealth Broadcasting Conference, which then met once every two years. He was succeeded by Stephenson in 1960, who was close to Greene, and given Controller status in 1966. The BBC's Representatives in Sydney, New York, and Toronto came under his control in 1963, and were

<sup>73</sup> *Observer*, 2 July 1967. He nevertheless described the British links as 'not too bad' and the British graphics as brilliant. The *Guardian* (26 June 1967) also felt that Cliff Michelmore had tried to give it continuity, but had been 'no match for the philistines of the television world'.

<sup>74</sup> *Daily Mail*, 26 June 1967.

<sup>75</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 26 June 1967.

<sup>76</sup> \*Television Weekly Programme Review, *Minutes*, 28 June 1967.

<sup>77</sup> See above, p. 683.

involved with Enterprises in selling television programmes. A London staff of twenty provided the nucleus of an 'International Relations Division' as it was to be named in 1975.

This Division was to attach equal importance to 'a wider communication network' inside the BBC itself and the strengthening of communications links with outside broadcasting bodies.<sup>78</sup> Technology assisted in the process, but ultimately it was human communication that mattered. There were people who appreciated this fully. One was a professor of engineering at Imperial College, Colin Cherry, who devoted all his energies to exploring it. He was to win the prestigious Marconi medal for his work.<sup>79</sup>

Stephenson's successor, Miall, who served in the post from 1971 to the end of 1974, knew the BBC intimately from within. He also knew how the BBC's history was caught up in a web of international institutions and events. In 1972 he wrote an informative article called 'Working with European Broadcasters' in which he described how he had been at Houston with Richard Francis when the flickering monochrome pictures of the Moon landing were being transmitted to millions of viewers all over Europe. And in the same article he offered another example of international co-operation of a very different kind. Like so much in broadcasting history, it seems ironical in retrospect. During the three previous months the BBC had invoked and secured the aid of Belgrade television and of the Yugoslav Territorial Army to stage spectacular battle scenes for an ambitious twenty-part television serial of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>78</sup> N. Wilson, then Controller, International Relations, 'Guides, Philosophers and Friends', *EBU Review*, no. 27 (1976).

<sup>79</sup> See C. Cherry, *On Human Communication* (1968), described as a survey and a review.

<sup>80</sup> L. Miall, 'Working with European Broadcasters', *EBU Review*, June 1972. The article was published a few weeks before Britain joined the EEC.

# VIII

---

## ***Broadcasting in the Seventies***

The 'seventies sound a long way ahead, but of course they start next year. Those who work in broadcasting have been preparing for them for some time.

LORD HILL, 'Into the 'Seventies: Some aspects of broadcasting in the next decade', address given at Leeds University, 19 March 1969

It would be cruel, and silly, to construct a totally new radio format from scratch. We have got an audience who have grown accustomed to it as it was over the years.

ANTHONY WHITBY, Controller, Radio 4, *Radio Times*, 12 March 1970

Hill's cut-price empire

Title of an article in *The Economist*, 12 July 1969

Whatever broadcasting system may be developed over the next ten years, BBC radio can, and should, maintain a central role. But the future of radio will depend on solving the problems of scarcity: scarcity of frequencies, scarcity of resources. Technology can help to solve the first; a more enlightened public policy, which does seem to be emerging, could ease the problem of resources, and give radio a chance to make just as great a contribution in the seventies as it has in previous decades.

IAN TRETOWAN, *Ariel*, March 1970



---

## 1. The Background

One of the most controversial documents ever produced by the BBC, *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, dealt not with war and peace but with internal management, and not with television (except in the BBC's Regions) but with radio. It was concerned at no point with external broadcasting, financed, as that was, quite separately from domestic broadcasting. None the less, the senior BBC official who had most to do with the preparation of the proposals of the Policy Study Group that were contained in the document and with their presentation inside the Corporation, Gerard Mansell, then Controller, Radio 4, and later Director of Programmes, Radio, was to become Managing Director, External Broadcasting, in January 1972.<sup>1</sup>

The origins of the document reach back to a time before Sir Hugh Greene gave way to Charles Curran and before Lord Hill replaced Lord Normanbrook—and they bring R. D'A. Marriott back into the story.<sup>2</sup> The document itself, however, looked forward, into a decade which was to prove very different from the 1960s; and Marriott, who retired from the BBC in 1969, had nothing to do with its format or its implementation.<sup>3</sup> Nor did the Policy Study Group, which produced the recommendations, approve either of its first or its final draft. It insisted that *Broadcasting in the Seventies* was not its own product.

The document itself, which appeared in July 1969, three months after Curran took over from Greene, ran to only eleven pages—plus an introductory page by Hill and one last page (page 13) of conclusions. Yet it required—and requires—exegesis. An article on it which was prepared for BBC staff and which appeared in a special issue of *Ariel* on 1 December 1969 consisted of questions and answers. It was almost as long as the document itself.

<sup>1</sup> When Controller, Radio 4, Mansell was also in charge of the Music Programme. Before moving to Broadcasting House to take over the Home Service, Radio 4's predecessor, he had worked in Bush House, since 1951.

<sup>2</sup> For his earlier role, see above, pp. 38 ff. There is a good brief account of the story, written in relative tranquillity, by J. P. Mullins, secretary of the Policy Study Group, 'Policy Study Group and *Broadcasting in the Seventies*', 22 Nov. 1973 (R78/549/1).

<sup>3</sup> There is a brief note on him by Martin Esslin in *Ariel*, Aug. 1970, which described the wartime story of Marriott's resignation from the Monitoring Service. Oliver Whitley had resigned with him.

In the course of producing the document, thousands of words about the future of radio had been spoken—and written. Not only had the Board of Management and the Board of Governors been involved from the start, but the BBC's General Advisory Council, the National Broadcasting Councils, the Regional Advisory Councils, the Chairman of the Local Radio Councils, and the Central Music Advisory Committee had all been drawn in at different times. The last of these committees, specialized though it was in its interests, was not the least important among them. Because of its resource implications, music always figured prominently in any discussions of radio policy—as it had done when Marriott's earlier working party had considered future policy.<sup>4</sup>

The views of all these bodies had been gathered and taken 'fully into account', Hill stated in his introduction to *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, and the 'original proposals' had been adjusted at 'a number of points to meet their views'. There had also been advance, but so far unsuccessful, consultations with trade unions, before the document was published, and these, he promised, would 'continue in parallel with the public discussion' about to begin.<sup>5</sup> They had not then reached their climax.

Whatever the scale and scope of previous discussion inside the BBC, 'public discussion' of the document after it appeared was to prove far-reaching and stormy. Significantly too, despite all the discussion, the first question posed (and answered) in the special number of *Ariel* ended: 'why are the [proposed] changes being raced through without any opportunity for consultation?' Another was: 'Shouldn't there be a public inquiry?', to which Ian Trethowan, then Managing Director, Radio, designate, who had been responsible for the final drafting, gave the answer that the common assumption was that there would be 'another Pilkington' in the early 1970s and that fundamental questions would be asked then about the future of broadcasting. Meanwhile, 'we have to run our own affairs'.

As in the earlier discussion of radio policy during the late 1950s, discussion that had followed the appearance of the Marriott Report,<sup>6</sup> domestic argument which began within the BBC itself was soon to

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 230. In 1969 the problem of how to cut costs in musical services was noted by Sean Day-Lewis in the *Daily Telegraph* as early as 10 Feb. and J. H. Arkell, who reported the article to Greene ('Policy Study Group: Musicians' Union', 14 Feb. 1969), telephoned Hardie Ratcliffe, General Secretary of the Musicians' Union, three days later reassuring him (R78/574). On 24 Feb. Arkell prepared an *aide-mémoire* on the subject.

<sup>5</sup> *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, foreword.

<sup>6</sup> See above, pp. 43 ff.



be taken up outside. Hill himself wrote of 'gains and losses' in the proposals that were outlined in the document, and both inside and outside the BBC there was to be as much talk of 'losses' as of 'gains'. None the less, there was will, as well as logic, behind the process of change, and most of the proposals were implemented. As on the earlier occasion, the need for change was given as the main reason for them, although Trethowan emphasized that proposals which were 'dictated by finance' could not wait. Recommendations had been presented in several different forms before July 1969, but in the final Trethowan draft of the document, *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, they were set out, at the Governors' request, 'in a journalist style'. It was 'deliberately designed to be of wide appeal and comprehensibility'.<sup>7</sup> 'You are the only journalist round here', Hill told Trethowan. 'You write the document.'<sup>8</sup>

As an argument for change, financial stringency came second in the final document, just as it had done when Sir Ian Jacob defended the earlier set of proposals. Indeed, Hill did not dwell on finance in his introductory page; nor did it figure in the list of questions in *Ariel*. There were, however, obvious financial imperatives during the late 1960s, and Hill, who had been asked on appointment to look into the BBC's financial position, acknowledged in his introduction that implementation of the proposals 'would enable us, as far as we are able to judge, to live within our prospective income . . . in the next five years'.

The Government—and Hill did not dwell on this—had refused to increase the BBC's licence fee further, however great the pressure applied on it by the BBC; and it was only on the basis of a realistic licence fee that the BBC could remain 'truly comprehensive and securely independent'. That, as Hill put it later, was 'the rock', an image that had been, and was to be, used in more than one context. If the level of the licence fee was right—and here Hill was writing on the basis of personal knowledge—broadcasting would not be 'exposed to the pressures which a commercial system cannot as easily resist'.<sup>9</sup>

Neither in this statement nor in the introduction to the document did Hill refer back to 'Improving the Management of Resources', a report that had been commissioned from McKinsey and Company, the prestigious firm of management consultants, in the spring of

<sup>7</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 5 June 1969.

<sup>8</sup> \*Trethowan interviewed by Frank Gillard for the Oral History Project, 21 April 1983.

<sup>9</sup> *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, foreword.

1968, although in his foreword to the *BBC Handbook, 1969*, published on 30 January 1969, he had described as one of the tasks for 1969 the application of the recommendations of the McKinsey Company to the financial and administrative structure of the BBC.<sup>10</sup> *Broadcasting in the Seventies* itself stated simply in a short second paragraph that the proposals made in the report had been drafted by an 'internal study group, assisted by McKinsey and Company'.

Greene had mentioned the first of a series of McKinsey reports in an address to the British Institute of Management in November 1968, but what he himself had to say about BBC management owed little to it. McKinseys, he noted, had given the BBC 'pretty good marks for the planning and control of the use of available resources'. He added that in 1964 the German consultants DEORGA of Stuttgart, commissioned by West German Television, had visited the BBC, and had concluded that the BBC methods should be used as the standard against which to judge West German practice. Greene used the occasion to stress that the words 'bureaucracy and red tape', 'so freely used [by the Press] in allegedly inside stories' about the conclusions of the McKinsey report, did not appear—even by implication—in the document itself.<sup>11</sup>

The idea of employing independent management consultants had arisen out of Hill's own initial report on BBC finances to the Postmaster-General, then Edward Short, in the late autumn of 1967.<sup>12</sup> He had been requested by Short to make such a report on 13 October, very soon after he had taken up his duties as Chairman,<sup>13</sup> and in presenting it, he had quickly conceded that 'a body which is spending vast sums of public money should provide and be seen to provide something more than an assertion that its financial control

<sup>10</sup> *BBC Handbook, 1969*, p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> *BBC Record*, 63 (Dec. 1968).

<sup>12</sup> Hill gave details of what he called 'substantial' BBC economies already achieved since Harold Wilson had asked the BBC 'drastically to prune its expenditure' on 16 Feb. 1966 (see above, p. 542). He also included sections on alternative modes of financing the BBC by subvention, borrowing, and advertising. He ended with the demand for a £1 increase in the licence fee in 1968, adding, 'I just don't believe that a Government which puts up the licence fee by a pound, even at a time when other things are going up, will suffer at the hands of the electors. Indeed, it may be that the courage to do the necessary thing will get less criticism than devices to duck it' ('Hill to Short, 'BBC Finances', 9 Nov. 1967 (R78/3/1)). For Hill's attitudes at the time and in retrospect—and Short's request—see Lord Hill, *Behind the Screen* (1974), pp. 82–4. He himself called his own report 'exhaustive'.

<sup>13</sup> \*'Chairman's Notes on Meeting with Postmaster General on October 13th 1967, 16 Oct. 1967 (R78/3/1). See also above, p. 607.

is efficient and its spending prudent'. 'Of course', Hill went on, while he suspected that 'the main fruits of the pressure for economy' had already been garnered, 'there *may* well be room for some further economies'. 'To this end', therefore, it might be 'thought wise to employ an outside firm of consultants of high repute to examine the financial and administrative structure and to make such recommendations as it thinks fit to the Governors.'<sup>14</sup> He himself would recommend to the Governors that they follow this course.

Hill had not pleased some of the Governors when he had told them initially that his own completed report to Short would be written on a personal basis as Short had requested. Dame Anne Godwin was obviously unhappy, as was Sir Robert Lusty, then Vice-Chairman. Greene, too, had demurred.<sup>15</sup> When Hill showed it to them, however, as he had promised to do, at their next meeting, Lord Fulton described it as a 'pungent and persuasive document'. 'Coming as it did from the Chairman', Lusty added, 'its impact might perhaps be decisive.'<sup>16</sup> It was still necessary, however, Hill replied, to supplement it with an independent assessment, and the Governors agreed, with Lusty dissenting and with one of the new Governors, Lord Dunleath, reminding the Board that 'at the depth required' such an assessment would not be cheap.<sup>17</sup>

It was Sir Reay Geddes, Chairman of Dunlop, who recommended McKinsey and Company as the 'outside firm', a recommendation strongly supported by Fulton, who had already employed them at the University of Sussex; and in February 1968 Hill and Greene met two representatives from McKinsey—Roger Morrison and Rodney Shirley—to discuss if and how a consultation should be carried out. It would be concerned, they all agreed, not with questions relating to broadcasting hours, programme output, or editorial control, but with the use of resources. In early April Morrison met the Board, which approved of this approach.<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, Greene was concerned that Short was delaying any action on the licence fee until

<sup>14</sup> \*Hill to Short, 'BBC Finances', 9 Nov. 1967.

<sup>15</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 19 Oct. 1967.

<sup>16</sup> \**Ibid.*, 2 Nov. 1967.

<sup>17</sup> \**Ibid.*, 25 Jan. 1968. On 10 Jan. 1968 the BBC's Controller, Finance, \*J. G. L. Francis, wrote to E. M. Johnson at the Post Office stating that the Governors had agreed to the Chairman's proposal that an external scrutiny should be commissioned and that in the meantime 'our Chairman and our Director-General have been holding discussions with three of the largest industrial concerns in the country in order to establish what precise form the enquiry should take' (R78/3/1).

<sup>18</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 4 April 1968. It was also agreed that it might consider whether the resources allocated to the Regions were 'wastefully deployed'.

after an external scrutiny had been undertaken. 'The Postmaster-General is keeping his cards very close to his chest.'<sup>19</sup>

In approving of a major consultation on the basis of a preliminary sketch by McKinsey, a process was started months before *Broadcasting in the Seventies* was written and which did not end until after its publication.<sup>20</sup> The first interim McKinsey report was submitted in July 1968,<sup>21</sup> and the first main report in September 1968. The latter set out major recommendations, 'with a wealth of detail to support them'. The process of consultation continued, and the final McKinsey Report, 'Improving the Management of Resources', somewhat confusingly given the same title as the September 1968 report, was dated February 1970. It was considered by the Board of Governors in July of that year, one year after the publication of the BBC's own document, *Broadcasting in the Seventies*. Morrison was present at the Governors' meeting on 2 July 1970, and was thanked for his services.<sup>22</sup>

It was the policy of McKinsey and Company to listen carefully to the views of top management and to take them fully into account in drafting their reports; and this the Company had already done within three months of the contract being signed. Indeed, their interim report dealing with top management, by its nature something of a landmark in BBC history, was ready in July 1968. Its intention was 'to build into the BBC a positive system of management which did not depend on the spending of money handed down from above'. Instead, it would 'demand the active participation of those spending the money in the setting and achieving of objectives related to the more effective and economic use of available resources'.<sup>23</sup>

A number of consequential managerial changes, what were described as changes of 'men and methods', were agreed to by the Governors in the month that followed.<sup>24</sup> The responsibilities of the Director-General remained unchanged, but increased responsibilities

<sup>19</sup> \*Greene to Hill, 26 Jan. 1968 (R78/3/1). 'One wonders', he added shrewdly, 'whether he has changed his mind or whether he has run into great difficulties on Cabinet level.' The latter was true.

<sup>20</sup> A public statement on the appointment of McKinsey was made by Hill on 30 April 1968.

<sup>21</sup> Morrison described the first report as interim. It was prepared 'merely to provide Governors with a preview of conclusions insofar as they had relevance to the Board's current consideration of top management appointments'.

<sup>22</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 2 July 1970.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

<sup>24</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 7 Aug. 1968.

were now to be conferred on three people directly responsible to him, each of whom was given a new title: Managing Director, Television; Managing Director, Radio; and Managing Director, External Broadcasting. In addition, it was announced that a new post of Director of Programmes, Television, was to be created, and that its holder, who was to be made a member of the Board of Management, was to be directly responsible to the Managing Director, Television. There was to be one other new post, that of Director, Public Affairs, 'with responsibility to the Director-General for the evaluation of the two-way flow of communication between the public and the BBC'. He was to take over many of the functions of the Chief Assistant to the Director-General, and he, too, was to be a member of the Board of Management. The post of Chief Assistant to the Director-General was to lapse.

Tasks and titles changed in August 1968, but at this first stage of a long review the men remained the same, except for Greene, whose resignation as Director-General had been announced at the Press Conference with Hill on 15 July.<sup>25</sup> Oliver Whitley, who had been considered as a possible successor to Greene, along with Huw Wheldon, David Attenborough, and Kenneth Lamb, made a move to External Broadcasting, while Frank Gillard's and Wheldon's spheres of influence remained the same after they had been given the new titles of Managing Directors of Radio and Television.

Lamb became Director, Public Affairs, and Attenborough Director of Programmes, Television. From 1 April 1969, the date when Curran was due to take over as Director-General, Whitley was to act for the Director-General in his absence, and he began acting in that capacity before the change of Director-Generals took place. The Governors also stated that at a date still to be announced there would be a separate Directorate of Finance. All appointments were to be from 1 January 1969, and 'consequential appointments' would not be announced before October. The Governors noted finally that Gillard would be leaving the BBC during the course of 1969, and that they would have to consider how best to replace him.<sup>26</sup> A further series of

<sup>25</sup> See above, p. 609, and Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 88. For inside comments on the change of Director-Generals when it took place, see 'Change at the Top', *Ariel*, March 1969. It warned that while it was 'idle to speculate on what the 'seventies will demand of the BBC', nobody, including Curran, expected the new Director-General to have 'an easy ride'. 'But that is what, in the end, the job is about.'

<sup>26</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 7 Aug. 1968. An announcement of the changes, including Curran's appointment (see above, p. 610), was made on 8 Aug.

interviews followed before Trethowan was appointed.<sup>27</sup> He had been surprised when first approached by Curran, who had telephoned him while he was hoeing his garden.<sup>28</sup>

At the next Board meeting on 19 September, Morrison, Shirley, and the McKinsey team were present, and Morrison was invited to pick out the salient points from the first of their general reports. Hill summarized them—he had already been told of them—in his autobiography.<sup>29</sup> The economies in programming in the last two years had not been real economies, since they had been made not by lowering the average cost of programmes, but by increasing the proportion of 'cheap' programmes in the mix. There had been too many delays also in implementing decisions. New decisions would have to be reached as a package. Taken singly or in selected combinations, they would not solve the BBC's overall problem of resources management. If the *status quo* were maintained, McKinsey pointed out, radio would have an unacceptable deficit on its account of £8 million by 1972.

Any serious economy exercise, the report went on, would have to probe allotments to the Regions and to determine their future role.<sup>30</sup> It would also have to assess music policy and to cut the costs of music which 'in one form or another', including repeats, accounted for about two-thirds of the BBC's radio output. In addition, since some two-thirds of the costs of music were accounted for by 'high-cost live broadcasting', as against relatively low-cost needletime, there was a case for a review on this score alone. At this stage, the McKinsey team was not fully aware of the complexities of needletime and the extent to which the BBC was dependent on trade union and business groups outside its own control.

Finally, and not least, the McKinsey team stated, existing BBC administrative procedures would have to be reviewed and streamlined. There should be a better information system and a tighter

<sup>27</sup> Hill, *op. cit.*, pp. 113–14. After the interviews, three names were put before the Board, those of Mansell, Dimmock, and Trethowan. The three men were interviewed by a subcommittee and later by the whole Board, and Trethowan was appointed on 17 Oct. When he went for his interview, Mansell was surprised to see Dimmock's briefcase lying on a chair. He had not known that he was a candidate. (Note from Mansell to the author, 12 June 1993.)

<sup>28</sup> I. Trethowan, *Split Screen* (1984), p. 119. For his reasons for accepting the post, see *ibid.*, pp. 121 ff.

<sup>29</sup> Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

<sup>30</sup> Regional planning procedures were questioned by Shirley. If current Regional investment plans were carried out, the ratio of investment costs to hours of output in the Regions would rise to a point considerably above the London level.



control of funds. Yet, as in the case of music policy, further work should be carried out inside the BBC itself. It should institute an internal examination of itself which, of course, whatever the McKinsey remit, would inevitably have to concern itself with radio as a whole, considering it in the light not only of financial pressures and of managerial efficiency but of changes in listening habits and of the possibilities of the growth and development of local BBC stations. There was also specific reference at the Governors' meeting to the awkward question of a new Manchester headquarters, the first plans for which had been drawn up in 1961.<sup>31</sup> The building was now to cost between £5 and £7 million, and the Governors decided before embarking on a major inquiry to scale it down to £3½million.<sup>32</sup>

This was an issue that was to remain on the agenda throughout 1968,<sup>33</sup> as was capital investment at Pebble Mill, a new studio and headquarters complex being planned in the Midland Region at Birmingham. Strong regional feelings were aroused in both places, particularly in Manchester. 'The BBC's North Region appears to be losing the battle to draw some of the Corporation's power away from London', wrote the *Guardian*.<sup>34</sup> It was not, of course, a new complaint.<sup>35</sup>

## 2. Internal Review

Internal examination through a Policy Study Group, as it was called, was set up by the Board of Management on 29 October 1968 at a meeting when Morrison was present.<sup>1</sup> The Group was chaired by Mansell, then Controller, Radio 4, with three other members, all of them working full-time. Ian Atkins, Controller, Programme Services, Television, had a specific brief to deal with Regional television, but

<sup>31</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 19 Sept. 1968.

<sup>32</sup> \**Ibid.*, 17 Oct. 1968. See above, p. 667. There was an immediate outcry in Manchester and outside when the news broke. See *Daily Mail*, 13 Nov. 1968: 'Spending Slashed for the BBC's New Northern HQ'; *Daily Mirror*, 13 Nov. 1968; *Daily Telegraph*, 13 Nov. 1968.

<sup>33</sup> In Nov. 1968 Sir Robert Bellinger, a new Governor, a businessman who was also a Director of Arsenal Football Club, told a Governors meeting (\**Minutes*, 28 Nov. 1968) that he did not believe that the plans then being contemplated would work. Further detailed planning would be necessary.

<sup>34</sup> *Guardian*, 13 Nov. 1968.

<sup>35</sup> See above, pp. 658–63.

<sup>1</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 28 Oct. 1968.

he also brought in a comparative perspective; John Rae, Head of the Monitoring Service, concerned not with Britain but with the world, had the delicate task of examining Regional policy—he had previously been Head of Administration, West Region, at Bristol; and Duncan MacEwan, Head of Engineering, Northern Ireland, was called upon to deal with a complex cluster of engineering issues, mainly centring on use of frequencies.<sup>2</sup> The secretary of the Group, Patrick Mullins, described it later as ‘a sort of “think tank” but with a specific commission rather than a roving one’.<sup>3</sup>

The Group was to be assisted in its work by McKinsey representatives, and was asked to report to the Board of Management by the end of April 1969. The timetable was tight because the Postmaster-General, still under pressure in the Cabinet, wished to make a statement on BBC overall finances by July 1969 at the latest, and it was important for the BBC that long before that the Corporation’s position should be clear.<sup>4</sup> At the September meeting of the Governors, Morrison had acknowledged that the greater part of the factual information and much of the thinking in the analytical sections of his company’s report had been contributed by the BBC.<sup>5</sup> Now there was to be a continuing partnership.

Before the Policy Study Group met, the Governors had already spent a great deal of time on financial questions, including the likely deficit, and Hill in face of opposition had decided to create a new Finance Committee of the Board.<sup>6</sup> Two other important matters had been raised at the Board of Governors meeting in September 1968, in the absence of the McKinsey and Company representatives, both matters suggesting significant differences of approach on key man-

<sup>2</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 14 Nov. 1968. In Feb. 1969 Rae, who was under pressure to return to his work at Caversham, was replaced by John Laird, Staff Training Attachments Officer. Mansell has described MacEwan as ‘an engineer with an understanding of broadcasting issues that went far beyond their technical aspects and a healthy inclination to question received Engineering Division wisdom’. He added: ‘I could not have done without him’ (Note from Mansell to the author, 12 June 1993).

<sup>3</sup> \*Mullins, *op. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> Curran explained this at the Board of Management meeting when Morrison was present (\**Minutes*, 28 Oct. 1968).

<sup>5</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 19 Sept. 1968.

<sup>6</sup> Hill, *loc. cit.*, pp. 94–5. Dame Anne Godwin claimed that the existence of subcommittees would destroy something of the vitality of the Board; Lady Baird did not want to constrain the Corporation’s ‘clever and dedicated top officials’; Professor Glanmor Williams did not believe the Board should intervene in committees poised between the Board of Management and the Board of Governors. Greene, too, objected. Hill, who not surprisingly had been uneasy as Chairman about having to approve between meetings the expenditure of very large sums, including one item of £1¾ m. on films, rightly persisted, and insisted on a vote being taken. It was carried by five votes to three.

agerial issues. James (later Sir James) Redmond, Director of Engineering, feared that the changes that were being discussed in the light of the first McKinsey proposals did not recognize adequately the general role of the Engineering Directorate in 'Operations and Maintenance': the Directorate was not only dealing with physical capital. Greene, still very much Director-General, declared himself strongly opposed to any separation of the managerial from the editorial control of news. The Managing Directors, Radio and Television, should not manage news, he insisted, for news was not a 'controllable commodity'. 'News bulletins depended on events, and staff and resources had to be deployed as the events dictated.'

All Greene's instincts as a journalist were stirred, and he, too, now went so far as to claim that the BBC's reputation was founded on a 'rock', and that the rock was news. The Governors were not immediately convinced by this affirmation, which sounded like a *cri de coeur*<sup>7</sup>. Instead, they asked Greene to produce a paper for the next meeting. They also failed to see why External Services News should not be brought into 'the central news fold'. This Greene had not considered necessary.<sup>8</sup>

At their next meeting, when Greene produced his paper as planned, and when John Crawley, Editor, News and Current Affairs, was in attendance, Morrison restated his case after Greene had told the Governors that he had the unanimous support of the Board of Management for a proposal of his own to retain the existing news structure.<sup>9</sup> The Editor, News and Current Affairs, should be in full managerial control of his resources, outside the range of control of the Managing Directors, Radio and Television. Again, the Governors, having heard both men, were not convinced. News was to be treated *sui generis*. Why?

One of the recently appointed Governors, Bellinger, asked Greene bluntly—and it was a new experience—whether or not he felt that his successors would follow the line he was advocating. Had he not, as a professional journalist, so identified himself with BBC News that he was unwilling to accept central control? 'Would there not then

<sup>7</sup> One distinguished former Governor, Lady (Barbara) Wootton, had described her uneasiness about such affirmations ('The BBC's Duty to Society', *The Listener*, 22 July 1965). For another attack specifically directed against 'wildly overdone' current affairs programmes, see *The Times*, 5 June 1965.

<sup>8</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 19 Sept. 1968.

<sup>9</sup> Morrison recalled a recent Paper in which Gillard, as Director of Radio, had drawn attention to 'the large proportion of his annual budget over which he was not effectively in control—and that included the £1½ million spent on news'.

be a danger of News becoming a powerful and autonomous department responsible to no one but himself?' Another Governor, Fulton, led Greene to declare that news was *sui generis*, 'a branch of output unlike any other'. Fulton asked him about education. 'No', Greene replied.<sup>10</sup> This too was a landmark statement in the history of the BBC. One aspect of broadcasting was singled out as being different from all the rest. No previous Director-General would have put it that way. More than one future Director-General would.

After considerable discussion, the Governors decided to accept Greene's proposal rather than that of McKinsey and Company.<sup>11</sup> For Greene it was a critical victory, almost the last BBC victory that he won. He won too, however, on the issue of whether External Services news should be under the same control as other news, having been supported by Sir Ralph Murray, who with his Foreign Office experience remarked correctly, as Greene did not, that External Services already had their own distinctive problems of establishing unified managerial control.<sup>12</sup> The role of the Foreign Office was obviously one of them.

Meanwhile, the position in relation to the role of the Director of Engineering was clarified in a different way. The Director would retain direct responsibility for technical policy and management, but the output Chief Engineers who fell within his Division would be responsible to the output Managing Directors for the efficient and economical use of technical resources involved in the production of programmes. Responsibilities would thus be shared. Given the role of engineers in programme making, it was surprising that Greene had not believed that it was necessary to seek the Board's formal approval to this proposal which broke with tradition.<sup>13</sup>

Before the Policy Study Group started to work, one other decision was taken by the Governors 'with the full support of McKinseys and with Board of Management approval'. A new Management Services Group was created, headed by Lionel Gregory, at that time Head of Organisation, Methods, and Grading Department. It was to provide services to 'the whole Corporation in the fields of computer planning and operations, operational research and internal management consultancy (organisation and methods, work study, etc.)'. The

<sup>10</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 3 Oct. 1968.

<sup>11</sup> \*Ibid. At this same meeting the Governors also agreed to retain McKinsey and Company until Mar. 1969.

<sup>12</sup> For Murray, see above, p. 605.

<sup>13</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 14 Nov. 1968.

'grading function', of great importance within the BBC's staffing system, was to be transferred to the Controller, Staff Administration.<sup>14</sup>

The discussion about other structures and other resource issues was handed over to the Policy Study Group, which reported not directly to the Board of Governors but to the Board of Management.<sup>15</sup> It was to be helped not only by McKinsey and Company, but by the deliberations and conclusions of a 'Working Group' that had been set up earlier to study the future of radio, under the familiar chairmanship of Marriott.<sup>16</sup> This Group had held its first meeting on 14 December 1967, and had already tackled a wide range of issues, including what was likely to be the most controversial general item, the item that had been shelved in the 1950s: how could 'the cost of music' be reduced or further increases contained?<sup>17</sup>

The last serious meeting of the Marriott Working Group was held on 15 November 1968, when it was agreed—before a Report had been produced—that 'in the light of the setting up of the Policy Study Group it would be sensible for the work of the present Group to be brought to an end'.<sup>18</sup> A further meeting planned for 13 December was not held.<sup>19</sup>

The Policy Study Group, operating in conditions of strict confidentiality, was not in any way bound by the Working Group's recommendations, but the tasks of the two bodies, originally distinct, were inevitably related to each other at almost every point. The composition of the two bodies, however, was very different. The members of the Marriott Working Group were involved in a representational capacity, and were not working full-time. The Policy Study Group,

<sup>14</sup> \*Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> The appointment of the Policy Study Group was reported to the Governors in Nov. (\*Minutes, 14 Nov. 1968).

<sup>16</sup> Hill was to refer to Marriott by name when he introduced *Broadcasting in the Seventies* at the Press Conference on 10 July 1969. Strictly speaking, the Working Group was the successor to a still earlier group, a Working Group on the Use of Wavelengths. The Marriott group changed its name from 'The Working Group on the Future Shape of Radio' to 'The Working Group on the Future of Radio' (\*Vicky MacDonnell, Secretary to Head of Presentation, Radio, to F. C. Nolan, Chief Registry, and Records Officer, 'Working Group on the Future of Radio/Policy Study Group', 11 Feb. 1970 (R92 Box 15: Radio Re-organisation: Working Group on the Future of Radio: Reports)).

<sup>17</sup> See above, p. 230; \*Note of Meeting of the Working Group, 20 Sept. 1968 (R92 Box 15: Radio Reorganisation: Working Group on the Future of Radio: Minutes).

<sup>18</sup> \*Ibid., 15 Nov. 1968.

<sup>19</sup> \*Radio Committee, *Minutes*, 28 Jan. 1969, reporting the end of the Working Group, which the Radio Committee said, 'had produced an outstanding and cogently argued report'.

despite the word 'study' in its title, was by its nature in a stronger position to present proposals for action, and was called upon to do so. It offered options, identifying their advantages and disadvantages. There was a further difference between the two bodies. Despite the word 'working' in the title of Marriott's Group, the Policy Study Group had to work still harder.

In the first instance, Marriott's Working Group had been asked to make recommendations about the future shape of radio 'within the framework of the wavelengths now available to the BBC' and 'in preparation for a new international allocation of medium and long wavelengths, on the assumption that the BBC is unlikely to retain all its present wavelengths under a new [international plan]'. There was no reference in its first remit to finance.<sup>20</sup> Nor was there any reference to the general public. 'The Committee's recommendations, if accepted', would form 'the basis of the BBC's claim for domestic and external wavelengths at the next international conference concerned with their allocation.'

The year 1970 was mentioned within this particular framework. 'No new plan could come into force before the end of 1970, even if a decision to make a new allocation were taken at the next opportunity in May 1968.'<sup>21</sup> Until a new international decision was taken, Britain would operate within the framework of the Copenhagen Plan of 1948 as modified at Stockholm in 1952 and 1961.<sup>22</sup> There was, in fact, to be no further conference until 1975, and the 'Geneva Plan', adopted then, was not implemented until 1978.

Six people were present at the first meeting of the Working Group: Marriott; Michael Standing, Controller, Programme Organization, Radio; P. H. Newby, Controller, Third Programme; Mansell; Robin Scott, Controller, Radios 1 and 2; and David Lloyd James, Head of Presentation, Radio, who acted as Secretary. A. P. Monson, Chief Engineer, Radio Broadcasting, and Desmond Hawkins, Controller, South and West, were the other two members. Not surprisingly, limited though the remit of the group was, 'resources' immediately came into the picture, including the capital cost of erecting transmit-

<sup>20</sup> \*Notes of the Meeting of the Working Group, 14 Dec. 1967.

<sup>21</sup> \*Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> At the meeting of the International Telecommunications Union Consultation Committee in Dec. 1965, there had been a majority of countries among those voting who did not favour revising the Plan within eighteen months. For the work of the Conferences see also below, pp. 817, 846, 854-5.



ters for a new VHF network. 'The public' equally unsurprisingly came into the picture immediately also. 'It was agreed that if a decision to separate medium wave from VHF networks seemed likely, the BBC ought to lose no time in announcing publicly that after a given date the full services of BBC radio would be available only to those equipped with a VHF receiver.'<sup>23</sup>

The Open University was mentioned at this first meeting, as well as the fact that its Planning Committee regarded radio as an important medium in its development.<sup>24</sup> In the light of future discussion, however, the most important item in the Minutes was the fourth. Because of the absence or presence of television, 'the Group must take account of the basically different requirements of day-time and night-time radio', and an 'arbitrary frontier' was suggested at 6 p.m. 'Conceivably also', it was added, 'there might also be a distinction between morning up to 2 p.m. and afternoon.'<sup>25</sup> The scale and patterns of listening were quite different.

The Policy Study Group was to benefit considerably, as Mansell confirmed later, from the prior discussions of the Marriott Working Group on questions of scheduling, including the scheduling of Open University programmes, and their influence on costs.<sup>26</sup> Yet Mansell was strongly influenced too by his own experience in introducing more news, current affairs, and light entertainment on the Home Service in the period between 6 p.m. and 7.30 p.m. Given the big difference between the size of 'night' and 'day' audiences, early evening slots, hitherto largely given over to Regional opt-outs and light music, were of pivotal importance.<sup>27</sup>

Before the first meeting of the Working Group, the BBC's Engineering Division had already prepared a paper on wavelengths, based on the assumption that in future Regional opt-outs would be on VHF only, a proposal that was to stay in the background whoever was concerned with radio policy.<sup>28</sup> The Working Group went on, therefore, to examine if and how it could secure a better non-VHF arrangement than it had secured as part of the Copenhagen Plan as far as wavelengths were concerned. The earlier working group on the

<sup>23</sup> See also below, pp. 839–43.

<sup>24</sup> See above, p. 570. After the meeting the Planning Committee asked for ten hours of radio each week, rising to thirty hours each week in the third year, and a meeting with Marriott's Working Group was arranged for 5 Jan. 1968.

<sup>25</sup> \*Notes of a meeting, 14 Dec. 1967.

<sup>26</sup> \*Mansell interviewed by Frank Gillard for the Oral History Project, 18 June 1981.

<sup>27</sup> For 'opt-outs', see also above, pp. 666–8.

<sup>28</sup> \*Mansell interviewed by Gillard, 18 June 1981. For VHF, see below, pp. 839–43.

use of wavelengths had been exploring this subject, along with the fate of 247 metres.<sup>29</sup>

Realistically the Marriott Working Group came to the conclusion that Britain was more generously provided for than most other European countries, and that unsatisfactory medium-wave reception conditions would have to be accepted 'for some years'.<sup>30</sup> Gillard encouraged the Working Group to be 'as radical as you like' within the limits of common sense when dealing with wavelengths and with programme services; the same applied also, he said, to financial possibilities and general BBC policy. 'Many ideas have been floating around for some time.'<sup>31</sup>

The discussions of the Working Group were to be regular and protracted, for it decided to meet fortnightly at 11 a.m. on Fridays, and, as in the case of the earlier Marriott Working Party, BBC views were collected from outside the Group.<sup>32</sup> An interim report was prepared in July 1968, which included an 'over-all plan' based on a 'four network' system, and a final report in January 1969. Both were submitted to Gillard, the Managing Director, Radio.

The final Report began by reiterating that the reason why the Working Group had been set up was to make recommendations on the future network structure of BBC Radio in preparation for a new allocation of European medium and long wavelengths, and that it had been no part of its brief 'to scale down our programme services to meet a financial crisis'. Nor, it added, had the Group been given 'any indication that such a crisis was imminent'. 'We were aware, of course,' it also added, 'as no one working in radio could fail to be of the need for economy and we had been pruning our expenditure for many years.' It was after the Group had started that it appreciated how 'general thinking about the future was being influenced by the preliminary McKinsey diagnosis'. 'Diagnosis', the word McKinsey and Company used, seemed the right term, and the diagnosis had

<sup>29</sup> \*Board of Management, *Papers*, 'Report of Working Group set up by the Board of Management', 16 Dec. 1966. In Sept. 1967, 247 metres became the wavelength for Radio 1 (see above, p. 574). \*Gillard to Marriott, 'Future Shape of BBC Radio', 29 Nov. 1967 (R92 Box 15: Working Group on the Future of Radio: Papers).

<sup>30</sup> Francis McLean, then the BBC's Director of Engineering, wrote to K. Hind at the Post Office on 12 Jan. 1968 that he hoped that a conference to deal with the revision of the Plan would not be held until 'some time in the 70s' (R92 Box 15: Papers).

<sup>31</sup> \*Gillard to Marriott, 29 Nov. 1967.

<sup>32</sup> The collection of views was less widespread than it had been in the previous case, as were staff discussions. This was because of the setting up of the Policy Study Group and the need to report quickly (\*Working Group on the Future of Radio: Report to the Managing Director, Radio, Jan. 1969 (R92 Box 15)).

led to the setting up of a Policy Study Group working full-time to suggest alternative remedies.

'We asked ourselves,' the Report went on, 'as everybody concerned with the future of radio must do, whether we are providing more radio than is really needed.' 'In an age when two forms of broadcasting exist side-by-side, the newer one more potent in its attraction than the old', was money being wasted on radio? In this context, the Report is better seen in its relationship to Marriott's earlier report than in relation to the subsequent report of the Policy Study Group. Fundamental questions about media competition were not directly within the McKinsey remit.

Between the late 1950s and the late 1960s there had been 'no significant recession in the usage or appreciation of radio'. Indeed, the average audience for radio between 0700 and 1800 hours, which in 1958 had been 6.8 per cent, had actually risen to 9.5 per cent in 1963 and 10 per cent in 1968. The evening audience, however, as anticipated, had fallen during the same period from 7.7 per cent to 2.8 per cent.<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile, the sale of radio sets had risen sharply in the age of transistors, doubtless, too, in part, as old sets went out of order or became technically or aesthetically unappealing. In 1958 the sales figure had been 1.5 million, and that for television sets 2 million. In 1967 the comparative figures were 4 million and 1.4 million. In the light of these statistics—and of other evidence—the Working Group refused to cast radio in 'some role' that was 'merely ancillary to Television . . . broadcasting only what it supposedly handles better'.

The Pilkington Committee had recommended an increase in broadcasting hours, and Wilson's Government, after long delays, had asked for a 'pop service'.<sup>34</sup> Yet the BBC's licence fee, the lowest in Europe, having remained unchanged since 1946, had been increased by the Wilson Government by only 25 per cent. Meanwhile, 'all other public services such as postal rates, telephone, gas, electricity, public transport' had increased threefold. 'The total cost to each household of the complete radio service' was 'the equivalent of one inexpensive book or one visit to the theatre per year'. In weekly terms, it was one-fifth the cost of one daily newspaper and less than the cost of the *Radio Times*.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* The comparisons were of figures for the third quarter of the years quoted.

<sup>34</sup> See above, p. 563. "Note of Meeting" between Normanbrook and Postmaster-General (Benn), 30 June 1966 (R78/623/1).

This fascinating and still pertinent statistical section of the Working Group Report, which should be studied alongside Governors' Papers and official BBC correspondence with the Post Office, reveals how frustrated people working in radio felt because of financial limitations.<sup>35</sup> Many of them believed, as the evidence submitted to the Working Group suggests, that if successive Governments—and, in particular, the current Labour Government—had met their obligations, there would have been no need for the kind of inquiry that was taking place. They could have quietly got on with their job. The mood persisted after *Broadcasting in the Seventies* appeared.

Yet not everyone felt that. For example, the poet George MacBeth, a producer in Arts, Science, and Documentaries, Radio, who had served first at Bush House in Overseas Talks, had come to the conclusion that 'the days of public service broadcasting' were over, and that 'commercial radio' was likely to come into existence 'whatever attempts we may make to avoid it'. Less foreseeably, he welcomed the possibility. Radio might benefit from competition 'in exactly the same way' as television, and as far as the financing of BBC radio was concerned, he would prefer advertising to any alternative form of revenue.<sup>36</sup>

In the circumstances the members of the Working Group had themselves concluded—and their conclusion, like MacBeth's, was bound to raise questions inside and outside the BBC—that the pattern of radio should consist of 'generic programme services, i.e. programme services with a definite and recognisable programme character' to which the listener could tune in 'with the reasonable expectation of getting what he wants'. 'Mixed programme services' such as had prevailed 'in the Reith era' and 'to some extent continue[d] on television', were not suitable for a medium which had

<sup>35</sup> For a relevant Board meeting see \**Minutes*, 20 April 1967, when Greene reported that he had written to Peter Lillicrap at the Post Office formally requesting an increase in the combined licence fee from £5 to £6 with effect from Jan. 1968 ('Greene to Lillicrap, 19 April 1967 (R78/3/1)'). Delays mattered, as well as sums fixed. 'The Post Office had warned him that the increase might be delayed until 1 April 1968 so that it could then be imposed simultaneously with increases planned for that date in direct postal charges. He had pointed out that such a three-month delay would cost the Corporation £3½m. to £4m. in revenue, and that a loss of this order might prejudice the BBC's prospects of getting through to 1972 without a further increase.' On 7 Dec. 1967, J. G. L. Francis, Controller, Finance, wrote to Hill that in his view the splitting of radio and television fees then being considered in the Post Office was 'a horrifying proposal' ('Francis to Hill (R78/3/1)').

<sup>36</sup> \*G. MacBeth, 'Notes on the Future of Radio', 5 June 1968 (R92 Box 15: Radio Reorganisation: Working Group on Future of Radio: Papers submitted from outside the Group).

'lost its compulsiveness'. (This was one of the only two references in the Report to Reith.) Radio had to be made as 'simple and convenient as possible, with the minimum need for reference to printed programme'. BBC radio, the Report noted—and Marriott knew the detail of the story and what lay behind it—had been 'working on this basis for some time'. Other European countries, including Sweden and France, were now following the same course. 'Even the pirate stations divided between pop and sweet music were run on the same lines.'

A long section on pop music followed in the Working Group Report, in part sociological in character, as Marriott's previous report had been. There were two kinds of popular music and two separate audiences, it was suggested, the division rooted less in musical taste than in the 'generation gap'. 'The young like to have something which belongs to themselves and from which the older generation is excluded. . . . They want to be spoken to by people who talk and think like themselves.' The 'old' preferred nostalgia to fashion. They were living in Memory Lane. However superficial this analysis was, the conclusion seemed plain. 'We have no doubt whatever that if BBC Radio is to remain a strong and effective monopoly, or if it is to face commercial competition with any chance of success, it must regard as a first priority the provision of programmes which even now occupy 80 per cent of the time spent on listening.'

Radio 1, introduced at the request of the Government, might have been, it was admitted, 'the product of muddled thinking on the part of the Government, Press and Public'. Nevertheless, the Working Group concluded, it had been right for the BBC to undertake it. It was right too for the BBC to continue to cater for its Radio 2 audience, a 'respectable' audience, 'more durable than the pop audience in that it covers a larger age span and more likely, if properly served, to stay loyal to the BBC in face of competition'. MacBeth would have gone further in defending Radio 1 at least. Indeed, his defence turned into an attack. Radio 1 had 'changed the *image* of the BBC', introducing 'a new kind of speed, personality, and dash into broadcasting'. In some shows, like John Peel's *Night Ride*, it had even shown that art and mass culture should 'join hands for a new audience by mixing poetry with pop music'.<sup>37</sup>

While MacBeth was not afraid of commercial competition, a sense of the threat of such competition pervaded the Working Group's

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

Report, and it was partly because of it that the proposal was made that there should be a twenty-four-hour service on Radios 1 and 2 which would operate quite separately except between 0200 to 0630 at night. As far as Radio 4 was concerned—and this was now described as ‘the programme service for the “middle man”, the average sensible citizen’, ‘the service likely to be listened to most often by the opinion-forming section of society’—changes were deemed desirable, even though the service was less vulnerable to competition. School broadcasting should be taken out of it and, along with Open University broadcasting, transferred to a separate VHF network to be paid for by the Government.<sup>38</sup> Pressure on the licence fee would thus be relieved.

So also would pressure on programme scheduling. ‘Cleared of school broadcasting’, the Report summed up, Radio 4 would be ‘essentially’ a ‘spoken word’ programme, with ‘most stress, within its generic character . . . on daily journalism’. It would not exclude radio drama and daily serials, however, and in the evenings it would carry ‘some of the entertainment programmes at present carried by Radio 2, comedy, quizzes and games, popular discussions like *Any Questions?*’ and ‘some mainstream classical music’.

For all the stress on news and ‘daily journalism’, by then familiar and, unlike education seldom questioned in Broadcasting House itself, the idea of a separate ‘continuous news and topicality network’ was explicitly rejected. Such an idea, which demanded ‘continuous “drip” news’, had been shown to work in the United States. Yet in the opinion of the Working Group, which on this occasion did not introduce any ‘sociologizing’, as it did in the case of ‘pop music’, ‘the public’s appetite for news, considerable though it clearly is, is not so great that it would be ready to sacrifice a whole range of entertainment programme services in order to have instant news available at the turn of a switch’.

‘Serious music’—and with it Radio 3—were left to the last in the Report. The BBC’s Music Programme—for which Mansell himself was then responsible—had been a success, extending the audience for the ‘classics’. The recommendation now was that it should be placed under the same Controller as Radio 3, to which an average of 650,000 people tuned in each day. It should provide ‘continuous

<sup>38</sup> The second reference to Reith in the Report came at this point: ‘Broadcasting to schools was accepted from the beginning under Reith as a BBC responsibility because there was no one else then able to do it and because it seemed a natural part of the BBC’s educational mission.’



good music during the daytime', and in the evening take over some of the music, particularly orchestral concerts, then being broadcast on Radio 4. Meanwhile, Further Education programmes should be switched to the new VHF network, and Saturday afternoon sports programmes to Radio 4. The terms 'Third Programme' and 'Music Programme' should both disappear. Relative costs of Radio 3 programmes would still be high, but these could be legitimately defended. It did not require 'any special research to prove that bingo halls and bowling alleys are used by more people at lower cost than opera houses or art galleries'.

There were no references at this point in the Report—or elsewhere—to the role of the BBC as a patron or, indeed, as an influence on the creation of new, hitherto unfamiliar, tastes, although the hope was expressed that the audience for 'good music' would increase if it were presented 'in a more attractive and accessible form'. It was explicitly recognized, indeed, that 'a smaller amount of time' would now be available on Radio 3 for 'difficult contemporary music and music for very small minorities' as well as for 'special programmes'. 'The overall effect in all our evening programmes would be a shift away from more specialised programmes towards those capable of attracting larger audiences which would be desirable in itself and could we think be done without reducing unreasonably our services to minorities.'

The conclusion of this wide-ranging survey—for such it was—pointed to the continuation of a four-network radio system, supplemented by a new VHF network, paid for outside the licence fee. In the last sections of the Report and in one of its Appendices attention was paid to the financial implications of this conclusion. No account was taken, however, of possible McKinsey suggestions about operating economies, or any related proposals which might eventually be put forward by the Policy Study Group. It was assumed that there would be more needletime, however it was acquired, and that the BBC would have to disengage itself from its present undertakings to the Musicians' Union in respect of minimum employment and expenditure levels. And that meant trouble ahead.

The plan as a whole envisaged 28,000 network hours of radio broadcasting that would be provided at a 'direct' cost of £600,000 per annum less than the 21,000 network hours being broadcast in 1967–8, but, as Marriott and his colleagues clearly recognized, despite this significant reduction in 'direct' costs, rising annual costs of 5 per cent would defeat the plan unless the licence fee were raised.

Given the tightness of the situation, the Working Group was forced, therefore, to consider necessary economies, even though such consideration had not been part of its original brief. The only way of making cuts, the Group suggested, would be to sacrifice one whole network or to mix two of the four networks into one network.

To sacrifice Radio 1, 'an enterprise on which we have made a successful start' and which was kept by the Press 'continually in the public eye', would be 'to isolate the BBC from the youthful section of its audience and throw the door wide open for a competitor'. Radio 3 had the smallest audience, but 'one which includes those who are most vocal and most influential'. It was 'hard to imagine something which has gained for public service broadcasting its greatest reputation and prestige being sacrificed to ensure a continuous supply of pop music'. Radio 2, which might 'superficially give the impression of being old-fashioned and of dwindling importance', was of 'at least equal and probably greater importance to the BBC' than Radio 1 because of its older and possibly more loyal audience than that for Radio 1. Radio 4 occupied 'a unique position at the centre', and its 'complete excision' was 'unthinkable'.

This left only a 'three-and-a-half' alternative, 'making one network do for two'. 'Everyone would have something of everything and nothing would be totally lost.' Such a solution, the Report admitted, might satisfy the British preference for compromise, but it would neither 'pacify' listeners nor reflect the philosophy of the Working Group. 'A mixture resulting in a miscellaneous or ill-defined programme service' went counter to 'the principle which we hold to be most important for the future of radio, namely its simplification through the division of its output into separate, easily understood, generic programme services, which alone are capable of holding and building audiences in an actual or potential competitive situation'.

The Working Group's own designated fall-back position was described, but not recommended, in Appendix D to its Report. It was not recommended because it would have involved the sacrifice of 'the principle' thus enunciated and because, psychologically, and this was regarded as more important, if it were offered as a 'solution', the public, the competitors who were 'waiting', and the BBC's own staff would see it as 'a signal that we have lost the faith and the will to survive'. The details of what such a 'solution' would entail were provided. Three programmes, A, B, and C—Programme A broadcast from 0530 to 2400—would have different programme mixes at

different points in the day. Programme A would broadcast the same programmes as Radio 1 from 0700 to 1830, and Programme B would resemble Radio 4 with some classical music being added in the daytime. There would be no Music Programme, and 'pop' music would be shared with 'light music' from 1830 to 2400 on Programme A.

Having glimpsed the worst, the Report ended—or almost ended—on a 'high note'. 'If it is said that the arguments for not cutting down radio, however sound, cannot stand up to the hard fact that the money is not available, then we would urge that the thinking about our financial situation, which is wholly unsatisfactory, should be at least as radical as the thinking about programmes.' To meet inescapable costs, the licence fee would have to rise, and, however reluctant or hostile Governments might be, a public campaign would have to be mounted to ensure that the licence fee would be raised each year at least to the extent of a rise in the cost of living index.

And then came the very last note. If, despite the pressure, the Government would not respond to such a campaign and BBC radio was placed in a situation where it was unable to justify its monopoly position by providing a proper comprehensive service to listeners, then it was 'inescapable that the interests of the BBC and of the radio audience in the United Kingdom would be best served by our acceptance of some measure of advertising revenue'.<sup>39</sup>

This important and unpublished internal report, frank in its conclusion and drawn up after considerable consultation, provided the immediate lead-in to the work of the Policy Study Group that prepared *Broadcasting in the Seventies*. It did not consider the possibility of reallocating spending between radio and television or any ways of reducing overheads or non-programme costs through changes of structure. Nor did it examine the relationship between Regional and national radio, as McKinsey had begun to do, or include any cross-references to Bush House, where there was a different approach to programming and to administration from that in Broadcasting House. Most important of all, its last conclusion did not figure in any of the subsequent internal discussions on the future

<sup>39</sup> In a note to Lloyd James, 10 Jan. 1969, Mansell commented on a paragraph supplied by Scott, and agreed that Radio 1 might be asked to take advertising. Someone else (Lloyd James?) added 'and 2' after 1 ('Report of Working Group on the Future of Radio' (R92 Box 15: Reports)).

of radio, for the Governors firmly ruled out advertising—on Radio 1 or any other part of the BBC's network.<sup>40</sup> Hill himself took the lead.

The Marriott Report made one highly relevant point in its presentation which related not to its proposals but to its approach:

In a situation in which an existing service is running short of the money required to sustain it, there are two possible ways of dealing with the problem. One is to say 'This, and no more, is the money available—do what you can to provide the best reduced service within these limits'. The other is to say 'This is the service which we should, and if we are to survive, must provide—how can we find the money to sustain it?' We naturally thought first of what it was right for BBC Radio to do, because this was the way our group was set up, but when we looked at the problem the other way round it became evident that there was very little difference between what was right and what was necessary. The question, in other words, was not simply what we can afford to do, but rather what we can't afford not to do.

It is interesting to compare the Report of the Marriott Working Group with some of the papers that were submitted to it by members of the BBC's staff. MacBeth's has been mentioned. His conclusion was in flat contradiction to that emerging from a paper by Keith Hindell, another producer in Arts, Science, and Documentaries, Radio, who described the mood in Broadcasting House as 'apprehensive'. 'Our prestige has plummeted relative to Television', he began, 'and relative to the national newspapers. We have become the butt of jokes. The serious side of radio broadcasting has been ignored by the Press. We trembled at the advent of pirate radio (as did the Government most shamefully) and we continue to be threatened by a greedy commercial radio lobby. We have lost confidence in ourselves to the extent that we appear to accept all the conceits and assertions of the opposition.'<sup>41</sup>

For Hindell, all radio and television advertisements, whatever their source, were 'gratuitous, ethereal litter, worse than junk mail', and he agreed with two other producers, Philip French and Michael Mason, that leaving on one side television, the continuous character of radio programmes made the question of the acceptability of

<sup>40</sup> The idea did not disappear, however. Hill noted in his Diary on 24 April 1969, when the Policy Study Group's final report was awaited, that at the Governors' Meeting that day the main item had been 'a discussion on advertising (about which I learned some members of the staff were wavering after so much delay in raising the licence fee). I led, urging that at no time and in no way should we accept advertising revenue. Unanimously agreed. Fulton said it was one of the best days for the BBC' (Hill, *op. cit.* p. 162, which gave the year of this meeting wrongly as 1970).

<sup>41</sup> \*K. Hindell, 'A Future for Radio Talks?', 14 Aug. 1968 (R92 Box 15: Papers submitted from outside the Group).

advertising messages quite different from what it was in the Press. Lord Archie Gordon, Programme Editor, Arts, Science, and Documentaries, Sound, who had succeeded D. G. Bridson, was asked to pass on their note to Curran, who replied that he agreed with it.<sup>42</sup>

In an interview on *Ten o'Clock* on the day on which his appointment as Director-General was announced, Curran made a good point of his own when he noted that 'radio is where people choose what they want to listen to', adding, without being daunted by the word 'afford', that 'we can afford to look at it [he did not say pay for it] as the medium of choice'.<sup>43</sup>

Stephen Bonarjee, hiding behind the formidable initials Prog. Ed. C.A.(S.) (Programme Editor, Current Affairs, Sound), stressed in an important paper that radio remained a majority medium for two-thirds of the day, and that although it had been slow in accepting the consequences of the television revolution, which would be 'speeded up' by colour, it was ready now to do so, changing the basis of its evening programmes when television was dominant. Bonarjee, writing 'as one who has worked on both sides of the house', did not favour a separate news programme: the end product would be 'broiler house' journalism, 'unable to lift its sights much beyond the next half-hour segment'.<sup>44</sup> What he did favour would have pleased McKinsey and Company—'appropriate staff productivity norms for each department, group or unit. These should be established on the basis of stretching fully active people to a reasonable limit and exposing under-employment wherever it may exist.' Someone (Marriott?) wrote one word in the margin without adding a question mark—'How'.

<sup>42</sup> \*Hindell, French, and Mason, 'Radio Advertising', n.d.; Curran to Gordon, 1 Aug. 1969 (R92 Box 15: Papers from outside the Group).

<sup>43</sup> Curran interviewed by Anthony King on *Ten o'Clock*, 8 Aug. 1968. For other comments made by Curran on his appointment, see an interview in the *Guardian*, 5 April 1969. From retirement Lindsay Wellington, formerly in charge of radio (see above, pp. 35–7) wrote to him asking him to do all he could 'to preserve the seriously important side of Sound Broadcasting'. 'I gather that the financial problem is pretty frightening, but if choices have to be made let them be made in the light of values we can respect and not just on the size of the battalions who listen or don't' (Wellington to Curran, 24 March 1969 (Curran Papers)).

<sup>44</sup> \*Bonarjee to Marriott, 'Your Special Committee on Radio', 10 Sept. 1968; Bonarjee, 'Radio in the Seventies: Some Problems for Consideration', 6 Sept. 1968 (R92 Box 15: Papers from outside the Group). He quoted that week's *Audience Research Bulletin*, which had covered the dramatic week in which the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia (see above, p. 690): 'on the evidence of the listening and viewing figures for the Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of Week 34, public appetite for news of the events in Czechoslovakia could hardly be called insatiable.'

Hindell's memorandum, which did not use such language, was indicative of a mood, and obviously it irritated George Camacho, Head of Talks and Current Affairs, Radio, who told Hindell not only that there were parts of it with which he did not—and could not—agree, but complained that Hindell had never told him before, as he did in the memorandum, that he felt 'cribbed, cabined and confined'. 'I have spent eight years liberalising,' Camacho went on. 'Has it had as little effect as your paper suggests?'<sup>45</sup> Camacho, who called the Marriott Report 'a splendid document', was out of sympathy with significant strains of opinion in Broadcasting House.<sup>46</sup>

More in line with mainstream thinking was another, short, thoughtful paper by Tim Pitt, a producer in Current Affairs, Radio, who described radio as 'an incomparable medium for news'; having seen portable tape recorders, he looked forward now to portable transmitters. Yet Pitt pressed for a network devoted entirely not to news but to 'adult education', 'a field in which we should concentrate as many of our resources as we can'—school broadcasts could be transmitted in the middle of the night to be recorded for classroom use—and he too would have made Radio 1 'commercial'. 'By limiting advertising to one channel, which is entirely devoted to entertainment, it [the BBC] would be in a position to get the best of both worlds.' Pitt would also have retained a substantial output in 'serious music', what the BBC did best, and would have abolished Regional broadcasting except in the national Regions. He wanted the BBC to think in national and in local terms. That was the spectrum.<sup>47</sup>

Another paper by Neil Hepburn, a producer in General Talks, Radio, was described by Camacho as the most 'comprehensive' of all those submitted. It was certainly wide-ranging in its analysis and its

<sup>45</sup> 'Camacho to Hindell, 'A Future for Radio Talks', 19 Aug. 1968 (R92 Box 15: Papers submitted from outside the Group).

<sup>46</sup> 'Camacho to Marriott, 5 March 1969; Hill called the Report 'succinct', 'cogent', and 'clear' ('Hill to Marriott, 19 Feb. 1969 (R92 Box 15: Reports)). Camacho told Marriott that he himself thought the Music Programme 'the biggest error ever made in the conduct of radio' ('Camacho to Marriott, 5 March 1969).

<sup>47</sup> 'Pitt to Camacho, 'The Future of Radio', 4 Sept. 1968 (R92 Box 15: Papers from outside the Group). Camacho described this paper as 'very interesting'. Another correspondent, Christopher Thorne, then Head of Further Education, Radio, and about to move to an academic post at the University of Sussex, pressed for an educational network for schools, further education, and the Open University. There had been a time, he added, when the 'missionary' idea argued in favour of placing educational radio programmes within the general output, and not in a ghetto. 'This time has passed . . . If a satisfactory degree of creative autonomy could be retained, this service should be financed by the D.E.S., Ministry of Labour, etc.' ('Thorne to Marriott, 'Radio in the 'Seventies', 10 Jan. 1968 (R92 Box 15: Papers from outside the Group)).



implications, based as it was on the assumption that the BBC could no longer communicate with an appreciable audience by means of radio 'except in one or two sharply defined areas in which we are still manifestly broadcasting what the audience wants to hear'. Without, he said, any help from Marshall McLuhan, Hepburn had come to the conclusion that 'radio is in all circumstances a less complete medium of communication, a smaller entity than television'. 'Acted documentaries' and 'features' had in consequence become 'sterile areas' of radio. So had 'straight talks'. 'If the criteria of economics or utility are used the abolition of the straight talk as at present defined is logically inevitable.'

Hepburn favoured a separate news programme, 'free in form, without rigid time-slots . . . under the control of a simple, integrated news and current affairs department'. Radios 1 and 2 should be amalgamated; Radio 3 would become 'a high-brow' pop station. There should be a new channel, preponderantly educational, but on Saturdays, Sundays, and Bank Holidays 'largely sporting', and, most radical proposal of all, Radio 4 would have to disappear or be replaced by various forms of market-related national, Regional, and local broadcasting.<sup>48</sup> The novelty of Hepburn's proposal about an educational channel was that during the course of a year it would have involved many hours of non-programming: 'switched-off transmitters have the advantage of being extremely cheap to operate.'

The contrast in content, style, and tone between the various papers submitted to Marriott's Working Group revealed that in the 1960s, as, indeed, at any point in its history, the BBC was in no way a monolithic organization. It revealed too that management would never find it easy to 'impose solutions'. Some of the people writing to Marriott wanted a bigger switch to VHF: others resisted it. Some favoured advertising, limited or unlimited: others were staunchly opposed. Lines crossed too. For example, MacBeth and Mason took up different positions on advertising, but both believed that radio, above all else,

<sup>48</sup> \*Hepburn, 'On the Future of Radio', n.d. (R92 Box 15: Papers from outside the Group). Hepburn provided a detailed plan which would have been based on nineteen Regional stations broadcasting on VHF, with a national transcription service, 'both a clearing house for the distribution of programmes between area and area and, in certain circumstances, a production house in its own right'. The devolution would facilitate interaction between programme production and audience response. Audience research would be devolved on an area basis. Hepburn used the term 'market principles', and when he employed the adjective 'economic', he said he was doing so in an 'Adam Smithian sense'. He referred to an article on the effects of devolution in the *Sunday Times*, 28 Jan. 1967. He declared himself strongly opposed to 'centralism'.

needed a new image: 'we need a new BBC colour, new BBC symbol, new designed stationery and books, a completely redesigned reception at all our buildings and new uniforms for commissioners.'<sup>49</sup> At the same time others, including Hindell, objected to 'wasting time, effort and resources' in 'more primitive and vastly expensive media', telling people that 'we are pulling our socks up'.

Hindell, who accepted the desirability of more news, including 'a first class news and comment programme' on Radio 3, complained that producers were too restricted within the existing set-up. He himself, for example, had not been able to present a programme on pirate radio: it had been a 'totally banned subject'. He had been 'forbidden from mounting a current affairs discussion of the pirates the day [Radio] Caroline began'. There was a whiff of the 1970s—and of later arguments inside BBC Television—in Hindell's demand that the BBC should concentrate above all else on 'morale', particularly 'producer morale'. Much of his paper was devoted to 'improving the structure of our organization so that the producer is *fully engaged, fully stretched, largely independent and much more efficient*'.

The papers submitted to Marriott's Working Group were not seen by the three members of the Policy Study Group, who were insulated from all outside pressures and were not allowed to speak to anyone about what they were proposing.<sup>50</sup> The Group was required to report to the Board of Management—and through that Board to the Governors—without consultations with staff, a procedure which inevitably fostered speculation and suspicion—and later became a matter of contention—but which resulted in the speedy production of the Group's first progress Report, in January 1969.<sup>51</sup>

This began with a statement of what the Group had set out to do first. It had decided to concentrate on major issues, starting with 'reducing the cost of music'. 'Substantial savings' in music were possible, it demonstrated, 'through the use of increased needletime and reductions in orchestras.'<sup>52</sup> Next it looked at Regional costing. It

<sup>49</sup> \*MacBeth, loc. cit.; M. Mason, 'Reflections on the Future of BBC Audio', n.d. (R92 Box 15: Papers from outside the Group).

<sup>50</sup> Three senior members of Radio, Lord Archie Gordon, Talks and Documentaries; Hallam Tennyson, Drama; and Hans Keller, Music, asked to see Mansell formally. They were among Mansell's close colleagues, but when he saw them he listened and raised no questions and made no comments of his own (Note from Mansell to the author, 12 June 1993).

<sup>51</sup> In Feb. 1969, Greene reported to the Governors that he had written to the staff in view of reports circulating about the work of the Policy Study Group (\*Board of Governors, Minutes, 27 Feb. 1969).

<sup>52</sup> \*Policy Study Group, [First] Progress Review, 27 Jan. 1969 (R34/1581/1). \*Board of Management, Minutes, 27 Jan., 1969.

was in the light of its first proposals that the Governors accepted the need to make cuts in music, recognizing at the same time that 'confrontation' with the Musicians' Union would be likely, and that the BBC prepared answers to Parliamentary questions on the cost of Regional programmes.<sup>53</sup> The Governors agreed later to leave discussion with the Musicians' Union until July 1969.<sup>54</sup>

'Non-metropolitan radio', a convenient term covering regional, area, and local broadcasting, inevitably came high on the Group's agenda, and two points were quickly made that were never subsequently forgotten. 'English regional Radio opt-out could be eliminated in favour of local radio.' 'The most likely viable form of local radio is a two-stage development to about 40 stations.'<sup>55</sup> There was also a factual addendum. Without taking advantage of any productivity improvement or changes in output, the BBC's cumulative radio deficit in March 1974 could be as much as £11.8 million, and the annual deficit would then be of the order of £3.8 million. Continuing local radio on existing lines—eight stations—would increase the cumulative deficit by £3 million and add £500,000 to the annual deficit. Last and not least—and disposing of all talk of a possible reallocation of BBC revenues—the Report observed that normal and special rising costs in Television were absorbing virtually all of Television's rising income, leaving something less than £1 million for development.<sup>56</sup>

A second Report of even greater importance—and certainly of greater complexity—was considered by the Board of Management in late March 1969.<sup>57</sup> Like the other Reports, it was organized neatly, produced inside plastic covers, and accompanied by 'exhibits' designed to cover particular points in detail. 'Conclusions' were set out concisely so that the Board of Management could consider them one by one. Three of them, all positive, were on the agenda, the first of them general. 'Changes in the content and character of network Radio can increase listener satisfaction and reduce costs.' Everything else followed. The second was encouraging. There was 'potential for

<sup>53</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 778, cols. 1911–12, 27 Feb. 1969.

<sup>54</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 13 March 1969.

<sup>55</sup> \*Policy Study Group, *First Progress Review*.

<sup>56</sup> \**Ibid.* Bonarjee had explicitly rejected any help from Television even if it had been able to provide it: 'Far better for radio to stand firmly on its own feet and offer the best possible value for money from its own resources' (\*Bonarjee, loc. cit.).

<sup>57</sup> \*Second Progress Review, 24 March 1969 (R34/1581/2).

savings in *all* Radio activities, if aggressively pursued'. Radio's deficit could be eliminated even in a period of rising costs 'without reductions in programme quality'. The question was how to do it. The third related to competition. Changes in the deployment of medium-wave frequencies could enable the BBC to 'counter more effectively [the] commercial radio threat'. What further changes were necessary had to be worked out.

In relation to the first conclusion, it was stated, as the Marriott Working Group had already stated it in somewhat different language, that the existing deployment of Radio resources was out of balance with listening patterns. The major audience for radio was in the daytime, but much of the resources were devoted to the evenings. A significant proportion of output hours attracted small audiences. Furthermore, high-cost networks got the smallest audiences. Recent developments, however, had helped to redress the situation. The opening of Radio 1 had resulted in increased audiences, and new programmes had added listeners to Radios 3 and 4 (Exhibits 8, 9, and 10). A large proportion of daytime audiences still remained to be tapped. In line with the Marriott Working Group and mainstream BBC thinking, the answer was 'generic networks'.

Despite the changes introduced since the advent of Radio 1, existing networks were judged to be 'an unhappy mixture of brow level and generic elements', 'similar material appears on several networks'. (This would once have been a matter of policy and of pride.) 'A further separation of Radios 1 and 2 would be beneficial.' The 'basic concept' of the Third Programme had to be re-examined. 'Some Third Programme material would be better employed on other media (eg *The Listener*).' 'Serious music' was the major component which most regularly achieved 'measurable audiences'.

At least one 'somewhat elderly listener' in Yorkshire, as he described himself, Frederick Chamberlain, approved whole-heartedly of generic radio, and sent in verses to the BBC, 'A Listener's Prayer', saying what he himself would do if he were in Broadcasting House:

Were I in charge of the BBC,  
 The Radio Programmes—they would be—  
 Channel 1—POP all day; low brow sounds, to some quite gay.  
 Channel 2—that would go—harmonic music for the medium brow.  
 Channel 3—Symphonic noise, for the high brow girls and boys,  
     Prose and Poetry, Opera too, not for the many but just  
     for the few.  
 Channel 4—Would surely be—talks—religion—plays and views—  
     odds and ends and of course the News.

And so—all—would be satisfied—  
Not one listener ere denied.

The verses made their way via the Programme Correspondence Section to Marriott, Mansell, and Lloyd James. 'Great minds', wrote Mansell, think alike. 'To add to the documentation of our Working Group.'<sup>58</sup>

Like the Working Group, the Policy Study Group concluded that 'four full networks' would constitute 'the best all-round services', but noted that if this pattern were adopted, costs would increase. To lower costs, the best solution would be a '4-day/3-evening configuration', details of which were exhibited. If rising costs could not be thus contained, it would be necessary to adopt a three-network system which would reduce both hours and mix. Cutting out a network should be 'the last alternative'—'tactically bad, hurts listeners'. There would have to be further savings also to finance local radio. Some of those could be met by changes in the pattern of regional broadcasting, including the end of regional opt-outs. Under whatever network option was chosen, a separate channel for education was deemed both desirable and feasible.

The section on possible savings began with music, where £1½ million of the £4½ million deficit could be saved, and went on to incorporate a subsection on 'opportunities for productivity improvement'. It suggested that £1.7 million a year could be saved by reducing evasions on car and combined licences (Exhibit 33).<sup>59</sup> Further savings of about £500,000 could be made if the Government could be persuaded to pay for 'all educational broadcasting'. Other savings would have to come from improved productivity, and this would demand 'tough management action'. There would have to be a cut in staff of about a thousand, and 'a systematic and challenging evaluation of all traditional practices' would have to be undertaken in all departments.<sup>60</sup> There was a McKinsey-like touch to the accom-

<sup>58</sup> \*F. Chamberlain to Miss Pat Bourne, BBC, 10 March 1968 (R92 Box 15: Papers and Schedules).

<sup>59</sup> There was little detailed discussion of car radio—or of what kind of programmes car drivers wanted—either in the Marriott Working Group or in the Policy Study Group. It was noted, however, that there were 2½ m. installed car radios, and that VHF receivers for cars were more expensive and less efficient than MW and LW receivers.

<sup>60</sup> The reduction of staff might not cause 'undue hardship', the Group noted, since turnover in clerical and programme operation assistant grades was high, and much of the managerial grade reduction could be met by normal and early retirements and expiry of contracts.

panying statement. 'Departmental managers must bear prime responsibility for setting savings targets and ensuring that they are achieved.' Management success in achieving savings would determine which radio network alternative—four or three and a half—could be chosen, while any delay in achieving savings would entail that future cuts would have to be more severe.

The last section of this second Report, that dealing with the reallocation of medium and long wavelengths, covered ground that had originally been surveyed by the Marriott Working Group, but it concentrated less on international wavelength planning and more on BBC choices. It noted 'the commercial radio threat', and recognized that the BBC could decide how to use its available medium wave and VHF frequencies only after 'tactics for local radio' had been determined. Extra capital spending on transmitters, of up to £5 million, would not be required until 1974–6, and that would depend on future international timetables.

Observing that within the international context the BBC used fewer frequencies than comparable countries and in the knowledge that some countries—for example, Finland—had moved over to dependence on VHF, the Policy Study Group none the less observed that 'the BBC should think carefully before deciding to abandon any part of its MW/LW system in favour of VHF'. At most, one more national VHF network could be developed, but that would not be before the late 1970s. Even for local radio, medium-wave development was more desirable, particularly if local commercial stations took it up. The BBC might then lose major audiences on Radios 1 and 2. Commercial bodies, to whom the Conservative Party was sympathetic, were already submitting proposals to the Post Office based on both VHF and medium-wave transmission.<sup>61</sup>

It was for this reason that the Policy Study Group drew attention to the urgent need to determine 'tactics on local radio'. The BBC could use ICFs (international common frequencies, later known as low-power channels) to improve network coverage and thereby limit opportunities open to commercial operators; it could develop local radio on VHF/MW by reallocating frequencies; or (and here it was mentioning what had by now become the unmentionable) it could 'abandon local radio to competitors and concentrate on strengthen-

<sup>61</sup> One proposal for commercial radio came from Hughie Green: it offered high population coverage and contemplated both VHF and medium-wave transmission. See below, pp. 842–3.



ing the networks'. Any '200-station concept' in local radio was not feasible, but ten to twenty local stations could be set up using a single medium wave.

With all this in mind, the Policy Study Group ended its Second Report by promising that its Third Report would cover the financing of local radio. It also promised to deal with concomitant issues: the future role of national regions, the development of area television, and the interrelationship of local radio and area television. As it pointed out in Exhibit 1, 'projects to resolve policies are inter-related', and the interrelationships covered radio and television.

Four days after the Board of Management had considered this Second Report, Curran, as Director-General Designate, identified three main issues, probably in part for his own information, in another paper of his own prepared for the Board. The first set consisted of ways of reducing spending on music, on which the Governors had already taken a line. The second set consisted of ways of reducing car licence evasion, a problem which had long been discussed with the Post Office. The third set consisted of means of improving 'productivity', the main McKinsey theme.<sup>62</sup> Mansell, however, had many other problems in mind, including the long discussed possibilities of a separate network for education—and how to pay for it—and he raised these with Curran on 11 April.<sup>63</sup> It was clear by then that there was no support in any quarters for a three-network BBC as a 'cost reduction alternative'.

In the same month, appropriately conceived of as 'the cruellest', Gillard, who remained deeply committed to local radio, which had been left out of Curran's list of three main problems, wrote on Curran's behalf to Mansell suggesting that the team should finish its task by the end of May, and that its members should return to their posts where they were urgently needed. Other people should be left to tidy up loose ends. Mansell replied wisely and firmly, however, that the Policy Study Group, which had already asked all 'the key questions', rejected the idea of such a dissolution before 'a strategy for detailed implementation' had been 'drawn up and agreed'.<sup>64</sup>

Mansell was clearly right to reply in this vein, for devising a strategy that would work was as relevant as formulating the recommendations themselves. Hill also appreciated how important this

<sup>62</sup> \*Board of Management, *Papers*, 'Policy Study Group: Note by D. G. Designate', 28 March 1969.

<sup>63</sup> \*Mansell to Curran, 'A Separate Network for Education', 11 April 1969 (R78/548/1).

<sup>64</sup> \*Gillard to Mansell, 2 April 1969; Mansell to Gillard, 14 April 1969 (R78/548/1).

was, and suggested, for example, that the outline of any plan put forward should be published in *The Listener* at the same time as it was presented to the Postmaster-General, in order to create an opportunity for public discussion.<sup>65</sup> There was concern, therefore, when the Post Office explained that it would like publication of recommendations to be held up until after they had secured Ministerial approval.<sup>66</sup>

The BBC had no alternative, however, to accepting this delay, thereby falling in with a timetable that was not of its own making. It knew that there were dangers ahead, and at the Board of Management meeting in April 1969, which had before it the Group's proposals, it was minuted uneasily that as a consequence there would be 'an uncomfortably long period during which the staff generally must continue to be kept in the dark about what was happening'.<sup>67</sup>

The question of consultation was raised in a different context by the Governors also, who decided three days later—in the light of experience—that there would have to be consultations with the General Advisory Council and the National Regional Councils.<sup>68</sup> It was doubtless with some relief, therefore, that Hill reported at their next meeting that the Postmaster-General no longer objected to the publication of the plan, provided that references to modes of financing local radio stations were omitted.<sup>69</sup> As it was, time was running out.

Before the Policy Study Group made its 'Final Presentation' in early May 1969,<sup>70</sup> it reviewed Radio News and Current Affairs, identifying ways in which news and news-based programmes could make radio 'more attractive to the audience and more efficient in organisation'. It called the existing organization 'multi-headed' and interdependent

<sup>65</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 14 April 1969. Hill had prepared the way for debate in some of his speeches. Thus, on 1 Jan. 1969, speaking to the Assistant Masters' Association at Southampton, he had told his audience that 'we're about to see a revival in sound radio . . . I think I detect a new demand for it. If I'm right, the BBC—which is currently doing some hard thinking about its whole radio structure—will be in a good position to meet it' (*BBC Record*, 64 (Jan. 1969)).

<sup>66</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 21 April 1969; \*F. Wood to D. Lawrence (copied to BBC), 6 May 1969 (R78/4/1).

<sup>67</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 21 April 1969.

<sup>68</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 24 April 1969.

<sup>69</sup> \*Ibid., 8 May 1969.

<sup>70</sup> \*Policy Study Group, Final Presentation, 12 May 1969, Summary Conclusion and Important Decisions (R34/1583).

but uncoordinated, observing that related departments were located in separate offices on two separate floors. Nor were they self-contained. There were cross-linkages both with Television News and with External Services. For example, Home Correspondents often covered the same story for both media, while Radio News Features produced overseas editions of *Radio Newsreel*. Radio News cost about £1.2 million a year, but had not hitherto had a separate, itemized budget.

In turning to an area which Greene had tried to fence off at the time when the McKinsey team was appointed, the Policy Study Group was treading where angels feared to tread. None the less, it recommended that there should be a Central News Department to control and manage the parts of the News Division which could not be effectively separated between Radio News and Television News, that the General News Service should be reformed and its functions extended, and that the Future Events Unit, following a timetable not set by itself, should be cut in size. Meanwhile, Radio would have to economize on foreign coverage unless, as had been proposed, it could combine with another news organization to set up an integrated organization, and the financing of Radio News's contribution to the External Services should be re-examined.

The Report included an interesting section on the organization of 'Radio News and/or Current Affairs'. There was no absolute distinction, the Report suggested, between News on the one hand and Current Affairs on the other, the Report suggested, or between radio and television. Distinctions were nuanced not absolute. At one end of the spectrum were news bulletins, news-based output like *Today* and *24 Hours*, all of which were influenced by 'the run of the day's news'; in between was daily output in programmes like *Woman's Hour*, which, while not influenced by the day's news, often dealt with 'current issues'; and at the other end of the spectrum were non-daily programmes dealing with current issues, like *Panorama* or *Radio 4 Reports*. These put news into perspective.

This was a more searching examination than had hitherto been made, and it identified conflicts of interest as well as centres of co-operation. Output control, it insisted, had to be unified, and in each day's operations there should be a shift of emphasis to the early morning. Radio 4 could offer a 'morning newspaper of the air', followed through with a 'range of news, news background, interpretation, up-to-date topicality and talking points'. Organizational options were outlined too, all of which focused on a 'distinction' within

Talks and Current Affairs, which the Group called 'sharp', between 'the type of staff needed to produce news-based output at a daily tempo and the type needed for non-daily current affairs. Greater clarity and greater efficiency would produce savings, it was suggested, and ways of achieving these were already being discussed.'<sup>71</sup>

In its Final Presentation the Policy Study Group 'highlighted' the important decisions still to be taken by the BBC, most of which had been identified previously. The choices that remained for the Board of Management and the Governors—cost schedules were attached—were whether to 'conjoin' Radios 1 and 2 in the evenings as part of a four-day/three-evening plan; whether to keep a 'mixed Radio 3' in the evenings or to concentrate on music; which orchestras to disband; and how to finance the expansion of local radio.<sup>72</sup> It now seemed plain that as far as that expansion was concerned, the only way to raise the necessary funds was to make savings in the Regions; and while the Group recommended that the BBC should continue to operate on a regional basis, and that necessary funds for local radio should be provided within the Regions from funds already allotted to them, it concluded that 'there was little case for creating new television areas' (within the Regions).

A highly revealing memorandum survives from Marriott to Gillard, dated 7 May 1969, before the process of decision making about the future of radio began. A copy of it was sent to Trethowan, who was to be Gillard's successor. It noted that a four/three solution was likely, as his own Working Group had reported, but that opinion was already tilting in favour of a wholly music programme in the evening on Radio 3 rather than a modified Third Programme with an emphasis strongly on music. To Marriott this seemed wrong, as it also seemed wrong to Gillard and to Mansell, but it was supported by Trethowan as a simple and clear programme arrangement in line with the 'generic' aim. It would cost a little less, Marriott admitted,<sup>73</sup> but it was not certain that it would be a solution that most listeners wanted. It would certainly be bound

<sup>71</sup> \*Policy Study Group, 'Radio News and Current Affairs', 2 April 1969 (R34/1582).

<sup>72</sup> The Policy Study Group referred to the first choice as a 'Third Programme Mix' (50% serious music, 25% drama, and the remainder talks, documentaries, etc.) and to the second as the Marriott mix (65% serious music, 10% drama, and the remainder talks, documentaries, etc.).

<sup>73</sup> This was on the assumption that significant economies in music were made.

to raise a 'formidable opposition' from supporters of the Third Programme.<sup>74</sup>

In Marriott's view, the proportion of broadcast speech should be reduced in quantity to something like 30 per cent or even 20 per cent of the total, but it should remain. So should music in Radio 4. 'Unless things have changed more than we guessed in the last ten years and judging from the opposition we met when we made some relatively small changes, support for the Third Programme can be very powerful and influential. We should not expect that this opposition will be matched by any support from a music public grateful to us for making the Third into an all-music programme.'<sup>75</sup>

It was perhaps worthwhile adding, Marriott continued, that all the original thinking of his own Working Group had been that there should be some speech on Radio 3 in the daytime, and that this thinking had been changed only at the last moment 'for simplicity and clarity' and 'because we were pressed for time'. He had come to the conclusion that the original thinking had been right. The names 'Music Programme' and 'Third Programme' should be dropped, he advised—without in this case asking himself what would be the public reaction to dropping them—leaving 'us free to adjust the proportions in the light of experience and public demand'.<sup>76</sup>

Marriott had a last thought, 'a purely internal one'. 'Who would control a total Music Programme?' The so-called Music Programme had hitherto been run by a Controller with other editorial responsibilities (Mansell) and whose professionalism had lain in broadcasting, not in music. 'If there were a network totally given up to music, would it not have to be run by the Music Department and what kind of programme would we expect to get?'

The question, a revealing one, which did not figure in the Policy Study Group's outline, although Mansell was well aware of its significance, was not put to the Governors. Nor was it raised by any

<sup>74</sup> For Trethowan's views, asked for by Curran at the first meeting of the Board of Management that he attended, see 'Interview with Gillard, 21 April 1983. He later came round to the view that Marriott and Gillard had been right. At the Board of Management Meeting Attenborough also supported a mixed programme.

<sup>75</sup> For the opposition recalled by Marriott, see above, pp. 52 ff.

<sup>76</sup> \*Marriott to Gillard, 'Future of Radio: Radio 3', 7 May 1969 (R92 Box 15: Reports). Such a memorandum, which might not have survived, is interesting, if only because of the postscript: 'I had written this before I knew of the opportunity for discussion next Monday evening, but even so it may be useful.' It is a reminder that much that was important was not put on paper even in this period of BBC history.

of the Governors when they reached their own final decisions. Nevertheless, Marriott won. An element of speech was retained on Radio 3, although it was not enough, it turned out, to satisfy believers in the old Third Programme. Both speech and music on Radio 3 were to pass under the control of Newby, who had been Controller of the Third Programme since 1958, and who after leaving the BBC was to describe his occupation as 'novelist'.

### 3. BBC Reactions

This and other unresolved matters were on the agenda at various meetings of the Board of Management, including a two-day meeting that was held immediately after the work of the Policy Study Group was finished;<sup>1</sup> and in the last meeting of the Board of Governors in May it was agreed that 'the unique drama element in the Third Programme would be upheld in the new Radio 3'.<sup>2</sup>

After the Policy Study Group's Final Presentation to both Boards, a '3½ system' was formally adopted. Radio 1 would present 'pop' music, and Radio 2 'sweet' music, but they would provide a combined service in the evening. Radio 3 would broadcast 'classical music', but it would also retain some 'spoken word'. Radio 4 would be the main 'spoken word' channel. A separate VHF educational channel would be part of the long-term plan, and the Government would be asked to finance school broadcasting as well as the Open University. There would be some reallocation of frequencies, seldom a popular move, but the reallocation would follow lines which had been discussed at length both in the Policy Study Group and in the Marriott Working Group. The most important of these would be the loss of Radio 3's medium-wave frequency in order to provide a local radio network on the same frequency. Regional broadcasting would be drastically changed. In Radio regional opt-outs would cease, although in television one twenty-five minute regional opt-out would be allowed each week. No new television areas would be created.

Specific recommendations about music were the most controversial of all the proposals, and the Board recognized in an understatement that the Musicians' Union would find it difficult to accept any of

<sup>1</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 12, 13 May 1969.

<sup>2</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 29 May 1969.



them.<sup>3</sup> Several orchestras would be disbanded, including the Concert Orchestra, the Training Orchestra, the London Studio Players, the Scottish Symphony Orchestra, the Northern Ireland Orchestra (unless the Northern Ireland Arts Council were prepared to share the costs), and the Northern Dance Orchestra. The Welsh Orchestra would be retained in the expectation that the Welsh National Opera Company would pay for its services for twenty-eight weeks of the year.

The Board appreciated that when all these changes had been made, there would still be no funds left over to develop the plan for forty local radio stations, and that in order to implement it, the radio licence fee would have to be increased by 5 shillings to £1 10s. and the combined radio and television licence by 5 shillings to £6 5s. The Policy Study Group had suggested that other ideas should be considered by the Government also, including the elimination of the separate radio licence and the raising of the combined licence fee.<sup>4</sup> The internal inquiry ended, therefore, as it began, with the Government being called upon to act.

After the whole package had been presented to the Board of Governors by Mansell and Atkins on 22 May, they deferred consideration of it for a week. Meanwhile, Hill urged that 'all possible action other than an increase in the licence fee' should be further explored, and Morrison of McKinsey and Company made a number of comments about how best the proposals could be presented.<sup>5</sup> McKinsey and company also prepared a paper for the Governors on the staffing and financial implications of the Policy Study Group's recommendations.<sup>6</sup>

A week later, the Board of Governors accepted all the major changes that had been proposed in the existing radio pattern, indicating their preferences when options were on offer. They did not minute any discussion they may have had on likely Union

<sup>3</sup> Hardie Ratcliffe had met the Policy Study Group on 20 March, and on 28 March Mansell reported to Curran that the Union was adamantly against any cuts whatsoever and urged an increase in the licence fee as the only answer to the BBC's problems. When Curran himself met Union representatives on 29 April he told them that he was not optimistic about the Government raising the licence fee before 1974 (\*BBC/Musicians' Union, *Minutes of a Meeting*, 29 April 1969 (R78/574)). Ratcliffe did not change his position, and Curran stated on 12 May that 'the union was clearly determined to fight the BBC on its plans for the future' (\*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 12 May 1969).

<sup>4</sup> \*Whitley to Curran, 'Financing Local Radio', 20 May 1969 (R78/548/1).

<sup>5</sup> \*J. G. Francis to Curran, 'Policy Study Group: Finance', 20 May 1969; Morrison to Mansell, 26 May 1969; Mansell to Whitby, BBC Secretary, 'Draft Papers: Proposed Network Changes and Local Radio', 27 May 1969 (R78/548/1).

<sup>6</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Impact and Cost of Proposed Changes in BBC on Staff Redundancy', 28 May 1969.

reactions, but they asked a number of pertinent questions—for example, what would be the consequence of the transfer of Radio 3 exclusively to VHF? The reply given by Mansell was that about one household in three had a VHF set, and that the proportion was higher among listeners likely to listen to Radio 3. He was influenced also in his judgement by the 'stereo capability' of VHF. Curran added that 'the move could in any case be justified', first by the fact that Radio 3, as a quality music network, needed good reception, and second by the fact that 'the long term development of VHF required that at least one national network should at some stage be exclusively on VHF'. He agreed with Bellingier that car radio listeners would be deprived of a service. The Governors accepted the move and the improvement of Radio 1 and Radio 4 coverage.

Another question came from Murray, who asked more generally to what extent the new network configuration 'measured up to the criterion of public service'. Curran said that he had no doubts. Nevertheless, after Fulton had stated that he was concerned that the BBC might appear to be justifying its policy 'on the grounds of adaptation to fashion and satisfying audience demands rather than on its own judgement of needs', Hill suggested that 'considerations of public service' should be set out as a preamble in presenting the proposals to the public. The Governors agreed also that they might have to prepare a brief public statement of their own which in the light of extensive speculation about future BBC policies in the Press would have to be issued sooner than had been planned.

The four-day, three-evening programme pattern was approved, as was the mix of music and other programmes on Radio 3, recommended by the Policy Study Group; and after listening to William Glock, Controller, Music, the Governors agreed also to the economies in music, reassured by Glock's carefully expressed view that the resulting musical output would be no less good than it was before. They decided, therefore, that after confirmation at their next meeting their proposals would form the basis of consultation with the BBC's General Advisory Council and with the unions.<sup>7</sup>

In relation to local radio, where there was still little that was certain, the Governors reiterated their support of an extension of the complement of local radio stations to forty,<sup>8</sup> but did not come out in favour of

<sup>7</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 29 May 1969.

<sup>8</sup> They agreed on the Chairman's suggestion not to indicate to the Postmaster-General that any money was available to finance local radio out of savings on network services, specifically the £600,000 which would be saved if Regional radio opt-outs were abolished.

any one particular option that would make this possible. Local radio did not figure, therefore, in their statement, which was drafted on 2 June and issued as a Press Release rather than as a letter to *The Times* as had been originally suggested. Before publication, the text was agreed with the Postmaster-General, after a last complaint had been made by the Post Office that it would 'pre-empt his decision as a Minister'.<sup>9</sup>

On the same day—and at its meeting the following week—the Board of Management again considered the Policy Study Group's report and how to handle it internally.<sup>10</sup> It was agreed that Curran should see the Association of Broadcasting Staff after meeting representatives of the Musicians' Union. The role of the Musicians' Union was rightly judged to be critical in relation to the final outcome of all the main proposals, including needletime as well as the future of orchestras; and the Governors recommended that negotiations with the Union should be carried further before publication of the Policy Study Group's proposals and, indeed, before consultation with the General Advisory Council or any other BBC bodies.

'Facing the Music' was the well-chosen title of the *Daily Telegraph's* article on the music cuts and other detailed proposals when they were eventually published in July,<sup>11</sup> and that had already happened, as far as Curran and Hill were concerned, long before publication date. Indeed, Curran feared that the Musicians' Union representatives might walk out when they heard in full what was being proposed. They did not. Instead, Arkell, who was sympathetic to their case, told Curran that Ratcliffe proposed telling the Prime Minister of the BBC plans, which his members believed were so far-reaching that they threatened 'the continued existence of the musical profession as it had existed up to now in the United Kingdom'.<sup>12</sup>

Hill advised Ratcliffe that he should not tell the Prime Minister until after the full list of BBC proposals had been published—and these included local radio—and Ratcliffe agreed. There was a complication,

<sup>9</sup> \*Curran, 'Note of Telephone Conversation with Frank Wood', 2 June 1969 (R78/4/1).

<sup>10</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 2, 9 June 1969.

<sup>11</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 11 July 1969.

<sup>12</sup> Arkell's uneasiness about proposals to make drastic cuts in music provision was expressed in a Note to Curran on 29 March. It was shared by G. M. Turnell, Head of Programme Contracts (\*Memorandum of 11 March). On 13 May Arkell accepted the idea of 'streamlining' orchestras, but warned of putting suggestions to the Musicians' Union that might lead to a prolonged strike (\*'Aide-memoire' (R78/574)). The fears of the Union for the future of the profession were expressed at a meeting with the BBC on 17 June. The particular statement was made by Basil Tschaikoff, one of the delegates.

however; for while these talks were proceeding, the Association of Broadcasting Staff refused to talk to BBC management, objecting to the BBC's requirement at that stage of complete confidentiality.<sup>13</sup> There had been difficulties with the ABS earlier that year, after it had held talks with the ACTT, the Association of Cinematograph, Television, and Allied Technicians, the union to which many members of ITV belonged and which had opposed the entry of the ABS into the TUC in 1962.<sup>14</sup>

Everything placed on the table so far related to recommendations, not to a document, and this was also the case when consultations began with the BBC's own advisory bodies. Very quickly, disagreements were revealed there too. For example, while the Midland Regional Council expressed itself in broad agreement with the proposals, if regretting that local radio might proceed at the expense of the Regions, the North Regional Council objected to local radio being set up at all if this were so. The South and West Region was disturbed that, in face of strong commercial competition, the proposed and strictly limited 'area' television would not be up to BBC standards.<sup>15</sup> The Northern Ireland Regional Council was alarmed at the prospect of losing its orchestra, while the Broadcasting Council for Scotland at a particularly stormy meeting accepted only with great reluctance and with reservations the idea of losing the Scottish Symphony Orchestra as 'an inevitable economy'.<sup>16</sup>

*Broadcasting in the Seventies*, the final document, refers to these discussions with the Regional Councils and with the General Advisory Council. Indeed, they were the sole discussions picked out in the document as discussions that had been taken into account in its final drafting, and they were discussions that perforce had undoubtedly taken place late. The General Advisory Council, for instance, had not been told of the process of internal review at its meeting in January 1969, and at its meeting in April attention was

<sup>13</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 19 June 1969.

<sup>14</sup> \**Ibid.*, 30 Jan. 1969.

<sup>15</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'The Future of the Radio Networks and Non-Metropolitan Broadcasting: Views of the Regional Advisory Councils', 17 June 1969; Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 19 June 1969. Regional Advisory Council representatives who attended that meeting expressed grave reservations about the future role of the Regions.

<sup>16</sup> In its *Annual Report, 1969-70*, the Council stated that when 'faced with a general BBC need to economise on the employment of orchestral musicians, the Council felt it could not dispute the BBC's proposal that it could no longer continue to finance the Scottish Symphony Orchestra; fully recognising that this decision would be disastrous for the musical life of Scotland but nevertheless seeing that step as the least injurious to broadcasting in Scotland open to it' (Cmnd. 4520 (1970), *Annual Report and Accounts of the British Broadcasting Corporation, 1969-70*, p. 127).

paid to the past rather than the future, to local radio, and to the effects of the previous set of changes in broadcasting consequent on the introduction of Radios 1, 2, 3, and 4.<sup>17</sup> It was only at its meeting on 18 June, after the Board of Management and the Board of Governors had already taken all the key decisions, that an item called 'The Future Shape of Radio and Non-Metropolitan Broadcasting', mentioned in April, headed the Council's agenda.

The meeting began with Hill emphasizing that before the BBC's proposals for change had been drawn up—and they still had not been published—it had been decided as a matter of policy that the BBC should not derive any part of its income directly or indirectly from advertising. Mansell followed with an impressive presentation, backed by Wheldon, who chose deliberately to enter the lions' den by denying that there was any such thing as a Regional audience. There were only two kinds of audience: national and local. Perhaps surprisingly, the afternoon session began not with the Regional question but with finance, although the two issues were linked when Dr E. J. Richards, Chairman of the Midlands Advisory Council, claimed that people in the Regions felt that matters of principle were being sacrificed for economy's sake.

Both he and Richard Hoggart, who had joined the Council in 1964, urged that the only real answer to the BBC's financial problems would be linking the licence fee to the cost of living. There was, of course, no evidence that the Government was prepared to do this. Indeed, Peggy Jay pointed out that the under-funding of public corporations was one of the country's major problems. Hill thought what she said 'helpful and sensible', adding that he suspected she disliked him.<sup>18</sup> Finance was tricky, and discussion, this time unsurprisingly, quickly switched to licence evasion—an easy way out—and a motion was carried by an overwhelming majority proposing that no radio or television set should be sold without a licence being produced.

The discussion of the overall plan began with praise for the BBC's proposal from Margaret Miles and others, but the critics soon declared themselves. Mrs Jay said she was horrified by the switch of the Music Programme to VHF, while Lord Harewood, newly appointed Chairman of the BBC's Central Music Advisory Committee, remarked more generally that he was not convinced that the new

<sup>17</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 15 Jan., 23 April 1969.

<sup>18</sup> Hill, *Diary*, 18 June 1969.

proposals represented a move away from the 'brow-level concept of broadcasting'. Radio 3 might prove to be 'a ghetto for music'. When it came to discussion of particular orchestras, members of the Council favoured their own—the Welsh and the Scottish Orchestras, which were to be disposed of (or shared), and the BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra which was to be preserved.

The Regional Councils were not represented on the General Advisory Council except through the presence of their Chairmen, and this made for a muted rather than a full discussion, although there had been a separate meeting of the Regional Councils (except Scotland and Wales) on 12 June, and the Scottish and Welsh Broadcasting Councils had already met on their own. Several members continued to complain about the threat to the Regions,<sup>19</sup> but the worst was avoided on 18 June, and there was no vituperation.

Curran's interventions, Hill felt, were more wordy and less effective than Mansell's cogent opening remarks. Yet Hill noted too that the General Advisory Council itself needed to be subjected to the processes of change. When John Shields, Chairman of the General Advisory Council, reported on the meeting to a special meeting of the Governors on 19 June, at which local representatives were also present, he reported that the proposed network reorganization had met with the general approval of the Council, but that there had been reservations in respect to the Regions, and fears had been expressed of a diminution in Regional influence.

Shields was right about the reservations—and the reactions of many of the people present at the Regional Councils meeting on 12 June, Hill thought, was to feel 'stunned'<sup>20</sup>—but when soon afterwards papers were received from the Regional Advisory Councils, there was more approval of the network proposals than outright opposition. Dr Richards, for example, congratulated the BBC both on the network proposals and on the intention to use the medium wave as well as VHF for local radio, while Lady Baird, as National Governor for Scotland, said that the only question of real concern north of the Border had been the loss of the Scottish Symphony Orchestra. Professor Glanmor Williams, National Governor for

<sup>19</sup> Professor Roy Shaw, Chairman of Radio Stoke, said that the quality of local programmes had not yet equalled the quality of the best national and Regional programmes. Hoggart queried the end of the Regional opt-outs. Dr Marita Harper, Chairman of the South-West Advisory Council, said that a forty-station local radio plan was an attempt to apply on a larger scale a concept which worked on a small scale.

<sup>20</sup> Hill, Diary, 12 June 1969.



Wales, went so far as to say that, having read Press speculations, his Council was agreeably surprised at the mildness of the proposals.

The views of the Central Music Advisory Committee were received last by the Governors, after the Committee had held a meeting on 26 June. Again Mansell made his big initial presentation, backed on this occasion by Gillard. He emphasized that, even after the changes, the BBC would be retaining 279 musicians in full-time employment, and that nearly half the total amount of serious music broadcast would still be originated by the BBC. The reaction was mixed. Despite what he had written years before, Sir Michael Tippett liked the idea of getting rid of the Third Programme image, and said that he believed, as others did, that the future lay with VHF.<sup>21</sup> He welcomed the plan whole-heartedly. Thea Musgrave, diametrically opposed, wanted the Committee to express general dismay. The band leader Sidney Torch, representing a very different kind of music from either of them, asked whether the BBC had considered advertising, to which Gillard replied that the BBC had reaffirmed its belief that its family of networks was indivisible. Another member of the Committee asked, doubtless trying to be helpful, whether the BBC might not emulate Gloucester Cathedral and organize a 'Friends of BBC Music'.

To the annoyance of Tippett, the threatened orchestras were powerfully defended by Regional spokesmen, particularly the Scottish Symphony Orchestra, which was eloquently praised by John Noble. Harewood's own conclusion was plain, and it carried weight inside the Committee and inside the BBC. 'The facts as presented by Mr. Mansell seemed to him conclusive, and it was very hard to argue against them. It certainly looked as though they would have a serious effect on the musical profession. The Committee could only recommend to the Board some degree of shift of emphasis.'<sup>22</sup>

It caused problems for the BBC, however, that the discussions of the Central Music Advisory Committee, which took place 'under a seal of confidence', were leaked to the Press.<sup>23</sup> There were to be many such leaks as the public controversy about *Broadcasting in the Seventies* went through different phases. Indeed, there had been a discussion of leaks in the General Advisory Council in April 1969, before the document

<sup>21</sup> Tippett had been uneasy about aspects of the Music Programme, including the broadcasting out of time sequence of all the works of a particular composer (\*Central Music Advisory Committee, *Minutes*, 16 June 1966). He made the interesting observation that while afternoon audiences to it might tend to equate it with the Third Programme, in the morning they might think of it as the Home Service.

<sup>22</sup> \*Central Music Advisory Committee, *Minutes*, 26 June 1969.

<sup>23</sup> \*Ibid., 19 Nov. 1969.

appeared, when Shields told the members that it was essential that the BBC should be able to 'rely on their discretion' if 'for its part, it was to be entirely frank in sharing information with the Council'.<sup>24</sup>

#### 4. The Document

In its draft form *Broadcasting in the Seventies* was called *Broadcasting for the Seventies*, and the first printer's proof was presented to the Board of Governors on 3 July, when minor amendments were suggested. The matter which then seemed of greatest concern to the Governors was not the cuts in music but the likely public reaction to the possible removal of Radio 3's medium-wave frequency. One Governor, Lady Baird, believed firmly that the BBC should stick to its decision: it would be 'retrograde', she argued, 'to lose the opportunity of transferring a service exclusively to VHF'.<sup>1</sup>

After the Governors' meeting the Board of Management agreed on a statement for the staff,<sup>2</sup> and the BBC's Legal Adviser, Edgar Robbins, arranged for the distribution of a statement to the trade unions. A number of MPs were to be specially briefed,<sup>3</sup> and plans were completed for statements to be made by the Director-General to senior staff in the Concert Hall in Broadcasting House on 10 July and by the Chairman to a Press Conference the same day. Meanwhile, Tom Morgan, Controller, Information Services, wrote to all Regional Controllers advising them of arrangements for distribution.<sup>4</sup>

As a document, *Broadcasting in the Seventies* reads very differently from the Marriott Working Group Report or the Final Presentation of the Policy Study Group. Yet it was not simply a list of recommendations. It talked of a radio 'pattern' which would be 'more logical, more attractive, and solvent', and finance came in only towards the end.<sup>5</sup> 'The fulfilment of these plans', it stated, 'will depend on

<sup>24</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 23 April 1969.

<sup>1</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 3 July 1969.

<sup>2</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 7 July 1969.

<sup>3</sup> \*Anthony Whitby, BBC Secretary, to Kenneth Lamb, Director, Public Affairs, 'Broadcasting Policy Debate: Briefing of MPs', 11 July 1969 (R78/576/1).

<sup>4</sup> \*Morgan to Regional Controllers, 'Arrangements for Distribution of "Broadcasting in the Seventies"', 2 July 1969 (R78/576/1).

<sup>5</sup> The *Scotsman*, 11 July 1969, noted the order: 'Being a high-minded institution the BBC does not like to admit that its new plans for radio are chiefly designed to save money. Accordingly the cuts are presented in the context of a homily . . . as if they were incidental to a bold scheme for better programmes at less expense.'

solving the critical financial problems'—internal economy for radio, additional income for local radio. 'Internal economy' comprised 'the dispersal of the three existing English Regions, the disbandment of several BBC orchestras, a reduction in the use of outside musicians, some reduction in other radio staff'. The extension of local radio, quite apart from requiring additional income, meant the possible loss for Radio 3 of the medium wave and for Radio 4 a part of VHF.

The future year that was chosen for reference in the document was the last year covered in this volume, 1974. In 1969 BBC radio was 'just in credit', but by 1974, it was claimed, it would be running a deficit of £4½ million at current levels of expenditure, and would have an accumulated deficit of nearly £12 million—and that assuming that no further local radio was developed. The idea of shifting funds from television to radio was illusory: 'Our forward projections show that television, too, will be hard pressed.' There would, of course, be further economies. 'We are determined that as much of our resources as possible shall go into the "teeth" of the operation (producing programmes) and as little as possible into the administrative "tail".'

Once again, in this published statement to the public and to the staff, advertising was deliberately and explicitly excluded as a source of revenue. For the BBC to accept advertising, it was reiterated, would be decisively to change the pattern. Moreover, 'the breach, once made, would be steadily widened. We feel strongly that so crucial a change should not be made purely as spasm reaction to an immediate problem.'

The substantive sections of *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, which followed closely the proposals of the Policy Study Group, began with a section called 'the problems'. Radio now had 'to live with the other mass media, above all with television'. 'The millions who once listened of an evening to *In Town Tonight* and *ITMA* now watch television.' Radio's peak, as the surveys had made clear, had been moved from the evening to breakfast time and lunch-time. Listeners now thought of radio 'less as a medium for family entertainment, more as a continuous supplier of music and information'. There was a demand too for a 'system' of radio broadcasting that would enable localized feeling to express itself and to provide focal points for community interest.

'Network radio', 'local radio', and 'the Regions' were then discussed in separate sections. 'Traditionally' broadcasting had been 'mixed'. Now it should be 'specialized'. Radio 1 should be clearly—and

clearly—separated from Radio 2: ‘to their respective fans, Emperor Rosko [still a ‘hit’] and Eric Robinson [then known to millions<sup>6</sup>] barely inhabit the same planet, let alone the same air waves.’ To make Radio 1 what its listeners wanted, however, would demand more needletime. ‘Discs are the life blood of any pop network and we will need to negotiate an agreement to use more of them.’

Anticipating opposition in relation to the new Radio 3, *Broadcasting in the Seventies* had to make it clear that it was not ‘abandoning programmes for minorities’. ‘What we have needed to consider is whether this factor is best fulfilled within a single enclave. There is a good deal of evidence that some listeners are deterred by the label “The Third”.’ An evening concert of ‘standard classical music’ would always win more listeners on Radio 4 than on the Third. Admitting that costs had to be taken into the reckoning in this case also—and in the knowledge that the Third cost much more per hour than any other network—*Broadcasting in the Seventies* sketched out what it called the ‘realignment’ of Radios 3 and 4 that had been suggested by the Policy Study Group.

It was specifically noted that the new Radio 3 would retain some specialized drama, poetry, and other cultural programmes in the evening, but that documentaries would move to Radio 4, largely a speech network. Radio 4, it added, could not be fully ‘rationalized’ until school broadcasts and eventually Open University programmes had been taken away from it and broadcast on a separate channel. ‘It could be to the joint benefit of the educational world and of the general listener if education programmes could be separated from the national networks [even] more quickly.’ ‘We are, therefore, prepared to make the VHF network now carrying Radio 4 available for education at mutually agreeable times.’ Radio 4 would continue to carry general entertainment programmes for those people who relied solely on radio or who preferred it, but there would be more news.

Never was the trend towards more news and current affairs more directly and more firmly identified than in *Broadcasting in the Seventies*. A network concentrating entirely on news had been discussed and rejected by the Policy Study Group, but the idea had appealed to Trethowan as a journalist, and the document that he wrote stressed that in all programming there would be more news in the future. The BBC would serve the requirements of different audiences, as newspapers did—those who wanted brief news in

<sup>6</sup> See Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 214, 675.

capsules and those who wanted longer bulletins, followed by programmes amplifying the news and presenting comment. 'The demand for news in brief will be supplied on Radios 1 and 2', which would carry hourly summaries, and news flashes would also be introduced. 'The demand for more detailed news and current affairs' would be supplied on Radio 4. There would now be four 'main news and magazine periods—breakfast time, lunch time, early evening and late evening'.

Local radio was approached with the same degree of 'passion' that *Broadcasting in the Seventies* attributed in advance to the beleaguered defenders of the Third Programme. 'No human organisation should claim infallible prescience, but we may fairly argue that the BBC was championing local radio before some of its present advocates found their voices.'<sup>7</sup> The new aspiration was to develop it as 'a major element in the BBC's services', 'a vital part', making no claim to monopoly in this field and being prepared to face commercial competition. 'There is a demand for local radio. We want to satisfy it over the country as a whole.' As that happened, 'the present regional and area radio programmes would be progressively superseded'. 'At present listeners to regional radio hear about five hours a week of regional programmes, often dealing with matters remote from their own locality. With local radio, nearly 90 per cent of the population of England would get at least five hours a day of radio programmes dealing with their own localities.'

*Broadcasting in the Seventies* conceded—and it was almost the only concession made in the document—that its proposals relating to the Regions had created anxieties in the Regional Advisory Councils. As a result, it emphasized that at each of the proposed major programme production centres in Birmingham, Bristol, and Manchester there should be a senior executive appointed to take charge of the facilities, and that he should be given responsibility for 'nourishing creative talent on the spot'. There should also be a senior controller in London—with direct access to the Director-General—whose task it would be 'to supervise the local output from the eight regions and to represent the new regions and local radio stations to central management'.<sup>8</sup>

At noon on 10 July 1969 Curran addressed a representative meeting of BBC staff before the Press Conference at which Hill and his

<sup>7</sup> See above, p. 627.    <sup>8</sup> See above, p. 668.

colleagues presented *Broadcasting in the Seventies*. Curran's speech was transmitted internally to other sections of the BBC, including Regions and Local Radio Stations, the last of which figured prominently in his picture. If the Government approved forty BBC local radio stations, he claimed, there would in effect be a new Radio 5. In reply to questions—and there seem to have been none on the Regions—Gillard stressed that the Government would have to provide the money for local radio. He also reiterated that it would be a great advantage for each network to have its own character and individuality. Channels would be identified by 'the material broadcast rather than by the level of brow'. His last answer was that some curtailment of staff posts would be inevitable.<sup>9</sup>

In opening the Press Conference at 3.30 p.m. on 10 July, Hill, well briefed and with Curran at his side, described the genesis of the document, starting with local radio, which, he emphasized, was not a new story. He also mentioned the discussions that had taken place before the document was published, and indicated that the document also dealt with television. This time he did not leave out finance. 'Had we made or proposed no changes of any kind,' he declared, 'it would still have been necessary for us within the existing licence fee, to look at the question of costs.'<sup>10</sup> The journalists present had been given in addition to a copy of *Broadcasting in the Seventies* a list of 'ten facts' relating to BBC funding and a paper setting out details of the annual licence fee in other European countries. Asked when the BBC had last applied for an increase in the licence fee for radio, Hill turned to Curran, who replied '1965'.

Hill's opening remarks concluded with the sensible observation that some of the basic decisions involved in the document were for the Government to decide, and not for the BBC. They were diverse decisions that included finance for local radio, responsibility for educational broadcasting, the possible delegation to the Arts Council of patronage of music, and the allocation of frequencies.

The first questioner, Martin Jackson of the *Daily Express*, asked about the cuts in orchestras and the attitudes of the trade unions, and Curran, called upon by Hill to answer, replied that discussions were still proceeding with the Musicians' Union. 'We are still talk-

<sup>9</sup> *Ariel*, July 1969.

<sup>10</sup> His opening remarks and subsequent replies to some of the questions were summarized in *BBC Record*, 66 (July 1969).



ing.<sup>11</sup> Hill also called upon Curran to deal with all the difficult questions relating to orchestras, while Gillard dealt with the many questions, some of them hostile, about local radio. It was Gillard, too, who stated that of every hundred listeners, forty-six 'went for' Radio 1, thirty-four for Radio 2, two for Radio 3, and eighteen for Radio 4. Hill, however, fielded questions about 'standard classical music', a term he was asked to define. The word 'standard', he replied, had been left in by mistake. Glock answered a question on the Training Orchestra which, he said, would be kept in existence until 1971.<sup>12</sup> There were several related questions on 'patronage' and how much the BBC would expect to pay as a proportion if the Arts Council or other bodies were drawn in.

Other questions concerned the role of the Regions, advertising,<sup>13</sup> VHF,<sup>14</sup> needletime, and the Welsh language. Surprisingly, there were few questions about the transfer of large parts of the spoken word from Radio 3 to Radio 4, although Curran stated that some drama—for example, European drama in translation—would continue to be broadcast on Radio 3. What would disappear would be 'that element which can rather rudely be described as dons talking to dons', which had been 'a diminishing element anyway'. 'In the light of experience', such talk could be more easily communicated 'through print than through the ear'.

Two questions addressed to Hill concerned procedure rather than content. Tom Marker of the *Daily Sketch* asked near the beginning how much 'room for manoeuvre' the BBC was leaving itself in further discussions. Could the plan be modified 'pretty drastically', or would it be a matter of 'very, very small face-saving gestures'? Hill de-

<sup>11</sup> \*Verbatim Record of Press Conference, 10 July 1969 (R78/576/2). Curran noted that Ratcliffe had already stated that afternoon that the effect of the BBC's proposals would be 300 musicians 'thrown on the scrapheap'. Neither he nor Ratcliffe, he added, wished to see that happen. Later in the conference he gave the figure of redundancies as 292 at the most.

<sup>12</sup> In a memo to Trethowan, Glock noted the pledge to keep it in existence until Sept. 1971, and proposed that the eleven major orchestras belonging to the Orchestral Employers' Association should each give two scholarships a year to talented young musicians wishing to join the Training Orchestra. After 1971 the BBC should not be 'left alone to provide what is in purpose and in essence a national enterprise' (\*Glock to Trethowan, 'BBC Training Orchestra', 20 Feb. 1970 (R78/574)).

<sup>13</sup> Milton Shulman of the *Evening Standard* directly related radio advertising to the television policy of BBC-1, which he believed was only 'marginally better' than 'commercial television' in terms of 'serious viewing'. If radio was only marginally better than commercial radio would be, could BBC advertising be ruled out?

<sup>14</sup> See below, pp. 839–43.

clared that this was a difficult question to answer, and he did not try to do so.

Someone, unidentified, asked near the end of the Press Conference whether in the light of what had happened so far the BBC would have changed its method of 'organizing plans of this nature', and the question, like most of the questions put, was answered robustly. The BBC, the questioner was told, had quite deliberately decided to publish *Broadcasting in the Seventies* only after the advisory bodies mentioned in it had been consulted first:

We deliberately took the risk of the kind we've had [speculation about likely recommendations inside and outside the BBC] in order fully to consult our advisory bodies and take their views into account before we issued proposals for public discussion. This has resulted, as [Milton] Shulman said, in public criticism. We still think this was the right course. It has resulted in a number of embarrassments, letters, even motions, dealing with proposals that were never in mind.

Hill did not refer to staff criticisms from within the BBC itself, but these were to continue to be made after Mansell and Curran had addressed private meetings of staff in the Regions, including those at Manchester on 17 October, at Bristol on 21 October, and at Birmingham on 14 November.<sup>15</sup> Grahame Miller, Head of Programmes, North Region, warned Curran before he went to Manchester that it would be a difficult meeting, since there was 'a widespread lack of trust in Board of Management, a good deal of anger and resentment, and a sense of betrayal'.<sup>16</sup> He added that there had been smouldering discontent in Manchester since the 1940s. At Bristol, too, 150 members of staff passed a resolution deploring *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, and John Elliot, Head of Programmes, South and West, told Curran even after he had visited Bristol that he shared some of their views as set out in a manifesto which regretted the under-financing of 'area television' and deplored the 'ending of Regional radio in favour of under-financed local radio'.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Papers*, 'Broadcasting in the Seventies: The Public Discussion and its Stimulation', 13 Jan. 1970; Charles Curran's office diary.

<sup>16</sup> \*Miller to Curran, 15 Oct. 1969 (R78/579/1). In a letter of 10 Sept. Miller had asked Curran to visit the Region, and had suggested 23 Oct. as a date. There was a Hallé Orchestra concert. Curran went there earlier.

<sup>17</sup> \*Telephone message from Michael Kinchin Smith, Controller, Staff Administration, to Curran, 17 Oct. 1969; Elliot to Curran, 17 Nov. 1969 (R78/579/1). Curran tried to allay Elliot's fears in a letter of 18 Nov. On 10 Dec. Elliot, now acting Controller, wrote to Curran through Beech, reporting a growing acceptance of the plans by the staff who, once 'a crack unit', now had a 'beaten look'. The Bristol staff group decided to stand down on 8 Jan. 1970, and channel protest through the unions. This was reported to the

In a supplementary question at the Press Conference of 10 July, a journalist from the *Manchester Evening News*, who had already asked detailed questions about the effects of the new Regional policies on Manchester, went on to quote the allegation of the Liberal MP for Cheadle, Dr Michael (later Lord) Winstanley, that at a meeting of the General Advisory Council, to which he belonged, he had been expected to judge on matters that he could not 'reconcile with his position as an MP' and had walked out. Hill was equally firm in his reply. Winstanley was a member of the Council, and the BBC had been right to seek its views in private. If in so doing Winstanley had considered that participation by him in its discussions was 'inconsistent with his position as an MP' the consequences had been for him to decide.

Before Mansell presented *Broadcasting in the Seventies* to the London staff of the BBC on 24 July and to a very different audience, the General Council of the TUC, on 22 July, the Board of Management had been able to study the Press reactions to the Press Conference of 10 July.<sup>18</sup> As always, they were mixed. 'Wrong Priorities' was the headline of the first *Times* leader. 'The trouble with the BBC's plans is . . . the premise on which it is based. Faced with the Tory proposals for a network of commercial local radio stations and with the probability of a Tory government within a couple of years they have concluded that it is necessary to get in first.'<sup>19</sup> *The Times's* own premise was itself disputable, however, for quite different arguments had influenced the decision to push ahead with local radio. Moreover, many of the other points in *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, including the 'axing' of orchestras, did not follow from that decision, as the leader claimed, but from the earlier refusal of the Government to increase the licence fee.

One of the first leaders to appear in the provinces, that in the *Birmingham Evening Mail*, made only one point, 'Who pays?', and the *Sunday Telegraph* chose that point also as the heading of its main article, 'BBC plan ducks vital issues of cost'.<sup>20</sup> 'BBC need money, not

Board of Management on 12 Jan. 1970. Curran had received an anonymous letter, dated 22 Oct. 1969, expressing appreciation for his visit to Bristol and for his 'straight talking': 'We were grateful for your swift response to our protest which was really a cry for help . . . we are sick of strife and strikes; and want, more than anything else, to get back once more to our proper business, which is making programmes' (R78/579/1).

<sup>18</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 14 July 1969.

<sup>19</sup> *The Times*, 11 July 1969.

<sup>20</sup> *Birmingham Evening Mail*, 10 July 1969; *Sunday Telegraph*, 13 July 1969.



15. 'The next programme will follow when a few more people have paid their licence fee', Cooper in *Tribune*, 25 July 1969.

an axe', the *Sun* headed its own comment, which ended with the words: 'whatever extra money is then needed should be raised by increasing the radio licence fee.' 'The 25s. radio licence is a great bargain', it added. 'It deserves a roll of drums from every BBC orchestra while there is still time.'<sup>21</sup> 'No important principles have been abandoned by the BBC in its proposals for a reorganisation of sound radio', the *Guardian* claimed. 'Dangers exist that principles may be eroded by the practitioners and that the Government may fail to

contribute the money now asked of it towards the cost of educational broadcasting.'<sup>22</sup>

The Government had not been mentioned once in *The Times* leader, which, none the less, made a number of important critical points which were soon to be made elsewhere. Confining Radio 3 to VHF would deprive many people of 'serious music' altogether. Satisfying existing tastes by providing specialized channels might have a public appeal, but it was not 'well designed to broaden a listener's horizons'. It used to be 'the special glory of British broadcasting' that it paid full attention to this latter responsibility. 'It would be sad to think that is no longer the case.'<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> The *Sun*, 11 July 1969. The left-wing *Tribune* took the same line (18 July 1969): 'Whatever the Government decides it must reconcile itself to the fact that it is impossible to run such an important "public service" on the cheap.'

<sup>22</sup> *Guardian*, 11 July 1969. There was an echo of Manchester in one of its last comments: 'There is no reason to fear a loss of productive activity in the recast regions. But unless the new Controller responsible for them has exceptional persuasive powers he may find that all the new ideas which are accepted are metropolitan ones.'

<sup>23</sup> *The Times*, 11 July 1969. The *Bristol Evening Post* headed its first leader of 11 July 1969 quite differently, 'Blow to Music'. It also asked why there was to be a 'colossal outlay on local radio'. 'Is anybody crying out for it? There may be a market, but that is not the same thing as a need.' The *Observer* leader on 13 July, which stated that the

The *Guardian* believed, like the BBC, that what was being proposed raised the large question of 'the future of artistic patronage'. It was a question for Jennie Lee and the Arts Council to consider. The *Sunday Times* agreed too. Although it began its leader by suggesting that *Broadcasting in the Seventies* showed, like a camel, all the signs of having been designed by a committee, it affirmed that the BBC was right to raise the question of musical patronage. 'There should be other sponsors', provided that the BBC did not abandon its responsibilities 'before alternatives were found'.<sup>24</sup>

## 5. Compromises, Conflicts, and Protests

Some alternatives, mainly compromises, were found during the summer and autumn of 1969, following two Parliamentary delegations, which were received by Hill, and an adjournment debate which took place in the House of Commons on 22 July.<sup>1</sup> Introduced by Paul Bryan, who claimed that British broadcasting had reached 'a critical moment', the debate was wound up by John Stonehouse, the new Postmaster-General, who accepted without prompting that it was not 'the end of the road'.<sup>2</sup> The debate was wide-ranging. As W. F. Deedes put it, it was not merely about the BBC's Music Programme or local sound radio or 'the BBC's recent paper on its own future', but about 'the future of the BBC itself'.

There was general agreement among those taking part in the debate, as Stonehouse himself acknowledged, that the BBC's 'patronage role' was important and should be maintained, and complete disagreement—on straight political grounds—about BBC plans for local radio. There was disagreement too about the effects of introduction proposals came as 'something of a relief, even an anti-climax', after all 'the public fears and forebodings', was headed 'BBC: Not just a question of money'. It also observed that, even if there had been no financial pressure, there was a case for disbanding some orchestras, although whether the BBC 'would ever have found the courage to brave the unions' wrath is another matter'.

<sup>24</sup> *Sunday Times*, 13 July 1969, 'Doctoring Radio'.

<sup>1</sup> Hill had received his first request to receive a Parliamentary delegation on 4 July, before *Broadcasting in the Seventies* was published (Hill, *Behind the Screen*, p. 132). One delegation that he received consisted of the Labour MP Terence (later Lord) Boston and the Conservative MP Dudley (later Sir Dudley) Smith: they wished to retain some of the threatened musical units and to keep Radio 3 on medium wave. Before the debate Hill and Greene attended the House of Commons to speak to MPs ('Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 17 July 1969).

<sup>2</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 787, cols. 1524–1624, 22 July 1969.

ing a commercial element into radio. For an MP with Radio Luxembourg interests, Sir John Rodgers, a director of J. Walter Thompson from 1931 to 1970 and President of the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising from 1967 to 1969, there was no case against commercial radio which could not be made equally strongly against commercial television.<sup>3</sup> For Stonehouse, however, broadcasting was a medium that was 'owned by the whole community', and it would be wrong for commercial interests to 'cream off' the profitable sections of it. Commercialism in radio would 'lower standards', and 'militate against local participation'.<sup>4</sup>

On finance the BBC found many supporters, including Deedes, who argued that the blame for the BBC's 'financial mess' lay largely with successive Governments who had 'resisted to the last ditch—or, rather, to the BBC's last ditch—the odious task of raising the licence fee'. There were other MPs, including Ian Gilmour, who in pressing for commercial radio implied, against the evidence of *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, that at the core of the BBC's financial problems was a relentless ambition to embark upon local radio.

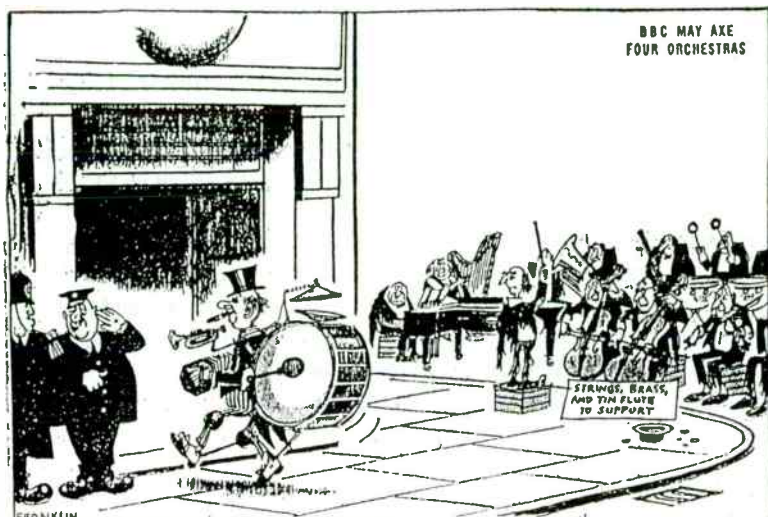
Winstanley, who had walked out of the meeting of the General Advisory Council, stayed in the House this time to attack *Broadcasting in the Seventies* as a 'disappointing document', a quite inadequate adjective for him to have chosen in the light of his large-scale attack on it. Setting out to defend Regional as against local broadcasting, he was quite sure that he knew best. So, too, was George (later Lord) Younger, who, in supporting the claims of the Scottish Symphony Orchestra, was bold enough to claim that 'we are the people who must give the BBC its brief. This House must decide what it wants the BBC to do.'

It was not through public debate in the House of Commons but through private discussions centred on the Post Office that the critical Governmental decisions of 1969 were to be taken, and they were to involve trade unions as well as politicians. In the House Stonehouse offered no promise of an increase in the BBC's licence fee, although Stratton Mills, Secretary of the Conservative Broadcasting Committee from 1963 to 1970, thought he discerned a glint in Stonehouse's eye when the subject was mentioned. He was right, for Stonehouse had already met Hill and Curran to discuss the licence

<sup>3</sup> One Conservative MP, Eldon (later Sir Eldon) Griffiths, asked Terence Boston why, since he was opposed to commercial broadcasting, he was giving a commercial for the BBC?

<sup>4</sup> For Stonehouse 'the BBC is the guardian of our cultural inheritance and it is one of the *raison d'être* for the public service institution that it is'.





16. 'He IS the new BBC Orchestra!', Franklin, in *Daily Mirror*, 2 June 1969.

level four days earlier.<sup>5</sup> Stonehouse did concede, however, at the end of the Parliamentary debate, that the logic of the debate pointed in the direction of an increase, and Hill himself wrote in his diary after the debate that the only question now was 'how much'.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, the way was left open for further discussions about musical patronage.

The first new move from the trade unions had come on 16 July, when Tony Hearn, Secretary of the ABS and of the Federation of Broadcasting Unions, had written to Stonehouse and to Hill rejecting *Broadcasting in the Seventies* and threatening possible industrial action. Hearn had argued on behalf of the Federation, a loosely framed body which included the Musicians' Union, Equity, the ACTT, the National Union of Journalists, NATKE, and the Writers' Guild, that it

<sup>5</sup> Hill, *Diary*, 18 July. According to Hill, Stonehouse had suggested a licence fee of £6 10s. 'We asked about the arithmetic. He tried to brush it aside.' Fred (later Lord) Peart, Lord President of the Council, told Curran on 19 July that a Government decision on the licence fee was not imminent and that Stonehouse had 'not [sic] business to make an offer' (ibid, 19 July). Meanwhile, Stonehouse was complaining about the BBC talking to other Ministers besides himself, and he and the BBC were exchanging calculations (entry for 31 July). On 29 July Stonehouse had rung Hill proposing that the salaries of the Chairmen of the BBC and the ITA be raised from £5,000 to £6,000.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 22 July 1969.

was financial necessity alone which had led the BBC to propose the changes set out in the document, and had gone on to demand a full-scale public inquiry.<sup>7</sup> He had also asked in vain for Hill to receive a deputation from the Federation.<sup>8</sup> Stonehouse's reply to Hearn had been that he would take the Federation's views into account, but that a public inquiry would take too long—'four years or more'—and that the BBC could not wait if it wished to clear up its financial position.<sup>9</sup>

Any hope of immediate clarification by the Government seemed to have been dashed when at the end of July, in another blow to the BBC, Stonehouse rang Hill to tell him that the Government had turned down the proposals he had made for an increase in the licence fee (and for an increase in broadcasting hours), even though he had been backed by the Cabinet's Broadcasting Committee. There had been further talk also of the BBC taking advertising. 'Back to Square 1', Hill wrote after a Governors' meeting at the end of July. It was a gloomy meeting at which the Governors concluded: 'No money, no local radio . . . Experiment would soon cease.' Orchestras would have to go.<sup>10</sup>

There are no entries in Hill's diary between then and the Governors' meeting on 25 September, but on 4 August he and Curran saw Wilson and Stonehouse at 10 Downing Street—at Wilson's request—and on 11 August Curran saw Stonehouse alone. Two days later, Stonehouse wrote to Hill setting out the terms of a deal which he publicly announced the following day.<sup>11</sup> The combined radio and television licence fee was to be increased to £6 10s.—not immediately, however, but from April 1971; separate radio licences would be abolished; the BBC could go ahead with another twelve local radio

<sup>7</sup> \*Hearn to Hill, 16 July 1969 (R78/548/1). At the ABS Annual Conference at Eastbourne on 10–11 May 1969 a policy statement was approved that no decision should be taken on the local radio experiment or on the BBC Policy Study Group's views 'without widespread public debate' (*ABS Bulletin*, June–July 1969). In an article in the same number by Tom Rhys, the General Secretary, 'Shotgun Consultation', the financial motivation of the BBC's proposals was singled out. 'What Charles Curran got from Hugh Greene in radio was an inheritance approaching bankruptcy.'

<sup>8</sup> Hill does not refer to this in his diary. He replied to Hearn on 24 July, refusing to meet the Federation as a body and denying charges that there had been inadequate consultation. On 26 Aug. 1969 Sir Tom O'Brien of NATKE informed Arkell that the TUC General Council did not support the Federation of Broadcasting Union's bid to see the BBC (\*Record of Message from Sir Tom O'Brien's Secretary, 26 Aug. 1969 (R78/549/1)).

<sup>9</sup> \*Stonehouse to Hearn, 13 Aug. 1969 (R78/548/1). Stonehouse does not discuss any of these matters in his uninformative book *Death of an Idealist* (1975).

<sup>10</sup> Hill, Diary, 31 July: \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 31 July 1969. Hill found Greene, now a Governor, 'very helpful' at this meeting, 'saying little but helping greatly'.

<sup>11</sup> \*Stonehouse to Hill, 13 Aug. 1969 (R78/3).

stations and with twenty more over the next seven years, making, as had been hoped, forty in all; and, meanwhile, the BBC would revise its proposals in relation to cuts in orchestras, aiming instead 'to maintain the employment of musicians at about the current scale, subject to the satisfactory negotiation with the Musicians' Union about a number of important points, including the use of recorded material'. Radio 3 would remain on the medium waveband and not be moved to VHF.<sup>12</sup>

The Governors, whom Hill consulted by post, accepted this package, knowing that it would entail a deficit of the order of £4 million by 1974.<sup>13</sup> The Board of Management, however, was uneasy, particularly about the implications of the delay in the licence fee increase until April 1971 and about Stonehouse's statement that the employment of musicians should be kept 'broadly at the present limit'.<sup>14</sup> It knew that negotiations with the Musicians' Union, always difficult, had not yet 'gone into detail'.<sup>15</sup> It knew also that even some senior members of staff were uneasy about what was going to happen. Yet, as Gillard told Mansell, whom he congratulated on his efforts, 'the decisions announced on 14 August may not have been the best ones possible from our point of view, but they were a hell of a sight better than anything we dared to hope for at this time last year'.<sup>16</sup>

At the first of their September meetings the Governors themselves returned to music, noting that, at Curran's instigation, Stonehouse had acknowledged that 'the continuance of patronage would be dependent on further discussions with the Musicians' Union and other bodies'. They noted, too, however, if only as a consolation, that in Stonehouse's references to music 'the principle had been acknowledged that if the BBC was to exercise . . . patronage then it should

<sup>12</sup> See above, p. 760. *The Economist*, 16 Aug. 1969, headed its article on the subject 'Stonehouse Triumphant'. On music it said that the BBC had 'knuckled under'. It disapproved of the Radio 3 decision. The Policy Study Group produced a paper 'Broadcasting in the Seventies: Issues Arising from the Postmaster General's Statement', 24 Sept. 1969 (R78/549/1).

<sup>13</sup> Hill, *Behind the Screen*, p. 136. 'I suspect', Hill told the Governors, 'that the Prime Minister was operating within the framework of a known dislike on the part of a number of his colleagues on raising the licence fee before the election.' His letter to the Governors was dated 6 Aug. 1969. The deficit estimate was wrong.

<sup>14</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 18 Aug. 1969. The questions were considered again on 8 and 29 Sept. and by the Board of Governors at its meeting on 11 Sept. Trethowan wrote a paper for the Board, 'Implications of the Postmaster-General's Statement', 21 Aug. 1969.

<sup>15</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 8 Sept. 1969.

<sup>16</sup> \*Gillard to Mansell, 21 Aug. 1969 (R92 Box 14: Radio Reorganisation: Reduction of Music: MU).

be reflected in the level of the licence fee'. What that meant was never clearly to be resolved, although later in the year Professor Alan Peacock, who in 1985 and 1986 was to chair a committee on 'Financing the BBC', raised many of the relevant issues in an Arts Council Inquiry on *Orchestral Resources*, completed in 1970.<sup>17</sup>

At Tom Jackson's request, Curran described the state of negotiations with the Musicians' Union, adding that the negotiations would not be likely to reach the crucial question of the level of employment until late November. Jackson said that he had reason to believe that on needletime the Union would be intransigent.<sup>18</sup> Earlier that year, G. M. Turnell, Head of Programme Contracts, had written that it was 'naive to assume that at one blow we can cut orchestral staff by 40%, increase needle-time by 150 hours which would reduce the money spent on musicians by about a million pounds a year, and get rid of all the restrictions on recording'.<sup>19</sup>

In fact, there were to be no BBC savings on music, a fact that Stonehouse himself recognized by the end of 1969. 'As you say,' he wrote to Hill, 'the loss of the hoped for £5 million saving is the only realistic assumption.'<sup>20</sup> The *fait accompli* was recognized explicitly three years later in November 1972, long after the Government had changed. Curran told a Governor then that 'the former government . . . had in effect insisted that the BBC should continue to be a considerable patron of the musical profession beyond its broadcasting requirements. The BBC could not really go back on that decision in which it had acquiesced as part of a deal which gave it an extension of local radio and an increase in the licence fee.'<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *A Report on Orchestral Resources in Great Britain* (1970). Ratcliffe, a member of the Inquiry in an individual, not a representative, capacity wrote to Arkell on its work on 17 Oct. 1969 (R78/574).

<sup>18</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 11 Sept. 1969. Hill summarized the BBC's reactions to its financial position, which by then had further deteriorated, in his introduction to the *BBC Handbook*, 1971.

<sup>19</sup> \*Turnell to Robbins, 'Reducing the Cost of Music', 11 Mar. 1969 (R78/574).

<sup>20</sup> \*Stonehouse to Hill, 17 Dec. 1969 (R78/5). By then it was also clear that the BBC was to raise no new income for educational broadcasting by way of a separate grant from the DES. See also below, p. 933.

<sup>21</sup> \*Board of Governors' Finance Committee, *Minutes*, 16 Nov. 1972. The story of the negotiations with the Musicians' Union, which covered many topics and which brought in Mansell as well as Trethowan, had its ups and downs. On 14 Nov. 1969 Ratcliffe had written to J. G. H. Wadsworth, Head of Programme Contracts, expressing disappointment at the progress being made (R92 Box 14: Radio Reorganisation: Reduction of Music: MU). Arkell reported a friendly meeting with Ratcliffe on 21 Nov., and on 8 Jan. 1970 Goodman chaired a meeting to discuss the Welsh Arts Council offer to assist the BBC with the costs of the Welsh Orchestra. Curran approved of working through Goodman, who was 'trusted by both the MU and (if the dispute ever got that far) by the Prime

The discussion at the Governors' meeting on 11 September 1969 showed some important differences of opinion on budgeting. Murray thought that Hill and Curran had negotiated successfully with the Prime Minister and Stonehouse; Bellinger feared the idea of budgeting for a corporate deficit, and objected strongly to the fact that the Board had had no opportunity of fully examining a television budget; Greene thought that there was nothing wrong in the BBC using its discretionary borrowing powers; Fulton argued that the BBC should avoid committing itself to patronage on the existing scale or for an indefinite period.<sup>22</sup>

## 6. Staff Relations

The deal, with its serious financial implications for the future, did not save the BBC from continuing staff troubles in London as well as in the Regions. A protest memorandum was sent to Trethowan on 3 October, four days before Hill saw Stonehouse—at the Postmaster-General's request—on 7 October. By then Stonehouse had been retitled Minister for Posts and Telecommunications (from 1 October). Hill, who, like Curran, was clearly concerned about staff morale, ended his diary note with the words 'I shall watch him'.<sup>1</sup> Hill was determined to press ahead with the implementation of *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, even though he knew that outside the BBC and in some circles inside he was being 'clearly cast for the role of Philistine'.<sup>2</sup> 'Philistinism', a word which Matthew Arnold had introduced

Minister' (\*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 19 Jan. 1970), and Arkell recognized his importance in a memorandum of 26 May 1970 (\*Arkell to Robbins, 'MU: Level of Employment' (R78/1477/1)). After careful preparations had been made, negotiations continued on various topics, including casual rates. Later, the focus turned to the amount of needletime available for local radio, and a breakthrough was eventually achieved in York on 6 Nov. 1970. Ratcliffe accepted by telephone to Wadsworth on 19 Nov. 1970 (\*Wadsworth to M. O. Tinniswood, Director of Personnel, 'Local Radio Needletime', 19 Nov. 1970 (R78/1477/1)). The BBC could have seven hours a week for each station for £50,000, this sum to be expressed as a percentage of local radio expenditure and reviewed every third year.

<sup>22</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 11 Sept. 1969.

<sup>1</sup> Hill, *Diary*, 7 Oct. 1969. The Postmaster-General revived the old idea of regular meetings between the BBC and ITA Chairmen, with Curran and Fraser present.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 Oct. 1969.

into the language of culture, was in vogue in 1969 and 1970, and the BBC as a whole could be accused of it.<sup>3</sup>

In an internal announcement made during the week after the meeting at the Post Office Curran told all members of the BBC's staff that the Governors had decided that development should begin along the general lines proposed in *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, and that 'detailed programme planning on the basis of this decision' was now starting.<sup>4</sup> He himself had come to the conclusion, he explained to the General Advisory Council on 22 October, that 'the damage that was being done to the morale of the staff held greater dangers than the accusations by the ABS of non-consultation'.<sup>5</sup> There would be 'the closest consultation with programme departments', the announcement went on, but meanwhile 'the phasing out of opt-out programmes in the English regions' would start, as would changes in 'area television'. The die was cast. None the less, Curran's firm internal announcement, which received considerable Press attention, did not stifle complaints either by the ABS and the other unions, including the Musicians' Union, or by groups of staff.

The unions, knowing the views of Stonehouse as well as those of Hill and Curran, issued a joint statement on 27 October, signed by Ratcliffe, Gerald Croasdell, Rhys, and Alan Sapper, urging the deferment of any implementation until a public inquiry had reported, and on 20 November London Programme Branch, knowing what Curran had promised, asked for 'proper consultation' before new programme schedules were introduced.<sup>6</sup> 'One of the saddest results of the last few months', the *ABS Bulletin* remarked in December, 'has been the devaluation of the BBC's reputation. It has put forward proposals for the future which seem to many to be a betrayal of its own highest

<sup>3</sup> 'It is easy to bandy about words like "Philistinism", but to do so is to over-simplify. The BBC has not yet (at any rate) openly admitted its adherence to a policy of Philistinism. Indeed, it has not yet declared its allegiance to any policy' ('The Future of Radio', *The Author*, Spring 1970).

<sup>4</sup> \*Curran, Note on all notice-boards, 'Broadcasting Developments', 16 Oct. 1969 (R78/549/1); Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 9 Oct. 1969. The statement had been discussed at the Board of Management meeting on 13 Oct.

<sup>5</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 22 Oct. 1969. Roy Shaw stated at the meeting that 'the morale of many staff was low and that it was not only renegades or rabble rousers who were worried about the future'.

<sup>6</sup> \*Statement issued at a Joint Meeting of MU, Equity, ABS and ACTT, 27 Oct. 1969 (R78/549/1). Curran repeated what he had already said. A new network schedule was being prepared (\*Curran to Ratcliffe, 4 Nov. 1969 (R78/549/1)). At the next Board of Management meeting, a joint union letter to Stonehouse was quoted which expressed the view that the BBC was the 'last body' to be allowed to decide on the future of broadcasting (\**Minutes*, 10 Nov. 1969).



standards. It seems bent on pushing these proposals through by methods which may seem politically expedient but are noticeably lacking in candour.<sup>7</sup>

At this point in the story of *Broadcasting in the Seventies* external and internal criticisms of the BBC's proposals merged, largely through the activities of a new pressure group, the Campaign for Better Broadcasting, which had been launched in September 1969 and to which the *ABS Bulletin* referred. This was after the first wave of public criticism of *Broadcasting in the Seventies* was beginning to subside.<sup>8</sup> One strand in the internal criticism was radical, reflecting the influence of ideological pressure groups, and the language employed was designed to sting, like much of the anti-authoritarian rhetoric of the late 1960s. Yet the language of the Campaign for Better Broadcasting, which drew on conservative more than on radical sources of inspiration, could be just as stirring. Both strands drew on university support.

'*Broadcasting in the 70s is a disastrous policy,*' the Campaign's document *Crisis in Broadcasting* maintained, challenging all forms of authority, 'though you might not realise it from the slim, white pamphlet . . . a masterpiece of devious and subtle generalisation, as elusive of attack as a cloud of feathers', which had claimed to put broadcasting first and money second, but had in fact done the opposite. It was 'a capitulation to accountants' logic'.<sup>9</sup> The Campaign document mentioned no one inside the BBC by name except Gerard (misspelled Gerald) Mansell, Jack de Manio, William Hardcastle, and Monty Modlyn (also misspelled). 'The trend on current performance is for Radio 4 to develop into one continuous programme called *Jack de Manio Today Out of This Week At One with the World and William Hardcastle's Woman's Hour At Home this Afternoon with Monty Modlin.*'

*Crisis in Broadcasting*, signed by John Donat, the architect son of one of Britain's best-known film actors, looked back both to Reith and to Pilkington. *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, it stated, marked 'a total reversal of the Reithian concept of broadcasting': the recommendations in it were just what the Pilkington Committee had warned against. 'The BBC's policy', the Pilkington Report had observed, 'has its dangers. From segregating programmes into classes,

<sup>7</sup> 'Future of Broadcasting', *ABS Bulletin*, Nov.–Dec. 1969.

<sup>8</sup> George Campey, Head of Publicity, first reported on its activities to the Board of Management on 8 Sept. 1969 (\**Minutes*).

<sup>9</sup> *Crisis in Broadcasting*, an undated brochure, bound in orange, prepared by the Campaign for Better Broadcasting.

the next step might be to segregate listeners into classes, to assume that there are large numbers of people who like only one sort of programme and different people who like only another, to think not of overlapping or minority tastes, but to distinguish sharply between “majorities” and “minorities”, to think of present tastes rather than capacities. We believe the BBC has not altogether avoided this danger.<sup>10</sup>

Donat began by quoting Mansell, who in presenting the BBC’s report had explicitly argued with what he called ‘disarming candour’ the very case that the Pilkington Committee had warned against. ‘There are three very, very large groups of listeners,’ Mansell had claimed, ‘and they are quite separate. One is a group that wants news, topicality, entertainment, drama, light entertainment. Another is a group that wants tuneful light music and the third is one that wants pop. In addition to that there is a very much smaller number who want serious music. We submit that our four networks will provide for these four basic tastes.’ That provided the model. For those who launched the Campaign, however, the BBC had been ‘mesmerised by head counting but apparently indifferent to what goes into the heads or how long it stays there’. It had abandoned ‘cultural and intellectual purpose’, and had substituted for it ‘trying to understand and assess “public demand”’.

The experience with the pirates and the events leading up to the creation of the BBC’s pop music channel were not referred to in *Crisis in Broadcasting*, which, for all its critique of Radio 4, dwelt mainly on the fate of the Third Programme. Nor did the writer of *Crisis* pay any attention to the tangled politics of broadcasting in the Greene years. He was prepared, however, to look forwards as well as backward, arguing that the kind of broadcasting being proposed for the seventies was both ‘out of tune’ with ‘what was [then] happening in life’ and inappropriate in relation to the preoccupations of the next decade. ‘In the arts, politics, drama, literature, science, education, architecture and planning the whole new direction (spontaneous, inner direction) is towards inclusiveness, wholeness, cultural synthesis, the breaking down of boundaries and categories.’ The BBC was moving in the opposite direction.

The content of *Crisis in Broadcasting* drew less Press attention—or indeed BBC attention—than a letter which accompanied it, the first of a series of such letters. It was signed by a group of twelve people

<sup>10</sup> Cmnd. 1753 (1962), *Report of the Committee on Broadcasting 1960*, para. 70, p. 25.

of varying degrees of prominence, some of whom, however, had been closely involved with the BBC. These included the musician Sir Adrian Boult, the Reith lecturer G. M. Carstairs, the actor and producer Jonathan Miller, and the musician and journalist George Melly. The other signatories were (in alphabetical order) Professor Max Beloff, James Cameron, Sir Tyrone Guthrie, Dr John (later Sir John) Kendrew, Frank (later Sir Frank) Kermode, Henry Moore, Sir Roland Penrose, and Peter Shephard.

The tone of the letter was less rhetorical than *Crisis in Broadcasting*, although it stated unequivocally that the BBC's policy 'seriously threatens the unique role the BBC has played in the cultural and intellectual life of the country', and would 'prove disastrous to the standards and quality of public service broadcasting'. 'We are aware of a strong current of opinion against the BBC's proposals,' it went on, 'but at the moment it is fragmented and powerless. The issues involved transcend any individual or group interest and we feel that only by organizing all dissent into a unanimous voice will there be any hope of affecting a fundamental change of heart at the BBC which is proceeding with its plans despite the evidence of public dismay.'

The Campaign, which was organized from near Broadcasting House, at 66 Portland Place, the headquarters of the Royal Institute of British Architects, called a meeting of supporters to determine what action should be taken to engineer a change in BBC policy.<sup>11</sup> It also gave *Crisis in Broadcasting* 'the widest possible circulation'. 'Public opinion saved Piccadilly Circus, saved Stansted, saved the portico of the Tate Gallery', Donat exclaimed. 'If "Public discussion" means anything at all, there may just be time to save the BBC.'

At a meeting of the Board of Management early in November 1969 Lamb reported that the Campaign was gathering momentum, and a week later Stonehouse, who was himself under pressure, expressed concern to the BBC about this. While the number of letters of protest received by the BBC about *Broadcasting in the Seventies* was smaller than had been expected, the new reactions, including the reactions of trade-unionists, were stronger. There were new cross-currents also. Hill, who as Chairman of the Board of Governors saw the full Minutes of the Board of Management, believed that it would be a

<sup>11</sup> Wheldon quipped that he thought of proposing a Campaign for the Promotion of British Architecture, based on Broadcasting House with a sub-office at Television Centre ('Competition in Broadcasting', an address given at a joint meeting of the Faculty of Royal Designers for Industry and the Royal Society of Arts, 26 April 1971, p. 3).

good idea if they were seen by all Governors, but Curran, supported by Greene, 'bristled' at the suggestion. At a meeting of the Board on 23 October, when five Governors supported Hill and five opposed him, Hill gave his casting vote in favour of discussing the matter further at the next meeting; but following lobbying by Greene, Hill reluctantly decided to pursue his idea no further.<sup>12</sup>

Once again the House of Commons entered the fray, on 3 December 1969, after there had already been demands for a full debate from several MPs, including Hugh Jenkins and Winstanley.<sup>13</sup> This time, however, the debate was held in Opposition time and was introduced by Heath, and the motion that was put focused primarily on the Government, not the BBC—'That this House regrets that the policy of Her Majesty's Government will cause a serious deterioration in the quality of broadcasting'.<sup>14</sup> A Labour amendment, proposed by Stonehouse, deleted everything after the word 'House' and substituted the words 'conscious of the contribution made by the British Broadcasting Corporation as a public service to the development of broadcasting in this country, rejects the Opposition's proposals for private enterprise commercial local radio stations'.

The wording both of the motion and of the amendment suggests that the Parliamentary context of discussion—with deep party divides—was very different from the context of discussion inside or outside the BBC, and many issues were blurred rather than clarified. Thus, for Heath, who recalled that during the 1950s he had been one of the Conservative MPs who had wished to see the BBC's monopoly broken, *Broadcasting in the Seventies* represented a complete change in priorities from what the BBC had done in the past. At the same time, he accepted that the money it needed to run a public service broadcasting system had to be provided out of licence fees. Thus, for Stonehouse, the BBC was free to work out its own plan and to modify it in the light of the kind of criticisms that had been made in the earlier July debate, but he was on shaky ground when he claimed unconvincingly that the BBC had sufficient finance to carry through whatever plan it proposed.

<sup>12</sup> Hill, *Behind the Screen*, pp. 143–4; \*Board of Governors, Minutes, 23 Oct. 1969. 'How the senior staff resent the Governors showing the slightest sign of governing', Hill wrote in his *Diary*, 23 Oct. 1969. 'Unimportant in itself,' the matter had become 'a symbol of Board of Management resentment'.

<sup>13</sup> On 10 Nov. representatives of the Campaign met a group of interested MPs at the House of Commons, and on 22 Nov. an all-party motion called for a Select Committee 'to examine and report on all aspects of broadcasting'.

<sup>14</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 792, cols. 1496–1632, 3 Dec. 1969.

Party politics obviously could not be left out of the debate on the Labour amendment, which put the spotlight on local commercial radio and which was carried by 286 votes to 245.<sup>15</sup> Yet there were many references to *Broadcasting in the Seventies* on both sides. A former broadcaster, Christopher Mayhew, a strong opponent of commercial television, who five years later was to move from the Labour to the Liberal benches, propounded two propositions: first, that 'the cultural standards of the BBC must be maintained', and, second, that they were 'threatened by the new plans of the BBC'. But, Mayhew added, 'we must also blame ourselves, the politicians. We have been far too cowardly in the past about giving public service broadcasting the money which it needs.'

Again it was a Conservative MP, Deedes, consistent on all these matters, who backed an immediate increase in the licence fee—'the sins which we now attribute to the BBC are shared by us in this House'—while it was a Labour MP, Hugh Jenkins, a spokesman of radical opinion outside the House, who most persistently questioned the motives and actions of the BBC, on one occasion provoking Stonehouse to exclaim 'rubbish'. Jenkins was sympathetic to the ideas of the Free Communications Group which had been formed in 1968, months before *Broadcasting in the Seventies* appeared, to demand 'democratic control of all media', believing, as its Manifesto stated, that 'communications are too important to be left to proprietors, shareholders and Boards of Governors'.<sup>16</sup>

The statement paralleled a memorable statement made by Tony Benn on 18 October 1968 in a speech delivered to only thirty-five people in his constituency, but widely—and immediately—publicized, far more, indeed, than any of the speeches that were delivered in the Parliamentary debate in December 1969. 'Broadcasting', Benn had declared in a phrase that was to be quoted in many contexts, 'is really too important to be left to the broadcasters.'<sup>17</sup> It should be added that in the Free Communications Group

<sup>15</sup> The main motion as amended was carried by 285 votes to 242.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Darlow and Roger Graef, both television producers, were among the members of the first Council of the FCG. So, too, was Nick Garnham, Head of Media Studies at the Polytechnic of Central London. Stuart Hood was a later Council member. Christine Fox, then a researcher at Thames TV, was the organizer. Phillip Whitehead, Editor of *This Week*, who had been a BBC producer from 1961 to 1967, was a co-opted member. The manifesto of FCG is reprinted in A. Smith, *British Broadcasting* (1974), pp. 160–2.

<sup>17</sup> *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, and *Guardian*, 19 Oct. 1968, printed the speech in its entirety. 'Somehow', Benn went on, 'we must find some new way of using radio and

it was not the public that was mounting pressure, but one stratum of the broadcasters, making syndicalist claims, shoulder to shoulder with people from other media (film, Press, and theatre). The Group also had links with radical groups in universities and with the ACTT.

Stonehouse told Hill and Curran that the debate in the House of Commons—with Benn as last speaker—had taken a lot of heat out



17. 'You had nothing good to say for it until Wedgwood Benn attacked it', [unknown artist], in *Sun*, 22 Oct. 1968.

of the situation. 'The opposition was beginning to die down.'<sup>18</sup> Yet, although Hill said that he agreed with him, this was by no means true. The initial letter published by the Campaign for Better Broadcasting should be set alongside a letter from members of the High Table of King's College, Cambridge, which appeared in *The Times* on 19 January 1970. It asked whether the BBC had adjusted its plans in

television to allow us to talk to each other. We've got to fight all over again the same battles that we fought centuries ago to get rid of the licence to print and the same battles to establish representative broadcasting in place of the benevolent paternalism by the constitutional monarchs who reside in the palatial Broadcasting House' (see J. Adams, *Tony Benn* (1992), pp. 296–7).

<sup>18</sup> \*Report of a Meeting held at the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications on Wednesday, 21 Jan. 1970 (R78/549/1).



the light of criticisms already made and how it could ever be possible for Radio 3 to serve the purposes which Mansell himself had set out. 'The issue at stake', the second letter concluded, 'is the issue of a failure of nerve, and a breakdown in imagination . . . There is no such thing as public taste. *You* make it.'<sup>19</sup>

A letter headed 'Maintaining the Quality of Radio', which appeared four days later, was signed by a group of people that included Peggy Ashcroft at the head of the list, Flora Robson, Geoffrey Grigson, Cecil Day-Lewis, Harold Pinter, Sir Adrian Boult, Benjamin Britten, Bertrand Russell, Eric Ashby, and Joseph Needham.<sup>20</sup>

Inside the BBC there had been increased bitterness during the last months of 1969 after the Corporation had found itself embroiled in the first official ABS strike in its history.<sup>21</sup> It was a strike about pay, including overtime pay and allowances, not about *Broadcasting in the Seventies*; but since it coincided with the argument about broadcasting policy, strike and debate inevitably overlapped.<sup>22</sup> 'Monstrous mismanagement' was the title of an article in the *ABS Bulletin* by Tom Rhys.<sup>23</sup> In the background of the strike, as in the debate about structure and policy, the Government was involved, as well as the BBC, if in this case indirectly, for the BBC was offering its employees what it claimed was the maximum sum allowable within the Gov-

<sup>19</sup> *The Times*, 19 Jan. 1970. The signatories included E. M. Forster, Edmund Leach, Edward Shils, Bernard Williams, and Lord Kahn. Curran dined at King's on 22 Feb. 1970, a visit arranged by the actor Marius Goring, and described the attitude of his hosts as 'obstinate but not irredeemable' (\*Goring to Curran, 10 Feb. 1970; Curran to Goring, 16 Feb. 1970 (R78/576/1); Board of Management, *Minutes*, 23 Feb. 1970).

<sup>20</sup> *The Times*, 23 Jan. 1970.

<sup>21</sup> *ABS Bulletin*, June/July 1969; \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 25 Sept. 1969. The strike was backed by the ACTT, which was not recognized by the BBC in its consultation procedures.

<sup>22</sup> In a statement to North Region staff on the eve of the strike, Grahame Miller stressed that 'this dispute is over rates of pay and conditions of service for monthly paid staff. It is not a dispute over "Broadcasting in the Seventies" which was never an issue in the national negotiations between the ABS and the BBC. I know that members of our staff feel strongly about parts of "Broadcasting in the Seventies"—particularly those relating to the English Regions. But it would be inappropriate to try and express those feelings through tomorrow's stoppage' (\*Miller to All Staff, North Region, 'BBC Pay Dispute', 10 Oct. 1969). Before Curran visited Manchester with Mansell to explain *Broadcasting in the Seventies* (see above, p. 772), Miller told Curran (\*Letter of 15 Oct. 1969 (R78/579/1)) that the strike had left its mark, and would influence their reception. 'Discontent will be smouldering on the floor and ready to blaze up into anger.'

<sup>23</sup> *ABS Bulletin*, Nov.–Dec. 1969.

ernment's prices and incomes control system, renewed and toughened earlier in 1968.<sup>24</sup>

The first target of the ABS lightning strike was a Heath broadcast from the Conservative Party Conference; but on this occasion the industrial action planned was unsuccessful.<sup>25</sup> Later action was more effective. Heath had been allowed to speak on 11 October, but Petula Clark was not allowed to sing on 13 October. Nor was Vera Lynn. Simon Dee could not present records, and *24 Hours* and *Nationwide* were also kept off the air on 15 October. There was irony in the fact that the blacked edition of *24 Hours* contained film of Yorkshire miners explaining why they themselves were out on strike.<sup>26</sup>

For the first time, internal debate about the issues behind the BBC strike was aired, in an exchange of correspondence in *The Times* between Curran and Rhys, General Secretary of the ABS, who was subject to strong grass-roots pressure.<sup>27</sup> The correspondence page of *The Times* was becoming the place where every aspect of broadcasting was being battled out.<sup>28</sup> Sometimes the Editor of *The Times*, William (later Lord) Rees-Mogg, a future Vice-Chairman of the BBC, was himself drawn in.<sup>29</sup>

On 21 October Curran asked the Government to intervene, and Barbara Castle, then Secretary of State at the newly formed Department of Employment and Productivity, who earlier in the year had produced her White Paper *In Place of Strife*, announced the setting up of a Court of Inquiry, which deliberated on the pay dispute while the argument about *Broadcasting in the Seventies* continued. It was headed by E. T. C. (Ted) Grint, a former Head of Personnel at ICI, and its other members were Peter Trench, a part-time member of the Prices

<sup>24</sup> A new Act fixed a ceiling of 3½% for pay rises and price increases. For comment on the strike see *Television Today*, 16 Oct. 1969. The BBC's offer had been accepted by the EET/PTU, NATKE, and the NUJ. There was no pay dispute with the Musicians' Union, to which the ABS had promised to give 'sympathetic consideration' to any request for support.

<sup>25</sup> The engineer in charge of the broadcast, Eric Benn, defied ABS instructions to black the broadcast, at the same time sending a telegram resigning from the Union. Others who resigned included Peter Hardiman Scott, the BBC's Political Correspondent, Conrad Voss Bark, the Parliamentary Correspondent, and Robert Dougall, the Television news-reader. For the ABS approach to the strike see *ABS Bulletin*, Oct. 1969.

<sup>26</sup> P. Seglow, *Trade Unionism in Television* (1978), p. 216; *Daily Express*, 16 Oct. 1969.

<sup>27</sup> *The Times*, 8, 9, 10 Oct. 1969.

<sup>28</sup> Trethowan, however, had written to the *Daily Telegraph* on 20 Nov. 1969 dealing with what he called 'misinformation' given to MPs.

<sup>29</sup> \*Curran wrote to him, 17 Feb. 1970, that a leader of that day obliged him to reply. He was not sure, however, whether in referring to a BBC crisis Rees-Mogg had meant a 'crisis of policy' or a 'crisis of people' (R78/576/1).

and Incomes Board, and Harry Norton, a trade-unionist engineer. Its Report, published in mid-December, questioned the way that the BBC had handled the ABS claim, a disturbing judgement when the handling of *Broadcasting in the Seventies* was being so sharply questioned.<sup>30</sup> The 'industrial relations machinery', which the Court described as 'quite comprehensive', had not given satisfaction, the Court concluded, because of lack of communication.<sup>31</sup>

There were other disturbing implications for the Governors and the Board of Management in the general proposition propounded by the Court, that 'it would be detrimental to morale in the BBC if their [*sic*] financial position prevented them from offering salaries and conditions which were fair and reasonable enough to enable it to be seen that they were implementing their declared salary policy'.<sup>32</sup> Oliver Whitley, who represented the BBC in the inquiry, had argued that the 1952 White Paper on Broadcasting (Cmd. 8550) had enjoined the Corporation to take account of Government wages policy. The Court brushed the argument aside, and there were no references to the Government's prices and incomes policy in its own judgement.<sup>33</sup> Nor was that all. Leaving Government incomes policy on the side, the BBC had not been able to prove to the satisfaction of the Court that its mode of funding through licence fees restricted its financial freedom.

A threat to Christmas programmes was lifted as a result of the Court's findings and a new pay increase offer of 4 per cent, but the long-term implications of the judgement seemed serious.<sup>34</sup> Nor did it settle the dispute. While new programme schedules were being prepared to take effect from April 1970, there was simmering discontent inside the BBC throughout the early months of the year, with further threats of strikes in radio and in colour television, just introduced on BBC-1 and ITV.<sup>35</sup> The ABS strike was not finally

<sup>30</sup> None the less, the ABS did not, as the BBC expected, attack *Broadcasting in the Seventies* during the Court's hearings (\*Board of Management, Minutes, 17 Nov. 1969).

<sup>31</sup> Cmnd. 4240 (1969), *Report of the Court of Inquiry into a Dispute at the BBC*, para. 67.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 76.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 42.

<sup>34</sup> \*Board of Management, Minutes, 15 Dec. 1969; Board of Governors, Minutes, 15 Jan. 1970.

<sup>35</sup> *Financial Times*, 4 Feb. 1970; *Daily Telegraph*, 18 Feb. 1970. There were unofficial NATKE strikes in Feb. and March (\*Note by Duty Officer, 26 Feb. 1970 (Man. Reg. file E45-14-1, pt. 1); *Daily Mirror*, 28 Feb. 1970; *Daily Telegraph*, 2 March 1970). Yet early in Feb. Arkell reported that the ABS had firmly rejected branch demands for industrial action in support of an addition to the 4% and at the same time seemed to have decided to suspend its opposition to *Broadcasting in the Seventies*. This he called 'something of a turning point' (\*Board of Management, Minutes, 9 Feb. 1970).

settled—on terms favourable to the Union—until after a general election in June 1970 had completely changed the political situation, and the arguments about the implications of *Broadcasting in the Seventies* had by then petered out.<sup>36</sup>

Staff discontent in relation to the BBC's broadcasting structures and policies took various forms of expression, most of them concerted, before and after the strike. Angry speeches at meetings were one form. Letters to *The Times* continued to be another. Trethowan recalled one meeting in the Concert Hall of Broadcasting House at which David Davis of *Children's Hour* fame delivered a tirade against the BBC which swung the gathering.<sup>37</sup> He and everyone else recalled a letter printed in *The Times* on 14 February 1970 which bore no fewer than 134 signatories, all of them producers or ex-producers, and all of whom strongly attacked the abolition of the Third Programme.

Twenty-five of the signatories came from Drama, thirty-eight from Music. The former included Douglas Cleverdon, Nesta Pain, and Terence Tiller, the latter Hans Keller and Brian Trowell, a future Professor of Music at Oxford. There were also, among others, five signatories from School Broadcasting, two from Further Education, and two from Staff Training. 'We feel . . . we have a duty to the public,' they wrote, 'which must override the BBC ruling that members of staff should not communicate directly with the press.'<sup>38</sup>

Printed immediately below their letter was another letter headed 'Quality in peril' from Croasdell, Ratcliffe, and the secretaries of the Radio Writers' Association, the Society of Authors, and the Writers' Guild; and after their letter had been published, there were further letters of protest against the proposals from BBC Regional staff. 'Our colleagues in London have exactly expressed the bitterness and disillusionment with which they confront the BBC management's

<sup>36</sup> None the less, as late as Feb. 1972 in the BBC's jubilee year, the *ABS Journal* carried a banner headline 'We accuse'.

<sup>37</sup> \*Trethowan interviewed by Gillard, 21 April 1983. For the *Children's Hour* dispute, see above, p. 342. It influenced the 1969 and 1970 discussion, as did the dissolution of the Features Department (see above, p. 342).

<sup>38</sup> *The Times*, 14 Feb. 1970. The staff were supported by Ronald Lewin, who had preceded Mansell as Chief of the Home Service, the then title (see above, p. 343). The Home Service, he remarked with some bitterness, by then had the individuality of a telephone number. Lewin's letter (18 Feb. 1970) emphasized that the signatories of 14 Feb. were all producers, and added that he had no doubt 'that the eagle eye of the BBC's historian, Professor Asa Briggs, will have marked it down as an undoubted turning point in the affairs of the Corporation'.

plans for radio, and we support them' began a letter signed by BBC staff in Bristol and Birmingham. It made the most also of Regional grievances. 'Regional cultural life—especially in music—which in the past has found expression in substantial contributions to national networks, is to be cut back, and the emphasis once again put upon the proliferation of trivial and undemanding material.'<sup>39</sup>

Trethowan wrote to all members of the London staff who had signed the letter of 14 February, reminding them that they had broken their contracts; he also interviewed the principal management signatories. He reported too to the Board of Management that, while some 'loyalist staff' might have wished him to have taken a tougher line, no one had suggested any more effective action.<sup>40</sup> There had, indeed, been attempts at conciliation in November 1969, when Curran met some of the protesters in the London Programme Branch and tried to allay fears about the music and speech content of Radios 3 and 4; and informal talks had continued throughout December.<sup>41</sup> None the less, they had not cleared the air; nor had a publicity campaign to present the BBC's case which George Campey, Head of Publicity, reported to the Board of Management.<sup>42</sup>

Both Curran and Arkell, the latter in his last few months as Director of Administration, believed that whatever the letter-writers said, they themselves had done everything required by way of consultation. Curran, in particular, remained convinced that protests about lack of consultation were based, at least to some extent, on the wish to express fundamental opposition to the proposals 'about which

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 Feb. 1970. The letter was signed by sixty-one staff. A second letter appeared on the same day from the No. 1 Branch of the ABS in Manchester. The latter claimed that there were 'some fundamental errors in the proposed basic structure . . . which BBC management has never been willing to discuss or to modify'.

<sup>40</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 23 Feb. 1970.

<sup>41</sup> The first meeting took place on 26 Nov. Curran had met T. R. Jennings, Secretary of the London Programme Branch, in a corridor, and had agreed to a meeting with 'a group of individuals'. Later Hill sent a letter to R. D. Smith, a Drama producer and leader of the delegation. It was drafted by Whitby, and was conciliatory in tone, because in Whitby's view 'these people wanted to get off the hook and should be helped to do so' (\*Whitby to Trethowan *et al.*, 'Broadcasting Staff Delegation to Chairman and D. G.', 26th November 1969', 28 Nov. 1969 (R78/S79/1)). Further meetings took place on 26 Nov. and 11 Dec. (\*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 15 Dec. 1970).

<sup>42</sup> \**Ibid.*, 24 Nov., 22 Dec. 1969. A new document was produced, *The Public Discussion and its Stimulation*. A special number of *Ariel* on 1 Dec. 1969 (see above, p. 721) had itself provoked discussion; e.g., the Bristol Staff group in a memorandum dated Jan. 1970 took up points in *Ariel* one by one, sometimes tentitiously. Their memorandum ended, however, with the words (in capitals) 'Do not resist change as such. When the opportunity occurs the BBC staff at Bristol will have further constructive proposals to make' (R78/S79/1).

consultation is being sought'. There was an element of deception, therefore, in the protests.<sup>43</sup> Arkell took a somewhat different line, writing a personal letter to Victor (later Lord) Feather, General Secretary of the TUC, designed 'to blow the ABS right out of the water on this subject because the BBC has not put a foot wrong'.<sup>44</sup> He went over the story of *Broadcasting in the Seventies* in detail, explaining the timetable that had been followed and claiming correctly that it would have been impossible for the BBC in the early stages to have permitted the ABS to publish 'embryonic proposals' to its branch members, 'when the vast majority of members of management in the BBC were ignorant of them'. Feather called the letter 'helpful'.<sup>45</sup>

Yet radicals inside the BBC staff did not think in this way. There were Marxist undercurrents of thinking and feeling in the Free Communication Group's periodical *The Open Secret*, which in underground fashion dealt only in anonymous contributions, seeking to ferret out 'stories' not only from the BBC, which was not the only target, but from the whole communications world. Some of the founders of the Group were journalists, and their objectives were far-reaching. 'The FCG believes in the social ownership of the means of communication', the second issue of *The Open Secret* stated. 'This will not happen without a radical change in the present state of society. But there is little point in voting passively for the millennium. There are many permutations which we can start arguing and fighting for now, the possible relations between the State, workers in the industry and the community.'<sup>46</sup>

The first number of *The Open Secret* denounced London Weekend Television. The third denounced Lord Hill, 'Wilson's philistine champion', the adjective that Hill himself picked up, and supported the Campaign for Better Broadcasting.<sup>47</sup> Ephemeral though the yellowing copies of *The Open Secret*, all undated, now appear, and scurrilous though they and other publications of the Group might

<sup>43</sup> He devoted a speech-day address at Wath-upon-Deerne Grammar School in March 1970 to the 'deceptions of consultation' (*BBC Record*, 70 (April 1970)). A report of his speech provoked a letter of protest from Rhys (20 March 1970), to which he replied on 25 March (Man. Reg. file E45-14-1, Pt. 1).

<sup>44</sup> \*Arkell to Curran, 'Draft Letter to Victor Feather', 16 Jan. 1970 (R78/549/1). Members of the TUC's General Council had seen Stonehouse on 25 Nov. 1969 to discuss *Broadcasting in the Seventies*.

<sup>45</sup> \*Arkell to Feather, 20 Jan. 1970; Feather to Arkell, 9 Feb. 1970 (R78/549/1).

<sup>46</sup> *The Open Secret*, issue 2. The manifesto of the Group was far more moderate in tone, and there were influential non-Marxist elements within it.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, issues 1 and 3. The last article was called 'Town Hall TV'.



quite deliberately be, the Group was to play an important part historically in the development of independent television production by often small producing firms that were unattached to the franchise-holding independent television companies. Channel 4, the case for which the Group helped to create, was to provide an unprecedented opportunity for independents, many of them hitherto dissatisfied.<sup>48</sup>

There were local Free Communications Groups in the provinces, as well as in London: in Bristol, for example, the city where Benn's constituency was located, a Freeprop/Free Communications Group concentrated on the BBC. Some of the Governors, when told of their activities, thought of them as being like undergraduates. Dame Mary Green, for example, said that while it was difficult for members of the Governors' generation to understand why it was that young people wanted to 'participate', they clearly did; while Fulton argued that it would be wrong for the BBC to appear to lag behind the demands of staff for 'participation', as the universities had done. It would be better to anticipate demands than to succumb to them. When Jackson suggested that 'real participation' was possible only with 'a proper trade-union structure', other members of the Board dissented, and Hill himself described how he had 'learnt from experience' of 'the inadequacy of individual professional bodies and unions to represent their members in specialist and creative fields'.<sup>49</sup>

The Free Communications Group, often itself a divided body, was not the only organization that had a footing inside the BBC. A more broadly based body that particularly interested both Governors and management was the 76 Group, formed in the House of Commons on 18 November 1969 with Brian Walden, then a Labour MP, in the Chair. Speakers at its inaugural meeting included Peter Morley,

<sup>48</sup> See S. Lambert, *Channel Four: Television with a Difference* (1982); A. Smith, *British Broadcasting* (1974), which reproduces circulated materials of the early period; N. Fraser, 'Independents' day dawns for TV', *Observer*, 22 April 1990. Efforts to establish independent production had been made for various reasons throughout the 1960s, e.g., by Revell Guest, Peter Batty, Norman Swallow, and Television Reporters International Ltd., founded in 1962. The BBC refused to give the last of these a contract, though it was supported by James Mossman, Malcolm Muggeridge, and Ludovic Kennedy (\*Ludovic Kennedy interviewed by John Cain for the Oral History Project, 18 June 1986). Donald Baverstock, Alasdair Milne, and Tony Jay formed JBM Ltd. in 1965, and in 1972 Jay set up Video Arts. There were few independent producers who could claim, as Darlow did, that he had never been 'a staff member of any organisation' (John Cain, record of interview with Michael Darlow, 17 April 1990).

<sup>49</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 12 March 1970. The ACTT formed a Policy Research Commission in 1969, which reported in 1971.

Thames TV producer; Philip Donnellan, BBC Television Talks and Documentaries producer in Birmingham; and Stuart Hood, who knew from inside how BBC top management had operated in the early 1960s. The main proclaimed object of this group was not to achieve 'a radical change in the present state of society', but to secure the establishment of a Royal Commission on Broadcasting. Unlike the Free Communications Group, it concentrated on broadcasting. Indeed, publicity for its first meeting announced as the topic for Hood's speech 'A New Royal Commission and what went wrong with Pilkington'.<sup>50</sup> The Group took its name from the year in which the BBC Charter was due for renewal.

Curran stated in February 1970 that he had no wish to stop BBC staff from supporting the activities of the 76 Group, but that staff 'should not be allowed to operate in any organisational or public relations capacity, or to sign any of the policy statements that the Group might issue from time to time',<sup>51</sup> and in March 1970 he had a talk with Hood which centred on what Hood called the lack of discussion between 'those at the lower end of the scale in production' and management.<sup>52</sup>

The existence of such a gap was disputed both by Trethowan and by Wheldon, who fully appreciated that the problems of radio could not leave television untouched, but there was an undoubted gap between Curran, Trethowan, Wheldon, and top BBC management on the one hand and the active radical minority on the other which used the language of the Free Communications Group. Moreover, radical groups had infiltrated the ABS, for as early as August/September 1969 an article in the *ABS Bulletin* by Stuart Hall, a Marxist academic sociologist, then Deputy Director (under Hoggart) of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University, had described *Broadcasting in the Seventies* as 'a panic lurch into strategies and surgeries, dictated by a highly visible managerial and accountant logic, dancing to the tune of those unseen musicians, the

<sup>50</sup> \*Notice of Meeting of 76 Group, 18 Nov. 1969 (Man. Reg. file N1585). The 76 Group was supported by Phillip Whitehead, Charles (later Sir Charles) Groves, Eric Fenby, and John Costello, a Conservative Parliamentary candidate. It spoke of 'all-party' appeal.

<sup>51</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 23 Feb. 1970.

<sup>52</sup> \**Ibid.*, 23 March 1970, reporting a meeting on 20 March. 'Middle management', Hood suggested, 'was not fulfilling its erstwhile function of facilitating the two-way movement of ideas.'

politicians, and commercial interests'.<sup>53</sup> What could be more different from the language of a McKinsey Report?<sup>54</sup>

Curran tried hard to choose his own language, and he was anxious too to talk to Reith, with whom he established a good relationship before Reith's death in 1971,<sup>55</sup> and to conservatives as well as radicals. Thus, in February 1970 he and Hill met the members of the Conservative Broadcasting Committee at a 'friendly meeting' where they dismissed 'the drive to achieve economies' as well as the patterning of programmes.<sup>56</sup> The main concern of the MPs, as expressed then and at a lunch with Reginald Maudling and Anthony (later Lord) Barber, was not with *Broadcasting in the Seventies* but with local radio, which the BBC was told would appear in the Conservative election manifesto 'but without a top priority'.<sup>57</sup>

Whatever else may have been discussed at these meetings, the word 'discipline' may well have entered the discussion, and in March 1970 Curran told the Board of Management that he wished to get back, as quickly as possible, to 'a disciplined situation without being repressive and to call attention to the rationale behind the present [BBC] rule about communication with the Press', which many members of BBC staff had breached. 'This was that broadcasting was a public concern and that the BBC's responsibility not to take sides in any controversy carried with it an obligation not to raise doubts about its attitudes on broadcasting matters by internal dissension'.<sup>58</sup> It was of help to him in the light of criticism from inside and outside the BBC that Arkell reminded the Board of Management that Greene had found it necessary to write a note to the staff on communication with the Press in February 1969 before the argument about *Broadcasting in the Seventies* began.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>53</sup> *ABS Bulletin*, Aug.-Sept. 1969. Hill found it difficult to understand Hoggart himself. When Hoggart spoke at a meeting of the General Advisory Council on 22 Oct. 1969, he wrote in his diary: 'Richard Hoggart spoke entertainingly—but what he meant, I scarcely know. He's too clever for me.'

<sup>54</sup> On 9 Oct. 1969 it was decided not to yield to Press calls for publication of the McKinsey Report (\*Board of Governors, *Minutes*).

<sup>55</sup> The two men met for the first time on 20 Feb. 1971. Reith refused, however, to have lunch at Broadcasting House. He described the last letter he received from Curran in June 1970 as being 'as impressive and delightful as ever I received' (quoted in C. Stuart (ed.), *The Reith Diaries* (1975), p. 324).

<sup>56</sup> Notes were prepared for the meeting by Colin Shaw, 'Conservative Broadcasting Committee', 10 Feb. 1970 (R78/S76/1).

<sup>57</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 16 Feb. 1970. The lunch was with Curran and Trethowan. Hill was not present.

<sup>58</sup> \**Ibid.*, 9 March 1970.

<sup>59</sup> \**Ibid.* Arkell added that he himself had produced an instruction to the staff on the subject as early as 1964, based on Staff Instruction 206.

It was of importance too that in any analysis of staff discontent attention be paid to 'personal grievances', as Curran called them, which played an obvious part in the display of attitudes and opinions. An anonymous article in *The Times*, in January 1970, an article not a letter, was particularly—and rightly—resented in Broadcasting House. It was written by what *The Times* called 'a well-known broadcaster' who attacked what he described as the BBC's 'monolithic resolve to have its own way [with *Broadcasting in the Seventies*] and damn the objections'. One paragraph in the article was headed 'low morale'.

Like the Campaign for Better Broadcasting, the article complained of the BBC introducing 'streaming' of radio—as if this were a completely new development—'when the schools are abandoning it'. The argument, however, was severely strained in a burst of rhetoric. 'There will be no need to defend the unusual because it will have been excluded; no reason to experiment, because it might upset the homogenized flavour of the channel: virtually impossible to criticize: "How can you say that Radio Four is not good?"' The article also included a gratuitous personal attack on Trethowan who, the author claimed, 'apparently believes that half-hearted snatches of serious music will convert listeners to a love of it'. 'Why should such views from a man better known for his political rather than musical background prevail over those of professionally and musically qualified producers?'<sup>60</sup>

The article was headed 'Opposition mounts in BBC to new programme plans', and Gillard, Curran, and Mansell all wrote to *The Times* in defence of the proposed new policies.<sup>61</sup> Gillard took the opportunity to remind *The Times* how it too had gone through 'its own agonies of transformation in recent years'. He also looked back

<sup>60</sup> *The Times*, 24 Jan. 1970. Trethowan replied sensibly to the attack (ibid., 28 Jan. 1970). 'Your contributor', he wrote, 'apparently believes that broadcasting is some private rite. He believes that listeners should not be free to tune in to serious music when they choose.' He rightly described as a 'cheap and unworthy sneer' the suggestion that 'the only people in favour of our plans are those who will gain promotion through them'. There were sneers too in a letter from Geoffrey Grigson, 29 Jan. 1970, who had studied *Who's Who* to discover who the Governors were.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 27, 31 Jan., 21, 26 Feb. 1970. A second long letter of Curran's to *The Times* (23 Feb. 1970) answered Goring's demand for the title 'the Third' to be maintained. 'Our suspicion is', he stated, 'that a title which, in its origins, was a declaration of aspirations, has become for others, over the years, a symbol of exclusiveness. To that extent it represents a discouragement of listening.' This was the real epitaph on the Third Programme.

to the pre-Hill, pre-McKinsey years when he had asked Marriott to plan a radio pattern for the seventies. Other letter-writers included Greene, eleven Governors, and Lusty.<sup>62</sup> Greene, while admitting that there was a 'crisis of confidence', strongly defended the document *Broadcasting in the Seventies* and the BBC's decision to 'bring in McKinsey' that had preceded it. He was ashamed, he added, of those members of the BBC staff who had written letters to *The Times*. The Board of Management consisted of people who knew their business. They and the Governors cared as much about the quality of broadcasting as the High Table at King's College, Cambridge.<sup>63</sup>

Lusty raised old scores. 'The present discontents' went deeper than 'a concern about news plans for radio. 'One needs no access to inside information to know this. No amount of explanation, compromise, rhetoric or plain arrogance can continue to conceal the fact that something somewhere has gone most seriously wrong with the BBC. How much derives from the new conceptions of Lord Hill of the functions of its chairman; how much from the oddities and hasty adoptions of the McKinsey recommendations; how much from real financial stringency . . . how much from a failure to explain (let alone to convince) it is hard to say, and we are not told.' 'The nation', Lusty ended on a high note, 'cannot regard this matter with indifference and expects that somehow or other the most exacting standards of public service broadcasting and public service television will again be seen to prevail.'<sup>64</sup>

## 7. Implementation

Such a clarion call was scarcely necessary, for already by the end of February the argument about *Broadcasting in the Seventies* was on the point of dying down, not because any ideological questions had been settled—or questions concerning how the BBC ran its affairs<sup>1</sup>—but

<sup>62</sup> *The Times*, 20, 21, 18 Feb. 1970.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 Feb. 1970. On the same page there were letters from Rhys and from another group of dons headed by Alan Bullock. The signatories included Lord Franks, Isaiah Berlin, Robert (later Lord) Blake, and Anthony Quinton.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 Feb. 1970.

<sup>1</sup> A 76 Group advertisement in *The Times* for which 600 signatories were sought was designed to leave a blank where BBC staff might have signed (\*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 16 March 1970).

because the detailed new programme schedules, introduced on 4 April 1970, proved far less controversial than the general issues that had been posed during the previous year. It must have seemed almost reassuring inside Broadcasting House when whatever controversy continued centred less on music than on religion. The biggest single number of specific complaints about the new broadcasting schedules (500) had come from people who regretted the ending of the Sunday morning hymn singing programmes on Radio 4, and there were enough complaints about another proposal to dispense with *Choral Evensong* for the BBC to restore it on a weekly basis.

During the spring of 1970 BBC top management had shown itself anxious, above all else, to reduce contention. Trethowan had never liked polarization. Mansell, who became Director of Programmes, Radio, in January 1970, wanted his colleagues to get down to programme making as quickly as possible. Beech, the new Controller, English Regions, tried hard to be conciliatory.<sup>2</sup> Tony Whitby, whose appointment as new Controller of Radio 4 had been announced on 24 October (Trethowan proposed him) combined intelligence, enthusiasm, and charm, and listened carefully to critics while always being willing to criticize them in return. Perhaps it helped that while at Oxford he had written a thesis on Matthew Arnold: he knew what 'Philistines' were. At his interview Hill found him 'cool', 'perhaps too cool', but he believed too that he would be 'a great success'.<sup>3</sup> He was, and so too was one of Hill's own protégés, Douglas Muggerridge, who succeeded Robin Scott as Controller, Radios 1 and 2.<sup>4</sup> The atmosphere was clearing, and when Hill and Curran met Stonehouse early in May 1970, they felt able to tell him that opposition was now 'minimal'.<sup>5</sup>

A few days earlier, when the General Advisory Council had met on 22 April 1970, it had been television, not radio, which had raised the

<sup>2</sup> Beech had given a Press Conference in Birmingham on 17 Oct. 1969, hooked up to Manchester, Bristol, and Leeds. He wrote a letter to *The Times* after the Regional staffs had sent their own letters, saying that he was sorry he had not persuaded them to share his convictions, but that he hoped to have their 'wholehearted support and co-operation' when the new schedules came into force ('Beech to Trethowan, "Letter to "The Times" ', 18 Feb. 1970 (R78/576/1)). There was irritation inside the BBC when Hugh Jenkins, who spoke at a meeting at the National Secular Society on 5 March, was reported as suggesting that BBC staff should not work the new schedules.

<sup>3</sup> Hill, *Diary*, 23 Oct. 1969.

<sup>4</sup> Hill, *Behind the Screen*, p. 114.

<sup>5</sup> "Note of a meeting held at the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications on the 6th of May 1970' (R78/577/1).



most critical discussion after a brief prelude devoted to *The World at One*. Ken Russell's *Dance of the Seven Veils*, his much attacked programme on the composer Richard Strauss, was debated at length, as was the portrayal of violence on the screen. A paper produced for the Council on this subject stimulated the interesting observation by Dame Margaret Miles that it was the interpretation of violence rather than its portrayal that gave most reason for anxiety.<sup>6</sup> Curran, at least, was satisfied that 'restraint' was shown inside the BBC, but he could point also to a study in depth of public attitudes to violence on the screen which the Audience Research Department had started in 1969.<sup>7</sup>

One last external debate about radio had also helped to lower the temperature. In late February 1970, when the House of Lords turned to *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, the tone, if not the content, of the debate pleased both Hill and Curran.<sup>8</sup> The Liberal peer Lord Gladwyn asked for the House to debate the subject 'not in any spirit of political partisanship but rather as an impartial investigation'. And while considerable attention was paid during the debate to staff comments from within the BBC and to the opening up of the correspondence columns of *The Times* to the arguments of those both in favour of and against the BBC's proposals, one speaker at least, Lord Annan, a former Provost of King's College, Cambridge, who was to play a key part during the 1970s in discussions on the destiny of the BBC, explained why he had not signed any of the letters of protest about the BBC's proposals. One person who had signed such a letter was one of his successors as Provost, the former Reith Lecturer Edmund Leach. Another was Michael Swann, a future peer, as well as a future Chairman of the BBC. He had associated himself with Peggy Ashcroft and her co-signatories on 23 January.

Meanwhile, preparations for implementing *Broadcasting in the Seventies* continued quietly and systematically, so that a heading in

<sup>6</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 22 April 1970.

<sup>7</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 2 March 1970. See *Ariel*, 4 Feb. 1972, for a report after a 220-page report *Violence on Television* had been published. A revised BBC code on violence was issued in March 1972 (*ibid.*, 31 March 1972).

<sup>8</sup> *House of Lords, Official Report*, vol. 308, cols. 57-69, 79-158, 25 Feb. 1970. Curran said of it that it was 'moderate in tone and informed by a certain willingness to wait for the revised pattern of programmes and judge by the results' (\*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 22 April 1970). The debate did not please Reith, who remained silent: 'Miserable affair and extremely disappointing. The whole thing was despoiled of any effect by the concentration on the wretched Third Programme instead of dealing with the general utter surrender of any principle in ethical or intellectual standards' (in Stuart (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 522-3).

an article in the *Radio Times* of 2 April 1970, two days before the new programme schedules were introduced, could read simply 'BBC Radio moves into the 1970s'. The article consisted of a dialogue between Trethowan and Mansell, introduced by Geoffrey Cannon, Editor of the *Radio Times*,<sup>9</sup> with cross-references to other articles in previous numbers in which Whitby had discussed news, current affairs, and documentaries, Muggeridge pop and light music, and Martin Esslin drama.<sup>10</sup> Cannon, with perhaps a touch of bravado, set aside all past controversy by wording his leading question to Trethowan and Mansell in positive fashion. 'Why do the changes in Radio, which begin this week, provide listeners with a better service?'<sup>11</sup> Whitby had stressed more defensively that it would be cruel and silly 'to construct a totally new radio format from scratch', and that most of the 'old favourites' would not be dropped,<sup>12</sup> while Trethowan went on to tell Cannon that no one was suggesting that 'the quality of BBC Radio' was 'going to be different'.

Both Trethowan and Mansell refused to stay on the defensive during their dialogue with Cannon. They stressed the need for radio 'to guard itself against the tyranny of the majority', and defended it against television as 'a medium of the imagination', 'intimate and pervasive'. Trethowan, who had now moved from television to radio, even quoted Richard Crossman, who had once said that he would

<sup>9</sup> Cannon served as Editor of the *Radio Times* from 1969 to 1979. He had taken over from C. J. Campbell Nairne, who had been appointed in 1968, and whose predecessor, Douglas Williams, had been in the job since 1954.

<sup>10</sup> *Radio Times*, 12, 19 March 1970. In the number of 2 April there was also a dialogue between Glock and Newby on music on radio. Muggeridge defended the policy of Radios 1 and 2 in dialogue with George Melly, who asked for Radio 1 to 'broaden out a bit'. While he had found John Peel 'boring', he said, he had done 'something very admirable'. He had 'broken the division between pop music and culture in general'.

<sup>11</sup> The Editor of *Ariel*, Peter Irving, was having a tougher time. One correspondent, Madeau Stewart, a producer in the Sound Archives Production Unit, suggested to him in March 1970 that *Ariel*, called the 'Staff Magazine of the BBC', should be renamed 'The Management Mouthpiece of the BBC'. Could nothing be done, she added, to make it a 'real staff magazine'? (*Ariel*, March 1970). Irving replied that *Ariel* was the staff magazine, but that from time to time it would include articles by senior members of management to 'inform staff about important issues facing the BBC'. There were some critical letters in the *Radio Times*, 2 April 1970, which were responded to by Trethowan, Mansell, Whitby, Crawley, Newby, and Elizabeth Johnson, Senior Producer, Light Music. The first critical letter began: 'Are the changes necessary (a) financially, or (b) for any other reason?' Another stated a proposition rather than posed a question: 'Changes in radio were needed, but not these changes. They add up to less opera, less drama, less serious talk, less light entertainment and more trivia in the shape of "news" and "magazine" programmes.' 'I'm sorry', Mansell replied, that 'Mr. Bull thinks news and current affairs are trivia.' Newby replied in one word, 'Yes', to the question 'Will Radio 3 retain its present wide spectrum—from Monteverdi through Mahler to Maxwell Davies?'

<sup>12</sup> *Radio Times*, 12 March 1970.

rather have five minutes on *The World at One* than on any television programme.<sup>13</sup> The big difference from the past, Trethowan added, was that people no longer needed to depend upon radio as they once had done to 'widen their horizons'.

Describing the new schedules as the schedules of 'a 24-hour world', *The Economist* noted that the number of news programmes would be substantially increased and that *The World Tonight*, the 10 p.m. news and current affairs programme, delivered in 'a less breathless style than that affected by Mr. Hardcastle and Co', might well provide 'a few sops for aggrieved dons displaced from the Third'. It also warned that both the Government and the Opposition would be watching the content of these new programmes with special interest.<sup>14</sup> There was a reminder during the following month when Wilson, who had made no comment on the scheduling, reminded Curran that in 1966 the then Chairman and Director-General had suggested that he ought not to deal with 'levels in the BBC lower than the Director-General himself'.<sup>15</sup>

After the first six months of the new schedules, listeners, while still asking questions, showed that they did not object to the new programming pattern. Audiences rose slightly. Radio 3 retained a commitment to the spoken word, and included a highly pertinent 'intellectual contribution' with a discussion 'Is an Elite Necessary?'.<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, the audience share of Radio 1 and 2 continued at about 80 per cent, and Tony Blackburn at 8 a.m. on Radio 1 attracted more listeners (4,750,000) than the 8 a.m. news on Radio 4 (4,000,000).<sup>17</sup> Radio 2, which had 'tended to suffer from the introduction of the pop network' (the BBC's own words) had been able 'to emerge more clearly as a channel providing listeners with middle-of-the-road music'. 'As was anticipated, it derived special benefit from the changes'.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Some television staff belonged to the 76 Group and some to the Free Communications Group, and the organizers of the advertisement for the former were led by Doreen Stephens (formerly Head of Children's Programmes, Television) ('Board of Management, Minutes, 9 March 1970).

<sup>14</sup> *The Economist*, 11 April 1970. Iain Macleod, it pointed out, had already attacked Hardcastle and *The World at One*. The article noted also that the BBC was not being given a special grant for educational broadcasting.

<sup>15</sup> \*Board of Governors, Minutes, 21 May 1970.

<sup>16</sup> Cmnd. 4824 (1971), *Annual Report and Accounts of the British Broadcasting Corporation 1970-71*, p. 9.

<sup>17</sup> *BBC Handbook, 1971*, pp. 45-51.

<sup>18</sup> Cmnd. 4824 (1971), pp. 9, 33. Blackburn's audience occasionally reached 6m.

The peak programme of the week was still *Family Favourites* (10,600,000) on Radio 2 at 12 noon on Sundays. *Junior Choice* with Ed Stewart came next at 8 a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays (6,650,000 and 4,500,000), and *Pick of the Pops* at 6 p.m. on Sundays with Alan Freeman attracted 4,407,000.<sup>19</sup> There were now twenty-six disc jockeys being given the chance to prove their talents, and one newcomer with a bright future, Noel Edmonds, was attracting a large audience on Saturday mornings.<sup>20</sup> There was a new daily programme series called, significantly, *Sounds of the Seventies*.<sup>21</sup> Older sounds were represented in *All Our Yesterplays*, and older sounds still in Eric Robertson's *Melodies for You*.<sup>22</sup>

On Radio 3 *The Saturday Concert* at 9.05 a.m. had an audience estimated at 150,000, as did *Your Concert Choice* on Sundays at 9.05 a.m.<sup>23</sup> About two-thirds of the music broadcast on Radio 3 was of the BBC's own making, and in the spring of 1970 and the spring of 1971 the BBC Symphony Orchestra made two overseas tours, one to Eastern Europe and Italy and one to Germany and Switzerland.<sup>24</sup> While the Orchestra was being initiated into 'total improvisation' for a performance without a conductor of Stockhausen's *Setz di Segel* in January 1970,<sup>25</sup> both Radios 3 and 4 were starting to celebrate Beethoven's bicentenary year. Radio 3 relayed *Leonora* from Vienna and the *Missa Solemnis* from Bonn, but it was Radio 4 that broadcast all Beethoven's orchestral works, most of his choral works, and some of his chamber music. It also turned to Vienna to broadcast a relay of *Fidelio* from the State Opera House.

Comedy crossed generic channel divides in 1970 and 1971, and sometimes the divide between radio and television. *The Navy Lark*, *Al Read*, and *The Clitheroe Kid*, radio through and through, echoed the past. *The Ken Dodd Show* bridged past and present. A *Comedy Review Parade* featured, among others, the comedian Les Dawson and the brilliant mimic Mike Yarwood, who was as successful with politicians as he was with personalities in show business. The most brilliant of

<sup>19</sup> *BBC Handbook, 1971*, p. 51.

<sup>20</sup> Cmnd. 4824 (1971), p. 33.

<sup>21</sup> In 1973 Radio 1 was to broadcast what was called its 'most ambitious project', *The Story of Pop*, in twenty-six parts. It spanned twenty-five years, and drew on a large number of interviews, sixty in the USA alone. Douglas Muggerridge described pop as 'the outward expression of a major social revolution of our time'. It did not make history, but it was a reflection of it. It had cut across social barriers, and was 'an important contribution to the understanding of our time' (*Ariel*, 5 Oct. 1973).

<sup>22</sup> Cmnd. 4824 (1971), pp. 34–5. Pete Murray's *Open House* was now on Radio 2 only.

<sup>23</sup> *BBC Handbook, 1971*, p. 51.

<sup>24</sup> Cmnd. 4824 (1971), p. 37.

<sup>25</sup> See N. Kenyon, *The BBC Symphony Orchestra, 1930–1980* (1981), pp. 349–51.

BBC radio shows, *I'm Sorry I'll Read that Again*, ISIRTA, quickly became a legend. Its first series had begun on 28 May 1965, and it was to run to seven series, with an eighth in 1973 after a break of three years. At the time it was said to have a 'cult audience',<sup>26</sup> but it had fascinating links with the earlier comedy of the 1960s. It occupies a prominent place in the history of comedy, not only because of its cast, which included Tim Brooke-Taylor, John Cleese, Graeme Garden, David Hatch, Bill Oddie, and Jo Kendall, but because of its content and style.<sup>27</sup> Barry Took described it as 'a young person's *Round the Horne*, a kaleidoscope of funny voices, catch phrases and innuendo revolving at break-neck speed and with a complete disregard for logic'.<sup>28</sup>

The world itself was moving at less than breakneck speed, but *The World at One* on Radio 4 had an audience of 3,800,000, and the news magazine *PM* at 5 p.m., which had started on 6 April 1970, had an audience of 700,000.<sup>29</sup> One highly original programme with a long future, *Week-ending*, first broadcast on the 'New Radio's' D-Day, 4 April 1970, was able to make fun of the week's news, which itself was never without its catch-phrases and innuendo, and at the same time it could make fun of the BBC's presentation of news, a useful task when news was taken so seriously in high places inside the BBC. Not surprisingly, it built up a highly appreciative audience.

To place *Week-ending* in context, however, there was still much old radio. *The Archers*, also on Radio 4, had an audience of 3,700,000, while 'parlour games' still flourished and *Twenty Questions* still vied with *Any Questions?*. *Desert Island Discs*, still hosted by its founder, Roy Plomley, concentrated on radio and television performers in 1970. They included Richard Chamberlain, Keith Michell, Dick Emery, Stanley Baxter, and Arthur Lowe, but there was a place also for A. P. Herbert (second appearance), John Piper, Roy (later Sir Roy) Strong, Barbara (later Dame Barbara) Cartland, and, appropriately, Frank Gillard.<sup>30</sup> There were no politicians in 1970, although Mary (later Lady) Wilson had been a guest in 1969. 'There is a drawback in inviting politicians to broadcast,' Plomley wrote; 'unless it is in a news or political programme, one is not allowed to discuss politics,

<sup>26</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1971, p. 49.

<sup>27</sup> David Hatch was to become Head of Light Entertainment, Radio, in 1978, and Managing Director, Network Radio, in 1987. For the links see below pp. 949–51, and R. Wilmut's masterly survey *From Fringe to Flying Circus* (1980).

<sup>28</sup> B. Took, *Laughter in the Air* (1981), p. 162.

<sup>29</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1971, p. 51.

<sup>30</sup> R. Plomley, *Desert Island Discs* (1975), pp. 229–30.

and there doesn't seem much point in interviewing a politician if you can't discuss the subject dearest to his heart.<sup>31</sup>

While the radio schedules of 1970 combined old and new in what quickly became a settled, if from time to time deliberately broken, mould, Regional broadcasting, so much discussed in the lead-up to *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, remained more disturbed. The greatest redeployment of staff had taken place in the Regions, where all the previous 2,000 posts disappeared with the disbanding of the three former English Regions in July 1970. Even outside London, however, redundancies had been few. A Staff Redeployment Committee, chaired by Marriott, recalled for the task, had offered 'judgement and guidance' in a necessarily delicate exercise, and by June 1970, ninety-seven people had been promoted through resettlement, and twelve fitted (without reduction of salary) into posts below their previous grade. In agreement with the trade unions, a special period of security extended to July 1971. During that period no one at risk was to be given notice.<sup>32</sup>

There were, in fact, significant opportunities for Regional staff in the new set-up, although it took time to identify them except, perhaps, in the new Regions, which included for the first time in the history of the BBC a South Region and East Anglia. It certainly took time to develop the potential of the three Network Production Centres at Bristol, Birmingham, and Manchester which had been specifically given the responsibility of 'discovering, stimulating and developing creative talent outside London'.

It seemed a landmark date when the new complex at Pebble Mill, Birmingham, was opened by Princess Anne (in the presence of Hill) on 10 November 1971,<sup>33</sup> and there was pride at Pebble Mill when it was the first regional centre to be completely 'colourized'. Yet Beech, who made his headquarters in Birmingham, had reported after being appointed to his job that the most difficult problem for him was the 'restoration of morale' not only in the old Midland Region but throughout the Regions. It was 'abysmal because of anxiety over security, fear of engulfment by the metropolis and a deep feeling that

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>32</sup> Bob Roberts, Head of Personnel, English Regions, in *Ariel*, June 1970.

<sup>33</sup> *Ariel*, 19 Nov. 1971. Princess Anne was presented with a gold *Archers'* medallion commemorating the programme's twenty-fifth anniversary. The Pebble Mill site had been acquired on a long 150-year lease dating from 25 Dec. 1950, with a stipulation that the BBC should start building before 25 Dec. 1965. The model, prepared by J. H. D. Madin, was described in *Ariel*, Aug. 1964. There were delays, however, and it was not until 7 April 1967 that Greene cut the first sod.



consultation had been inadequate'. Nevertheless, he concluded that the 'downward spiral of morale' had already been halted by the summer of 1970, and noted that it had been encouraging that the ABS had assisted in the process.

Less than a year after the changes had taken place, Beech could report that only Manchester had not yet found 'a specific role' within the new system;<sup>34</sup> and by 1972 he could report proudly that not only was Pebble Mill now 'on stream', but that the formal start of work on the All Saints complex at Manchester had raised morale there too.<sup>35</sup> There was even talk, Beech went on, of the Regions taking over from London, in his view 'extremely salutary' talk. If he had played any part in changing 'the climate', he added, then he could feel well satisfied.<sup>36</sup>

In retrospect, it could rightly be claimed that there had been continuity as well as change in the Regional situation. For example, Wheldon and Derek Grubb were to remark in a report on the Regions for the Director-General in 1976 that 'a new regional policy started in 1970. It borrowed much from traditional and tested Corporation policies and attitudes and was the stronger for that. By and large there is no doubt that it was well-found[ed], and it is working well.'<sup>37</sup>

The National Regions were particularly conscious of the relationship between continuity and change when, during the early 1970s, they prepared for their fiftieth anniversaries, a time for 'stock-taking and reappraisal'.<sup>38</sup> Many new ideas were mooted, and there were to be more radical changes in radio in Scotland in 1974 than any proposed for Britain as a whole in *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, while in Wales pressure for a fourth television channel in Welsh was building up powerfully.<sup>39</sup> On 1 January 1974 BBC Radio 4 in

<sup>34</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report by Controller, English Regions', 17 Dec. 1970. When Beech reported directly to the Board of Governors meeting early in 1971 (*Minutes*, 14 Jan. 1971), he was congratulated by Hill on behalf of the Board.

<sup>35</sup> The topping-out ceremony for the long delayed new six-storey building took place in Aug. 1973 (*Ariel*, 24 Aug. 1973).

<sup>36</sup> \*Board of Management, *Papers*, 'Report by Controller, English Regions', 11 Feb. 1972.

<sup>37</sup> \*Regional Policy Review 1976: A memorandum prepared for the Director-General by Sir Huw Wheldon and Derek Grubb', Nov. 1976 (Man. Reg. file B3-6). The report was controversial.

<sup>38</sup> Scotland celebrated its fifty years first in 1972, Wales in 1973, and Northern Ireland in 1974.

<sup>39</sup> *The Annual Report of the National Broadcasting Council for Scotland, 1 April 1973-31 March 1974* noted that for familiar reasons in the history of Regionalism it had been controversial: 'The volume of protest from those deprived of access to the network, illustrated yet again the dilemma of the Regional opt-out' (*BBC Handbook*, 1975, p. 108).

Scotland was to be renamed Radio Scotland, the name of a former pirate station, and a new two-hour morning sequence *Good Morning, Scotland*, incorporating parts of *Today*, was also introduced as an 'opt-out'. There were complaints from listeners deprived of access to the network, but the programme quickly established itself. In Welsh radio too there was pride in the 'diversification' of national coverage in 'a period when the identity of Wales and its proper reflection in broadcasting were under scrutiny'.<sup>40</sup>

It was a sign of the times, perhaps that in changed circumstances it was the metropolis that was now uneasy about its own place in the system. Beech's successor as Controller, English Regions, John Grist, was later to pass on an opinion, which he endorsed, that the staff of the English Regions and members of the Advisory Councils were convinced that one of their major problems was 'to get the BBC Television Service to treat London and the South-East as a Region' on its own.<sup>41</sup>

While the argument about *Broadcasting in the Seventies* had raged, there had been relatively little talk of technology, although it figured prominently in the Report of the Crawford Committee on Broadcasting Coverage, published in 1974 when Regional questions were being fully discussed afresh from a different angle.<sup>42</sup> The Grint Court of Inquiry had noted that the BBC acknowledged that whatever else might be wrong in BBC/ABS relations there was co-operation with the ABS in 'the acceptance of technological change', and outside the BBC there had been increasing interest during the 1960s in communications technologies.<sup>43</sup> Technology, indeed, seemed to have a momentum of its own.

<sup>40</sup> *BBC Handbook, 1975*, pp. 114, 116. In Wales *Open Line* gave the freedom of the air to listeners anxious to express views on matters of national concern. In Scotland it was claimed that increased relevance and greater quality went together: 'The Scottish product matches the top professional level. In overall BBC terms the injection of regional talent and ability can only enrich the United Kingdom output' (*ibid.*, p. 109). For the situation in Wales there is an extremely interesting and important report by the new Governor for Wales, Dr Glyn Tegai Hughes, which links television and radio and sets out clearly the relationship between ideas and interests (\*Board of Governors, *Papers, 'Broadcasting in Wales'*, 26 Oct. 1972).

<sup>41</sup> \*Grist to Alasdair Milne, 13 Dec. 1974 (Man. Reg. file B3-1, Pt. 2). Milne had by then returned from Scotland to Television Centre. See below, p. 966, and for Grist's appointment, p. 899. Grist claimed boldly in 1976 that from a regional standpoint "Broadcasting in the 70's" will stand as one of the best systems introduced into the BBC in the last 20 years' (\*Grist, 'The Story of Broadcasting in England', n.d. (Man. Reg. file B3-6)).

<sup>42</sup> Cmnd. 5774 (1974), *Report of the Committee on Broadcasting Coverage*. See also below, p. 997. Two whole sections were devoted to 'regionalism': paras. 50-64 on television and paras. 94-108 on radio.

<sup>43</sup> Cmnd. 4240 (1969), paras. 25, 86.

Before he was named as Chairman of a committee on the whole future of broadcasting, Annan had himself referred briefly in the debate on broadcasting in the House of Lords in February 1970 to 'technical changes' which, he noted, would affect the financing of broadcasting. He added, however, that he did not profess to understand them. Nor did he expand on their possible structural consequences. One man, however, who did was Hill, and in a lecture at Leeds University entitled *Into the Seventies*, delivered before *Broadcasting in the Seventies* had been published, he made 'crystal-gazing', a pretty hazardous occupation, into his main theme. Without then thinking of an Annan Report, he told his audience that he expected an external review of the BBC, a new Pilkington, which would be set up by the Government of the day in 1971 or 1972 and which would most likely report in 1974.

This particular piece of crystal-gazing into the chronology of change was to prove wrong. Yet most of the substance of Hill's lecture was devoted not to the inauguration of an inquiry or to the economics or the politics that would concern it but to technology; and in this connection, unmentioned in *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, he foresaw 'remarkable developments . . . coming our way'. 'The next decade', he believed, would be likely to see the establishment of 'new transmission systems which could revolutionise the whole nature of broadcasting'. With such a future in mind, therefore, the subtitles of the different parts of his lecture included 'Colour TV on three channels'<sup>44</sup> and 'Speed of satellite communication'.

Hill also dealt more than once in his lecture with the idea, then current in the BBC, of an electronic memory store into which information concerning every aspect of broadcast production would be fed, extending the conception of its use to include viewers and listeners, as well as broadcasters and managers and foreseeing a 'vastly larger BBC catalogue of programmes' than those to be found in the *Radio Times*. This would enable each viewer and listener to 'dial in from the memory bank the programme best suited to his needs or mood of the moment'. There would be real freedom of choice. Hill also foresaw a time when 'the box itself and the cathode-ray tube' would 'find their place in museums'. He was obviously looking well beyond broadcasting in the seventies.

<sup>44</sup> At the Press Conference on 10 July Curran had stated explicitly that none of the BBC's proposals in *Broadcasting in the Seventies* or estimates of cost related to colour television (\*Verbatim Record (R78/576/2) ).

In conclusion, however, Hill left behind him technology, what he called 'questions of hardware', and returned to the 'software' of its programmes, as so many people did when they discussed *Broadcasting in the Seventies*. 'In broadcasting', he claimed,

technical advances, however astonishing, are only a means to an end. What counts is the way they are used. At all times and in all circumstances, the BBC will be judged on the quality of its programmes. To ensure that this quality is maintained and enhanced it must seek out new and exciting talents and provide the conditions in which they can work. It must continue to strive to create programmes which provide not only delight but something more. The BBC has a responsibility to broaden horizons, open up new interests and new areas of knowledge for its audience. It must encourage higher standards of discrimination and appreciation in all fields.<sup>45</sup>

The critics of *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, many of them absurdly contemptuous of Hill, could not have put it better than Hill had done months before that contentious document was written and circulated.

<sup>45</sup> Lord Hill, *Into the 'Seventies: Some Aspects of Broadcasting in the Next Decade* (March 1969).

# IX

---

## New Technologies

Communications is an amorphous subject, bleeding off into electronics at one end and McLuhanism at the other. It also tends to be an American one—for better or worse.

*The Economist*, 9 Aug. 1969

Technology is the application of scientific and other organised knowledge to practical tasks by hierarchically ordered systems that involve people and machines.

JOHN NAUGHTON, Open University Course, LIVING WITH TECHNOLOGY

Of all the revolutionary changes which have come upon us since the Second World War, few are likely to be of greater long-term significance to the world than those deriving from our vastly increased power of communicating. I say this, not thinking of specific gadgets, like telephones, aircraft, television, computers, satellites and—whatever next? Nor from conjecture about what each is likely to do to us. I say it rather from the consideration of the nature of human communication itself.

COLIN CHERRY, *On Human Communication*, 1971

No single technology assessment can be considered final because of the absence of complete data, uncertainty about the methodology, limitations of the human imagination to foresee all possible interconnections, and, above all the inability of humans to avoid bias, resulting from their personal values . . . [Yet while] technology assessors must expect that their predictions will be . . . challenged . . . society will be far more informed of the policy options available for the future than if the assessments were never begun.

E. M. DIXON and R. BOWERS, *The Video Telephone*, 1973

---

## 1. Connections

In August 1969, five months after Lord Hill's lecture at Leeds, *The Economist* published a forty-page supplement on communications to which it gave the title 'The Connections'.<sup>1</sup> It was largely concerned with technology, a word which had been used increasingly during the previous decade by politicians and educationists even more than by engineers. In the American writer Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock*, a best-seller, to be published in 1970 at the beginning of the new decade, it was to be described as 'that great growling engine of change'.<sup>2</sup> Lord Snow, who earlier in the decade had introduced the debate on 'two cultures',<sup>3</sup> said of *Future Shock* that 'no one ought to have the nerve to pontificate on our present worries without reading it'.<sup>4</sup>

The articles in *The Economist* supplement had more to do with telecommunications (and the role of the Post Office) than with broadcasting: indeed, the BBC, so often mentioned in *The Economist*, was not referred to once. Yet those articles which were focused on the United States—and there were several of them—hinted at a future convergence between telecommunications and broadcasting, what the Americans were to call 'comunications'. Although Japan, like the BBC, was not mentioned once, there was one prescient Japanese advertisement proclaiming 'total communications' as the company's goal.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Economist*, 9 Aug. 1969. 'Communications' was described as an American subject.

<sup>2</sup> A. Toffler, *Future Shock* (1970), ch. 2.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 466.

<sup>4</sup> Comments on *Future Shock* in the American paperback ed., Bantam Books, 1971. The *Guardian* claimed pertinently that in the book 'the two cultures have met and are being merged'. Cf. *Future Shock* with Toffler's next book, *The Third Wave* (1980). See also C. Susskind, *Understanding Technology* (1973), and P. L. Berano, *Technology as a Social and Political Phenomenon* (1976).

<sup>5</sup> The advertisement for Fujitsu Ltd. referred to the need for, and the demand for, a 'total communications system' which required 'even more advanced exchange, transmission, control and calculation systems than are available at present'. The motto in the Cable and Wireless advertisement was: 'Though we're up in space we're down to earth as well'. For a survey of Japanese development in the period covered in this volume see W. A. Fischer, *Postwar Japanese Technological Growth and Innovation: A Comprehensive Review of the Literature* (1974).



The subjects covered in the articles included cable television, 'Television Pipe Dream'; the International Telecommunications Union, the ITU, which had celebrated its centenary in 1965, the year of the launching of Early Bird, the first satellite to go into commercial operation;<sup>6</sup> 'Comsat', the Communication Satellite Corporation, which was then only seven years old; Intelsat, the international satellite consortium, then involving nearly seventy countries; 'spectrum shortage'; and 'the teeming air'.

All these subjects had for long concerned the BBC both through its engineers and through its administrators. All of them had international implications. The first of them raised issues which had been discussed in relation to radio during the 1920s and 1930s before regular BBC television programmes began. The 'teeming air' was an older issue still in the early age of radio. Indeed, fear of 'chaos of the ether' had provided one reason why the BBC came into existence.<sup>7</sup>

In 1969, however, most of the increasingly voluminous writing on communications technologies, whether British or American, was, like Hill's Leeds lecture, future-orientated, and little attention was paid either to the distant or recent past.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, during the 1970s the agenda was to switch from scarcity to abundance, opening up, but not guaranteeing, new vistas of choice. There were new devices also that broadened the agenda further, beginning with Ceefax, a BBC videotext or teledata system that gave viewers the choice of extra push-button information on their screens.<sup>9</sup> Ceefax was to have

<sup>6</sup> See Briggs, 'The Communications Revolution', *New Scientist*, 13 May 1965, written in conjunction with the centenary of ITU. 'We now conceive of a "communications revolution" ' I wrote, 'still in its initial stages, comparable in significance with "the industrial revolution", which rested on a new exploitation of power. At the centre of the new revolution is the control of information, and the electronics industry is the main agent of transformation.' A meeting was held at Montreux in Oct. 1965 between representatives of the European Broadcasting Union, the American networks, and the European postal administrators to discuss the cost to broadcasters of using Early Bird (\*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 7 Oct. 1965).

<sup>7</sup> Briggs, *The Birth of Broadcasting*, pp. 63, 88.

<sup>8</sup> See D. Gabor, *Inventing the Future* (1963); W. Bell and J. A. Mau (eds.), *The Society of the Future* (1971); D. Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1973); and K. Kumar, *Prophecy and Progress* (1978).

<sup>9</sup> *Ariel*, 27 Oct. 1972. 'It allows the viewer to see facts on his home television screen', a brochure on Ceefax stated. ITA developed its alternative system, ORACLE (Optical Reception of Announcements by Coded Line Electronics). See 'Ceefax', *BBC Record*, 83 (Dec. 1972), for a description of the basics of the system. 'In every second a viewer is watching television there are fifty "gaps" which occur so quickly that they are never seen. In these fractions of seconds the Ceefax data can be transmitted, stored and up-dated.' For the other developments see below, p. 925. See also the Fast Report, *Eurostructures, The Challenges of Innovation* (1984).

a future more limited than that which had been forecast for it, but in 1972, when it was first announced, it sounded promising.<sup>10</sup>

The idea of it had been conceived in the course of research by the BBC's Engineering Division's Research Department at Kingswood Warren, Tadworth, Surrey, on improved ways of displaying information 'at the touch of a push-button' on television screens, and a patent was filed in February 1972, the year of the BBC's golden jubilee.<sup>11</sup> 'The television receiver', Bill Wood, Head of the Engineering Information Department, reported, 'represents a major capital investment and in terms of modern communications technology it is under exploited.'<sup>12</sup> The first regular transmissions began on an experimental basis in September 1974 after Colin McIntyre had been appointed the first Ceefax editor.

For all the future orientation, however, most apparent as it always had been in newspapers and periodicals, the origins of almost all the technologies which were being discussed in 1969 and in the decade of development and controversy that was to follow can be traced back, as they were inside the BBC, to a few major scientific theories and inventions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>13</sup> What had made the crucial difference during the 1950s and 1960s, it was recognized at the time, had been the development of the electronic computer, a device that was to be described as 'the dream machine'. It affected the development of so much else that by the year 1970 there was already talk of a 'computerized society'.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *BBC Record*, 83 (Dec. 1972).

<sup>11</sup> BBC Research Department, 'Ceefax: Its History and the Record of Development', March 1978; \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 7 Sept. 1972.

<sup>12</sup> *Ariel*, 27 Oct. 1972.

<sup>13</sup> Edward Pawley, author of *BBC Engineering, 1922-1972* (1972), emphasized this point in a paper on 'the development of technology in the service of broadcasting', presented at Goldsmith's College two years later in 1974 (Lectures delivered at the second meeting of an Institution of Electrical Engineers' Specialist Group, 13 July 1974). For a similar, but more attractively arranged and illustrated, American presentation, see International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation (ITT), *A Technology Perspective* (n.d., c.1977).

<sup>14</sup> J. Martin and A. R. D. Norman, *The Computerized Society* (1970); A. G. Oettinger, 'Communications in the National Decision-Making Process', in M. Greenberger (ed.), *Computers, Communications and the Public Interest* (1971); and A. Mowshowitz, *The Conquest of Will: Information Processing in Human Affairs* (1976). The French word *télématique* (trans. telematics) was not used until 1978 in a best-seller official report commissioned by the French President, by S. Nora and A. Minc, *The Computerization of Society* (Eng. trans. 1980). See also E. C. Berkeley, *The Computer Revolution* (1962); J. Bernstein, *The Analytical Engine: Computers, Past, Present and Future* (1963); M. L. Dertouzos and J. Moses (eds.), *The Computer Age: A Twenty-Year View* (1979); and F. Williams, *The Communications Revolution* (1981).

The computer gave yet another new meaning to the word 'programme' as it was to give new sense to the word 'language'. It was to end up, moreover, within the home alongside the television receiver, 'the box'. Even in this case of cases, however, there was a history that stretched back far into the nineteenth century, long before the coining of the word 'computer' or the word 'electronics', and long before the building by the Post Office, in 1943 in top secret for code-breaking purposes, of the first British vacuum tube (valve) electronic digital computer, Colossus.<sup>15</sup>

Colossus, still not called a computer, was a real name. The story of the computer, however, brings in more acronyms than real names. They include ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer), an acronym for America's first computer, devised for military purposes, that now sounds primeval, and TOPICS which, despite its familiar ring, was Japanese in origin (Total On-line Programme and Information Control System).<sup>16</sup> The latter acronym, introduced in 1968, to cover a system of automation of almost all broadcasting operations, became familiar before Japanese information technology made major inroads into world markets.

Government usually figured directly or indirectly in the story of computers as it did more generally in the story of electronics. In the light of foreign competition, a National Electronics Research Council was incorporated in Britain in July 1964 under the chairmanship of Lord Mountbatten, and in the same year a new Ministry of Technology was founded, with much blowing of trumpets, after a general election when technology had been one of the platform issues.<sup>17</sup> It

<sup>15</sup> The story goes back even before Charles Babbage. See J. Palfreman and D. Swale, *The Dream Machine* (1991); S. Augarten, *Bit by Bit: An Illustrated History of Computers and their Inventors* (1985); H. H. Goldstine, *The Computer from Pascal to von Neumann* (1972); B. Randell (ed.), *Origins of Digital Computers* (3rd edn., 1982); and J. R. Beniger, *The Control Revolution: Technological and Economic Origins of the Information Society* (1986), pp. 404 ff. Beniger's judgement is that 'World War II interrupted work on generalized information processing and computing technology as much as stimulated it' (p. 406). The BBC's Director of Engineering, James Redmond, in an important and wide-ranging *BBC Lunch-Time Lecture*, 'Radio and Television Engineering—The Next Phase', delivered on 19 March 1969, stressed how television development since 1945 had been based largely on radar technology evolved during the last War. Early radar, not then so described, had itself been influenced by early pre-war development of television.

<sup>16</sup> ENIAC, completed in Nov. 1945, missed the War by several months. It had been conceived of by the Ballistics Research Laboratory in Maryland. The acronym became as well known across the Atlantic as the acronym in Britain of a different kind of equipment, ERNIE (Electronic Random Number Indicator Equipment), used when a lottery element was introduced into the national savings system. For TOPICS see Pawley, *op. cit.*, p. 472.

<sup>17</sup> See below, p. 1038.

included a Computer Advisory Unit.<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, the older Television Advisory Committee, which had originally been established by the Government in 1935 during the early years of television, continued to give advice, which was usually followed, on a broad range of questions, including television line standards and, after 1953, VHF/FM radio.<sup>19</sup> It was part of an official complex that was supervised by the Postmaster-General, and it took account of the operations and views of the British Radio Engineering Manufacturers' Association (BREMA) as well as those of the BBC.

International questions of conformity and control were the province of the ITU, which had become a specialized agency of the post-War United Nations system in 1947. Initials in this field, as in the case of the EBU, which had its own strong technical interests, were more common than acronyms. Everyone involved in the international politics of broadcasting knew the word CCIR, the initials of the French name of the International Radio Consultative Committee of the ITU, which drew up what it called 'the bible of international communications'. During the 1960s it included a new testament concerned with space.<sup>20</sup>

The story of post-war computerization—without which there could have been no space journeys—has been interpreted persuasively and in depth not as a story complete in itself, but as only the most recent phase in a long 'control revolution' that followed directly from the earlier Industrial Revolution and that continued during the Second

<sup>18</sup> The inception of the Council in 1961 and its subsequent history is described in *National Electronics Research Council Review*, vol. 1 (1965). In 1964, 25,000 papers on electronics were published.

<sup>19</sup> See below, p. 841. The Committee was established on the advice of the Selsdon Committee. It was reconstituted in 1952, and following the Beveridge Committee, its remit now included VHF/FM sound broadcasting, as well as television (*First Report of the Television Advisory Committee 1952* (1953), p. 3). The Chairman of the Committee from 1952 to 1962 was Sir Charles Daniel, and from 1962 to 1968 Sir Willis Jackson (later Lord Willis-Jackson). The Committee reported in 1953, 1954, 1960, 1968, and 1972. The original meaning of VHF was the electromagnetic or wireless waves on which any message could be imposed—telegraph, voice, television, etc.—but during the 1960s it came to be used, as in the previous chapter and throughout this book, with particular relation to sound broadcasting. During the same period the British took over the American usage of the word 'radio' to cover both 'sound broadcasting' and 'wireless set'. For radio and television sets see K. Geddes, *The Set Makers* (1991). Despite changes in purchase tax, the cost to the consumer of black and white television sets remained almost static throughout the period covered in this book. So, too, did rental costs (information obtained from *Electrical and Radio Trading Price Lists*).

<sup>20</sup> ITU, *The International Telecommunications Union and Space Communications* (1969). For problems of international standardization see below, pp. 853–6, and J. Farrell and G. Saloner, *Standardization, Compatibility and Innovation* (1984).

World War.<sup>21</sup> It was after the War, however, that 'automation' in factory and in office raised urgent questions at a time when the entire field of control and communication theory was opened up. The subject, which generated a huge, if ephemeral, 'literature', was introduced to BBC listeners in Reith Lectures by Sir Leon Bagrit in 1964.<sup>22</sup>

## 2. Transistors

Crucial to the story were 'miniaturization', made possible by the rise of the transistor and later the microchip, a tiny but indispensable object in a technology that would abandon the 'colossal' and culminate in personal computers and progressive digitalization.<sup>1</sup> By operating on discrete rather than continuous quantities, digitalization made possible both greater speed and efficiency and integrated storage. Signals were handled as streams of digits. In the course of development, distinctions between the communication of information and its processing were blurred. So also were traditional distinctions between types of information—numbers, words, and images.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Beniger, op. cit. Among items covered in this illuminating and original book, which integrates technological and economic and social history, are transportation control technology and 'mass feed back technologies'. Among examples given of significant new developments with communications reference are Hollerith punch cards (1886), commercial teletype services (1931), Nielsen's audimeter monitoring of broadcast audiences (1935), and the Gallup Poll (1936). Computers fit into a long story as 'information machines', a term used by F. Machlup in 1962 in *The Production and Distribution of Knowledge in the United States*.

<sup>22</sup> L. Bagrit, *The Age of Information* (1965). In 1965 the BBC had also produced a pioneering programme unit, 'Logic and the Computer', in a schools series *Mathematics in Action*. It was prepared by Edward Goldwyn, who stands out in retrospect as a far-sighted pioneer. In 1978 he was to produce a fascinating *Horizon* programme *The Chips are Down*. For the theoretical background of technological development, see N. Wiener, *Cybernetics or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine* (1948), p. 11; C. Shannon and W. Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication* (1949); and J. Von Neumann (ed.), *Theory of Self-Reproducing Automata* (1966).

<sup>1</sup> See E. Braun and S. MacDonald, *Revolution in Miniature: The History and Impact of Semiconductor Electronics Re-explored* (2nd edn., 1982).

<sup>2</sup> Yet the miniaturization of car radios, which made mobile radio attractive, preceded the discovery of transistors (see Pawley, op. cit., p. 341). They were on show at the first post-war Radiolympia in 1947. Car radios had a far longer history, however, going back to the 1930s. See C. W. Rowan and C. A. Altgelt, 'Auto Radios: Early Evolution and Current Chaos', paper read at Fifth Conference on Automotive Electronics, 1985. See also above, p. 751 n.

Transistors, a name coined by the American J. R. Pierce after their discovery in 1947/8 by a Bell Laboratories team of solid state physicists, were essential both to computer development and to the miniaturization of other electronic products. They required no vacuum, no heating time, and no high voltages; and they were smaller than the smallest valves, yet they also lasted longer. The first transistors, germanium wafers, soon gave way to junction transistors that could use the cheaper element, silicon, as semiconductor material. Soon it became virtually the only raw material required.

The impetus to substitute transistors for valves came in the first instance from American demand. Progress in application had been relatively slow, however, during the early stages, and the first practical consumer device to use transistors was a hearing aid. None the less, by 1956 radio had come into the picture, and the first hand-held transistor radios were being marketed. From then onwards, the word 'transistor' was applied without fuss in popular language not to the semiconductors but to cheap, light, and portable radio receivers needing only one small dry battery.<sup>3</sup> They ushered in a universal radio revolution, visible in places as different, for example, as Britain's beaches, where the 'transistor' was taken up eagerly by young consumers, and the deserts of the Middle East, where the BBC was to attract an entirely new, socially mixed, audience for its overseas services.<sup>4</sup>

Mass production of transistors developed first in the United States during the early 1950s; and in 1959 sales of transistors for the first time exceeded the sales of valves. Silicon Valley was now charted on the world map. When in 1957 production of transistors was started in Britain, at Southampton by the Mullard Company, which for a generation had produced valves and wireless receivers, *The Economist* for once looked backwards, not forwards, and warned its readers that the germanium transistor was 'not impressive to look at': it was 'a highly sophisticated version of the original "cat's whisker"'.<sup>5</sup> For the

<sup>3</sup> See R. M. Warner and B. L. Grung, *Transistors* (1983).

<sup>4</sup> For the genuinely revolutionary implications of the transistor radio in the Middle East and other parts of the world see G. Mansell, *Let Truth Be Told* (1982), p. 239. Set ownership trebled in Communist Central and Eastern Europe between 1955 and 1965, increased five times in the Middle East, six times in China, and twelve times in Africa and India. See also D. Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society* (1964).

<sup>5</sup> 'Transistors by the Million', *The Economist*, 8 June 1957. Cat's whiskers made from galena (lead sulphide) had served as crude amplifiers. It required advances in physics to furnish explanations that made possible the Bell team's discoveries. For the real cat's whiskers, a term that became metaphorical, see *The Birth of Broadcasting*, p. 200.



historian also, looking backwards is essential. Two distinct phases of radio history were now spanned. They had been separated in the golden age of wireless by valve wireless sets (and 'radiograms') of extraordinary diversity, in technical range, in appearance, and, above all, in price. They all began to look out-of-date, even to become museum exhibits.

During the late 1950s, transistors in Britain were painstakingly assembled almost entirely by hand, and valve sets, especially the larger and more powerful models, remained competitive until the mid-1960s, when integrated circuits began to be developed commercially and as transistor design was improved.<sup>6</sup> The use of small pieces of semiconductor material enabled the components of an electronic circuit, such as resistors and connecting wires, to be replaced by strips of various 'printed materials' deposited on an insulator base. This simplification had far-reaching implications for broadcasting, both at the 'producing' and the 'receiving' end, and, indeed, for industry as a whole.

Inexorably there was a further reduction in size as automatic processes were followed in every stage of production. There was also extended 'memory'. The microprocessor, a semiconductor chip that incorporated the complete central processing unit of a computer, was invented in 1971. Microelectronics had come of age.<sup>7</sup>

### 3. Computers

As far as British broadcasting was concerned, computer application was only in its first stages in 1974, when this volume ends. The biggest changes were to come later. None the less, the BBC's Engineering Division had begun to use computers in design calculations for aerials and in analysing equipment faults, and computer technology had already advanced far enough to influence lighting consoles and to generate new art-forms such as electronic music and the design and use of computer graphics. There was even talk of 'pro-

<sup>6</sup> For the origins of the integrated circuit see M. F. Wolff, 'The Genesis of the Integrated Circuit', *IEEE Spectrum*, Aug. 1976. The term was first used by the Motorola company. See also F. F. Mazda, *Integrated Circuits* (1978).

<sup>7</sup> See T. Forester (ed.), *The Microelectronics Revolution* (1980), and P. Large, *The Micro Revolution Revisited* (1984).

gramming a programme' and of designing cameras to focus automatically.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, at a practical level, a computerized management information system had been developed in BBC Television 'in a context of increased complexity': it was based on a computerized two-file record of programmes to be produced and of resources that were available.<sup>2</sup>

'Television Management long ago decided', wrote David Jones, Chief Assistant, Planning, in 1968, 'that Programme Planning was one of the areas in which a computer might help. A computer's ability to make difficult calculations swiftly and reliably, to remember instructions, to compare situations, and to communicate rapidly gave it the promise of being a valuable planning aid.'<sup>3</sup> Joanna Spicer, Assistant Controller, Planning, Television, under whom Jones worked, realized this. So, too, did controllers of television budgets.

The year 1974 was to prove an interesting year in the story, for it was then that radio also was brought into the picture and a micro-computer was installed by the BBC's External Services to control all the output from the fifty-two studios in Bush House. The micro-computer linked the Control Room with distant transmitters in a new switch system that had previously been operated manually.<sup>4</sup> This was one of the first European examples of a fully automated broadcasting control system, applied to external, not to domestic broadcasting. Outside Europe, Japan had led the way.<sup>5</sup> Switching, pre-set by computer, was now possible every five minutes, rather than every

<sup>1</sup> Redmond, loc. cit., p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> 'BBC Television Computer Applications', Appendix 1 of 'The Application of Computers to Broadcasting Needs', Paper prepared for the Eighth Commonwealth Broadcasting Conference, June 1970. See also *Ariel*, 23 March 1973, 'Computer takes the chore out of music listing'.

<sup>3</sup> D. Jones, 'Television Production Planning—Computers Can Help', *Ariel*, Dec. 1968. Jones referred to the help the BBC had received from the staff of the Centre of Computing and Automation at Imperial College. The BBC had established a Bursary at Imperial College for a postgraduate student in this field. Jones's last paragraph was headed 'Only a starting point'.

<sup>4</sup> The system was to be briefly described by the BBC in its evidence to the Annan Committee: it operated, it was said, with 'reduced manpower, yet very high reliability'. Alterations, if required, could be made at short notice (*The Committee on the Future of Broadcasting, 1974: BBC Memorandum, Engineering*, p. 6).

<sup>5</sup> In 1968 NHK in Japan was the first broadcasting institution to introduce a 'total on-line programme and information control system'. It had taken five years to develop. In 1970 the EBU held a symposium on the subject, at which four papers were read by BBC authors (see Pawley, op. cit., pp. 472–3). In 1975 BBC External Services were to introduce an electronic distribution system for news and current affairs (EDS) which was computer-controlled.

fifteen, and, in consequence, there could be more flexibility in programme planning.

In the same year, the significance of such changes was clearly identified in a lecture by F. J. M. Laver on 'Information Engineering and Society'. It ended with a plea to 'information engineers' to explain the implications of their work to the public, so that an 'informed discussion' could begin.<sup>6</sup> 'Information technology' was coming into its own. So, too, was computer education, although it was not until eight years later that the BBC was to begin a pioneering Computer Literacy Project.<sup>7</sup>

It had taken a long time to realize the possibilities inside the BBC, and the early stages in the story are uninspiring. After the first BBC Working Party on Electronic Computers had been set up in November 1954, the Board of Management had not approved the main proposal of the Working Party, made two years later, that the BBC should go out to tender and acquire a computer. More than one BBC department had been involved in prior discussions about the acquisition and use of computers, but only the Finance Division pressed for a computer, and a very limited proposal was agreed in April 1957—that the payroll division of the BBC should be computerized. The Corporation was not alone at this time in restricting computerization to this regularly recurring and essentially dull management task.

Even then there was further delay. With the support of the Finance Division, the Working Party had also proposed that an electronic computer expert be recruited to the Central Establishment Office for two years in order to examine 'the possibility of whether the working methods and processes of the Corporation were susceptible to treatment by computer'.<sup>8</sup> It was not until October 1958, however, that D. M. Preston was recruited from Elliott Brothers to carry out this examination. Greene was then Director of Administration,<sup>9</sup> but by the time that Preston had produced his report in April 1961, Greene had become Director-General.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See F. J. M. Laver, 'Information Engineering and Society', Ninth Lubbock Memorial Lecture, 1974.

<sup>7</sup> See J. Radcliffe (ed.), *Towards Computer Literacy* (1983). Radcliffe, an Executive Producer, BBC Continuing Education Department, Television, was later (1984–9) Head of the BBC's Open University Production Unit.

<sup>8</sup> 'D. M. Preston, 'Feasibility Report on Electronic Data Processing in the BBC', 25 April 1961 (Staff: Automation—Reports).

<sup>9</sup> See above, p. 311.

<sup>10</sup> See above, p. 311. \*D. M. Preston, loc. cit.

There was still further delay, and when at last in July 1962, on Preston's recommendation, the BBC's first computer, a National-Elliott 803B, was installed in the Langham building, Preston had to defend its presence cautiously in the pages of *Ariel*. 'This device', he still found it necessary to explain, 'has not been constructed from a design originating in Andromeda'—a cross-reference to Fred Hoyle and science fiction. Nor was it, 'we hope, malignant'.<sup>11</sup> It was to be controlled by the Central Establishment Office, and would deal mainly with audience research work, rendering obsolete earlier punch-card and counter-sorter equipment.

Fortunately for the BBC, Preston was not telling the whole story. The computer was to do more than that. Up to half its time was to be made available for 'experimentation' in other BBC activities,<sup>12</sup> and the Engineering Division's Research Department, so named as early as 1930, became a main user. Moreover, in 1963 a second computer, an ICT (ICL) 1500, was installed at 2 Cavendish Square, not far from Broadcasting House, to deal with pay and salaries; and a year later a second ICT 1500 was purchased when a move was made around the Square to No. 33. Soon afterwards, computers figured for the first time in a *BBC Handbook*: the BBC's Director of Administration, J. H. Arkell, collaborated with F. C. (later Sir Francis) McLean, Director of Engineering, in an article called 'Automation and Computers in the BBC'.<sup>13</sup>

In the same year, 1964, before the launching of BBC-2, the Research Department had used an outside high-power UNIVAC computer to predict the service area for the new network, based on what was called a 'spot map' of the proposed transmission points.<sup>14</sup> This was an urgently necessary task, one of a variety of respons-

<sup>11</sup> D. M. Preston, 'The BBC's First Automatic Computer', *Ariel*, Aug. 1962. For *Andromeda*, see above, p. 424. After claiming that names were thought of first and then turned into acronyms like Fred (Frightfully Rapid Electronic Device), Preston said that no prizes were offered for a name for the computer in the Langham building. The world's first commercially distributed data system, American Airlines 'Sabre', was introduced in 1961.

<sup>12</sup> Brian Emmett, then Assistant in Charge, Projects and Development, Audience Research, who was in July 1968 to succeed Robert Silvey as Head of the Department, was responsible for determining its role in audience research. He had joined the department in 1948 as a statistician.

<sup>13</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1965, pp. 32-5.

<sup>14</sup> For the launching of BBC-2 see above, pp. 402 ff. Much of the work of the Research Department was concerned with the planning of networks for national coverage of television and VHF radio. The Department was assisted by a Scientific Advisory Committee, first set up in 1948, the name of which was changed to Engineering Advisory Committee in April 1961. It strengthened the BBC's links with industry and the world of education.

ibilities to be shouldered by the planners of BBC-2. Fortunately, the Research Department was more than a service station. It was a centre of innovation that could, and did, directly affect programming as well as television and radio networking. Its staff increased from 215 in 1955 to 251 in 1965, a peak year. It was then spending about 1 per cent of the BBC's total income.<sup>15</sup>

The extension of networks, like the switch to a 625-line standard in television, had implications for BBC-1 also, for the old network was replaced by radio links in the same geographical configuration as those of BBC-1.<sup>16</sup> Computerization subsequently made it possible to control, monitor, and switch transmitters. It also enabled data to be transmitted in digital form on some of the lines. The ITA was to benefit from this process, as well as the BBC.

Meanwhile, the importance of computerization was being more generally recognized in BBC departments outside Engineering, although the process of discussion about what could be done, how it could be done, and, above all, how much it would cost remained difficult and protracted. Thus, while a management information service in Television (TMIS) had first been proposed in 1966—to deal with what had by then become a routine need, the planning, budgeting, and reporting of programmes—it did not become operational until October 1969, in the year after David Jones wrote his article in *Ariel*. A Television Computer Steering Group, which had examined in detail the operation of such a service, had focused on the importance of computerization in effective management.<sup>17</sup> It would reduce complexity without decreasing flexibility, facilitate longer-range forecasting, and provide 'a solid and common information basis' from which monitoring could be 'effected' and 'control exercised'.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Pawley, *op. cit.*, p. 424. Numbers employed in the Department fell to 237 in 1970, and in 1974 were 246. At current prices, outlay on the Department quadrupled between 1955 and 1974. Each year the Department produced an annual report.

<sup>16</sup> Before the advent of BBC-2, the network of television links comprised about 3,000 route miles, 1,700 of which were rented from the Post Office (*ibid.*, p. 495). In 1974 the figure had risen to nearly 5,200 miles, 3,700 of them Post Office radio links. The BBC itself then operated, for financial reasons, more than 1,000 miles of the permanent vision network (*ibid.*, p. 498).

<sup>17</sup> \*T. Smith, Head of Television Computer Services, wrote a paper on the subject in 1974, 'The BBC's Television Management Information Service: The History and the Future', and has recalled the history in *Television, Journal of the Royal Television Society*, June 1986. See also C. Lashmar, 'Television and Computers: A Report on Progress', July 1967 (Staff—Automation—Reports). Radio Computer Services was not set up until 1979.

<sup>18</sup> \*Smith, *loc. cit.* For television planning, see above, p. 388. The new procedure started six months before the beginning of the year, thus allowing the costing of alternative plans and providing incentives 'to reduce costs'.

'Decision taking' would be more soundly based and (optimistically) larger sums would be left over for programming. Between 1966 and 1968, pre-McKinsey, management, based on systematic budgeting, was already moving to the top of the BBC's agenda.<sup>19</sup>

#### 4. Perspectives

By 1974, when the TMIS service was fully established, new communications technology was no longer concerned only with systems, managerial or technical. Nor was the word 'information', which was being used more than ever before, proving comprehensive enough to cover all aspects of communications use. The prospects of computerization were already being associated with increased consumer choice. Across the Atlantic, indeed, 'consumer electronics' was already beginning to offer to the public what were coming to be thought of as 'technological goodies' or 'the new toys of the Information Society', physical products that could be bought and sold.<sup>1</sup>

Automation at work had created economic and social problems; electronics in the home, it was now confidently promised, would offer new social and cultural outlets. Following in the wake of pocket calculators, there would now be not only video tapes and video cassettes or discs but video games. There would be electronic leisure as well as electronic business. In Europe the first International Market of Video Cassettes and Video Discs (VIDCA) was held in Cannes, an appropriate rendezvous, in 1971. Unlike the Film Festival, it was a 'bazaar' for 'hardware', a term that computers had endowed with

<sup>19</sup> See above, p. 381. Jones and Lashmar of the BBC joined P. L. Clout and P. M. Grey of Imperial College in presenting a paper on 'A Graphical Display to Aid Resource Allocation' to the International Federation of Operational Research Societies in Venice in 1969.

<sup>1</sup> As late as 1979, however, the term 'consumer electronics', in regular use in the USA, was still little used in Britain. So too the term 'electronic leisure'. See A. Robertson (ed.), *From Television to Home Computer: The Future of Consumer Electronics* (1979), and S. Hayman, 'Satellite Communications', *The Listener*, 23 April 1981. Her subtitle was 'A satellite in the sky can generate industry on the ground'. For the words 'technological goodies', a later term, see J. Black, 'Changing Technology, Scholarly Communication and the Research Library', in B. Stuart-Stubbs (ed.), *Changing Technology and Education for Librarianship in Information Science*, Report of a Conference (1985).



new significance, and at the second Market in 1972 it was reported that the hardware was becoming more and more impressive.<sup>2</sup>

'Software' received less attention, although within future vistas it was already being forecast that the individual would soon be placed in a position where he or she could actually become a 'programme selector' and not merely a receiver of 'mass television' programmes planned by professionals within the framework of a broadcasting week or season. He (or she) would be able to choose not only what to see in video bazaars, as was already the case with what to hear in record shops, but, through home recording of broadcast programmes, when to see it. Such possibilities were mainly talked about, rather than acted upon, within the last years of the period covered in this volume. It was not until the 1980s that the real take-off began.<sup>3</sup>

In education big claims were being made for individual use of new technology, not least in schools; and publishers, as well as broadcasting organizations, were present at Cannes. Teaching machines and 'programmed learning', for example, were thought to have exciting possibilities, both at school and university level, although again they were more talked about than used.<sup>4</sup> Another new device, Radio-visual, eloquently advocated and cheap to install, was used successfully in BBC broadcasts to schools, but fairly quickly lost its appeal.<sup>5</sup> The most significant educational technologies in retrospect were those that promised 'open learning', a widening of access to a widening range of services. Yet the Open University, committed to open learning, began not with new technologies, but with the existing electronic technologies of radio and television.

First conceived of as a University of the Air, it quickly appreciated the value of radio, but it had to develop its courses within time schedules never entirely of its own making. It relied entirely on the BBC system, and when it took in its first students in 1971, they were

<sup>2</sup> *Television Mail*, 17 March 1972. See also *ibid.*, 26 May 1972, 'Philips Wins Video Cassette Race'. Dennis Seuse ended an article on video cassettes in *Ariel*, 4 Feb. 1972, with the words 'Nobody knows when the big bonanza will happen or whether it will be fact or fiction.'

<sup>3</sup> See R. Moorfoot, *Television in the Eighties: The Total Equation* (1982).

<sup>4</sup> An interesting paper of 1 Dec. 1965, written by Richmond Postgate, then Controller, Educational Broadcasting, asked for an 'urgent' BBC response to the spread of closed circuit educational television in universities and local authority institutions. Engineering, as well as programme advice, was frequently being sought. Postgate raised tricky but crucial questions of BBC consultancy, of outside access to BBC materials, of training, and of secondment ('BBC Educational Television and New Developments' (T16/374)).

<sup>5</sup> See above, p. 482.

tied to weekly times set not by itself but by the BBC.<sup>6</sup> Curiously, however, Sir Hugh Greene had told Anthony Crosland, the then Secretary of State for Education and Science, in November 1965, that the Open University, about which Crosland was far from enthusiastic, might think in the long run about the employment of less conventional methods. He did not mention video discs or cassettes, but drew attention to satellites, and sent Crosland a memorandum on direct broadcasting by satellite which, he warned, might read 'rather like science fiction'. 'Developments in this field', he added, 'are moving fast and it might be possible before many years have passed to avoid the very high expenditure inseparable from today's conventional methods.'<sup>7</sup> There was prophecy in this.

The philosophy of the Open University was severely practical, and it rejected the notion that learning in the future would be totally different from in the past. Historical continuities would not be broken. Indeed, at a time when prophets, fascinated by new technologies, were already predicting the death of the book, the Open University skilfully used books and other published materials—of high quality—as well as television and computers.<sup>8</sup> It also emphasized from the start the role in education of the individual tutor, a traditional British role, in assisting the student to learn at his or her own pace. The electronic media, it asserted, would never suffice. OU tutors made the same point also when, in their pioneering courses on technology, they always dealt with it critically, rightly treating it as a subject of debate as well as of forecasting. Technology, the courses implied, should serve man, not control him. Charles Curran, Greene's successor as Director-General, said the same in the *BBC Handbook* for 1970 when he warned future committees of inquiry into the future of broadcasting not to be 'so bemused by the technological advances of the age that they lose sight of the values to which all technology is ancillary—as the servant and not the master'.<sup>9</sup>

In similar vein, most BBC statements about technology during the late 1960s and early 1970s, unlike most American statements, many of which had a manifesto-like quality about them, stressed the links between the present and the recent and the distant past. Moreover,

<sup>6</sup> See above, pp. 567 ff, and below, pp. 935–6.

<sup>7</sup> \*Greene to Crosland, 29 Nov. 1965 (R31/101/6).

<sup>8</sup> See below, p. 935.

<sup>9</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1970, p. 32.

they did this both when management and when engineering was being discussed.<sup>10</sup> Thus Redmond, who had succeeded McLean as Director of Engineering in 1968, dealt with development rather than with revolution in his far-ranging Lunch-Time Lecture on 'Radio and Television Engineering—the next Phase', delivered in March 1969. He quoted with approval a comment of the then Postmaster-General, John Stonehouse, that anyone who claimed that he knew for certain how television would develop and what impact it would have on society during the remaining thirty years of the century was probably a fool; while anyone who claimed that he understood how television would shape during the next century was probably an idiot. 'I have no doubt', Redmond added, 'that he was right.'<sup>11</sup>

While mentioning 'cassette television' and promising 'an exciting future', Redmond concentrated on the effects of computer technology on the BBC and on what had already been achieved in radio and television.<sup>12</sup> So, too, did Curran when in 1972, in the first of a series of lectures on 'Broadcasting Technology—Past, Present and Future', delivered at the headquarters of the Institution of Electrical Engineers in Savoy Place, he focused on continuity in technological development, as represented by BBC Engineering. He also acknowledged the pride of BBC engineers who had created a BBC tradition, a tradition upon which Director-Generals depended as much as programme makers.<sup>13</sup> Curran had begun by recalling that he was lecturing in the place where the first meetings had been held in 1922 that had led to the setting up of the BBC.

Curran's lecture, which incorporated little crystal-gazing, was scheduled as part of the BBC's jubilee celebrations, and while in the course of it he described broadcasting as 'a technologically-based industry', he insisted, as he had done in the *BBC Handbook* for 1970, that the relevant communications technology, much of it directly related to programming, was always instrumental. There had to be purpose too. Most of the possible impact of technology would be

<sup>10</sup> For the American emphasis on discontinuity, see P. Drucker, *The Age of Discontinuity* (1968).

<sup>11</sup> Redmond, loc. cit.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. In dealing with Video-cassette television, he observed that 'the cost of the attachment and the cassettes may restrict their use to educational and training purposes, but they could become popular in the years ahead'.

<sup>13</sup> In 1958 the BBC published a useful and handsome brochure just after the twenty-first anniversary of British television, *BBC Television, a British Engineering Achievement*. 'BBC engineers', it stated in the forward, 'have always been pioneers. For twenty-one years they have occupied a position in the forefront of television development.'

greatest, he suggested, in the studio, the place which computerization was only gradually reaching. Television producers had always been interested in cameras, their size, adaptability, and efficiency. They had become deeply interested, too, however, in more general developments, like the use of colour and the improvement and extension of recording facilities. Fascination with technique, however, was not in Curran's view enough. 'Programme need among the audience' always had to be studied carefully.

It was in the combination of two kinds of appreciation—'the technical and the socio-cultural', Curran concluded, 'that the true skill of broadcasting management' always resided.<sup>14</sup> A few years later, in the BBC's evidence to the Annan Committee, liaison between technical staff and programme makers was to be described as 'vital and continuous';<sup>15</sup> but Curran admitted in 1972, while praising the engineers, that there could be tensions between producers and engineers in the studio or in what went on before programmes reached the studio: as Cecil McGivern had claimed twenty-five years before, engineers might not be as aware of the new programming possibilities opened up by technological development as the programme staff themselves.<sup>16</sup>

Television producers liked to experiment, and radio producers too had long been interested in experiments in sound, even before the first stereo records were put on sale in the shops.<sup>17</sup> For this reason there was a built-in BBC commitment to the development of stereo, which some producers believed did for radio what colour did for television. Trethowan singled it out when he lectured on radio after the publication of *Broadcasting in the Seventies*.<sup>18</sup> It was not only the broadcasting of music that was affected, although in music, in particular, listeners were themselves demanding technical improvement after the rapid commercial development of stereo long-playing records, and stereo had the enormous advantage of enabling the

<sup>14</sup> C. Curran, *The BBC in the Eighties: The Relationship between Broadcast Policy, Programme Needs and Technological Potential*, 14 Nov. 1972.

<sup>15</sup> *The Committee on the Future of Broadcasting: BBC Evidence, Engineering*.

<sup>16</sup> \*McGivern to Norman Collins, 16 Dec. 1948 (WAC file T16/98/1). 'The technical quality of a television programme . . . was totally important' ('Report of a Meeting between Light Entertainment Producers and Engineers, 15 Oct. 1958 (T31/70/3)'). For examples of how the relationship between programme makers and engineers worked out in practice, both in outside broadcasting and in the studio, see above, p. 213, and below, p. 858. There was always an engineer in the background, and for a good working relationship to be established, he had to be a partner and not an agent.

<sup>17</sup> 'Going Stereophonic', *The Economist*, 1 Feb. 1958.

<sup>18</sup> I. Trethowan, 'Radio in the Seventies', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 8th ser., 5 March 1970.

listener to follow music and speech in whatever proportions he preferred. A mobile stereo desk was put into service for the first time at the Aldeburgh Festival in June 1966.

A radio programme of 1973, *A Pair of Ears*, written by Alan Dell, traced the development of popular stereo music on LPs over a period of fifteen years; while in the same week Desmond Briscoe produced an anthology of stereo pieces created by the BBC Radiophonic Workshop. There was also a repeat in stereo (with Raymond Raikes as producer) of *Danger*, a play by Richard Hughes that had first been produced for the BBC by Lance Sieveking, a dedicated experimenter, in 1924. 'Loftily dismissed in BBC engineering circles as a transitory gimmick in its earlier years,' Douglas Cleverdon generalized in an article written in 1973, 'stereo has emerged as an essential development in radio.'<sup>19</sup>

Curran did not mention 'gimmicks' in his lecture, although he stressed throughout that technological development would not stop. There was no arrival point at which 'one halts and says "no more"'. 'Technological change, unlike the pleasures of travel, is something which is enjoyed because it never ends.' Curran made it clear also that when he talked of 'technological development' he had all kinds of technology in mind, the simple as well as the complex, the 'embryonic' and the 'mature'. An example of the simplest variety was the teleprompter, which enabled newsreaders, commentators—and even politicians—to broadcast without appearing to be reading from a script.<sup>20</sup> The most striking example of the second was the development of satellites, which captured public attention during the 1960s even more than the development of colour television.<sup>21</sup> The only use of the word 'satellite' in the BBC report on twenty-five years of engineering achievement in television published in 1961 had been with reference to satellite low-power transmitting stations extending television coverage to new areas.<sup>22</sup>

The BBC's Engineering Division, which Curran rightly praised so warmly, was concerned with an impressive variety of tasks, which ranged from research, designs, and transmitter and studio planning,

<sup>19</sup> 'Stereo', in *The Listener*, 11 Oct. 1973.

<sup>20</sup> For condemnation of the teleprompter see R. Day, *Grand Inquisitor* (1990 edn.), pp. 131–2.

<sup>21</sup> See K. W. Gatland (ed.), *Telecommunications Satellites* (1964); A. R. Michaelis, *From Semaphore to Satellite* (1965).

<sup>22</sup> *BBC Television, a British Engineering Achievement* (rev. edn., 1961), p. 14. There was a photograph of the television satellite station at Hastings.

through operations and maintenance, to equipment engineering and development and engineering information. It was necessarily interested also both in the properties of carrier circuits and in the receiving end of both radio and television. There was a wealth of experience available at each point in the range and at the top. McLean, who had succeeded Sir Harold Bishop as Director in 1963,<sup>23</sup> had joined the BBC in 1937 to head the Radio Section of the Design and Installation Department, and during the war had been Chief Engineer of the Psychological Warfare Division of SHAEF.<sup>24</sup> Tony Bridgewater, who had joined the BBC in 1932 and had become Senior Maintenance Engineer when television began four years later, was Chief Engineer, Television, from 1962 to 1968, and it was he who was responsible for the complex engineering developments necessary to put BBC-2 on the air.<sup>25</sup>

Redmond was just short of fifty when he became Director. Like McLean, he had joined the BBC in 1937—at a very different level—from the Merchant Navy, and in 1938 he had moved to television at Alexandra Palace as a vision mixer. He returned to television after the war, spending much of his time in telerecording and video-recording. In 1963 he became Superintendent Engineer, Television, and in 1967 Assistant Director of Engineering.<sup>26</sup> When he was interviewed by *Ariel* after his appointment as Director, he laid particular stress on the development of colour and of automation, but the interviewer, who noted what weight the post of Director carried outside the BBC, shifted the emphasis to resources, thereby raising a different but equally important range of questions. Obtaining new equipment, Redmond replied, usually meant 'striking a compromise between the ideal requirements of the user and the cost of development'.

Financial factors always influenced technological development in a direct way outside as well as inside the BBC, for 'technological advance' could never be divorced from economics. Curran knew this more than some of his colleagues in television. He knew too that Sir William Haley had been forced to recognize the relationship after 1945 when the future of television was being considered.

<sup>23</sup> Bishop had been President of the Royal Television Society from 1961 to 1962.

<sup>24</sup> For his career see *Ariel*, May 1968.

<sup>25</sup> See above, pp. 404–5, and his important article 'Putting BBC-2 on the Air', *Ariel*, April 1964.

<sup>26</sup> When Redmond became Director, D. B. Weigall was Deputy Director, D. E. Todd was Assistant Director, and Edward Pawley, historian of the Division, was Chief Engineer, External Relations.



Philosophically averse to giving priority to television development, Haley would have found it difficult to press ahead at full speed even had he believed differently.<sup>27</sup> In a period of austerity, physical controls were being imposed by the Government: they were an essential prop of its policies. Yet, when austerity gave way to 'affluence', as it soon did, economics still could not be left out, as Jacob, who believed in television, very quickly realized. Greene had to worry about the relationship less than Curran, who was forced to consider broadcasting priorities at every state of his Director-Generalship.

Redmond, who after his retirement from the BBC in 1978 was to become in his later years a member of the Council of the Open University, expressed the hope, which was shared by governments, that the kind of equipment that the BBC recommended for use in studio and transmitting plant would be 'attractive to other broadcasters'. He believed that 'more cooperation . . . with the radio industry' would help its export sales.<sup>28</sup> The argument was to be used often, but it did not prevent the British communications industry from losing ground to Germany and the United States and, above all, to Japan.

## 5. Recording

Within the BBC itself, where there was a lively interest in the most up-to-date technology, acute awareness both of technical possibilities and of financial restraints was apparent in relation to one of the main changes of the period, the growth of recording, both in radio and in television. Less glamorized than the development of satellites or of colour television, changes in recording, which depended largely on the outside industry to which Redmond drew attention, transformed almost every aspect of broadcasting. In 1955 magnetic tape accounted for 60 per cent of BBC sound recordings: in 1960 the comparable figure was around 80 per cent. Five years later, apart from one or two specialist uses, like research on the writing of the earlier volumes of this *History* where an old disc dictaphone was used, the victory of magnetic tape over disc was complete.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>27</sup> He dreamed of a 'married service of television and sound', which he conceived of as 'the sensible and desirable end' (Haley to Sir George Barnes, 28 Sept. 1958 (Barnes Papers)).

<sup>28</sup> *Ariel*, April 1968.

<sup>1</sup> The first cumbersome recording system employed by the BBC in 1930 had used steel tape. It was gradually replaced by a disc system from 1935 onwards. See Briggs, *The Golden Age of Wireless*, pp. 93–7.

There was a far more significant victory also. In 1960 about half the sound programmes broadcast for the British audience were broadcast live. 'Everything happened in real time.'<sup>2</sup> By the mid-1970s there were very few programmes that were not recorded. The exceptions were news and current affairs programmes, although, even in the case of these, inserts, increasingly common, were regularly recorded—in time they were to become the major element in the programmes—as were many outside broadcasts of 'events', including sports and concerts.

There was a concomitant change also in broadcasting practice. As recording became an accepted part of standard BBC routines, recording operations switched from what were often remote recording rooms to adjacent studio cubicles. In the BBC's Transcription Unit, which made available copies of BBC radio programmes for sale overseas, all the old equipment was replaced by 1964, when the headquarters of the Unit were transferred to Kensington House, Shepherd's Bush. A dozen Studer machines were then installed: they were made in Switzerland.

A valuable weapon in the victory of recording was a new EMI tape recorder, the TR90, lighter in weight than any of its predecessors and mountable on trolleys. It was first purchased in 1957, and in the same year the BBC Designs Department developed a transistorized version.<sup>3</sup> The miniaturization of the recorder and of the loudspeaker, like the miniaturization of the camera, was accompanied by greater standardization of speeds, guided by the European Broadcasting Union.<sup>4</sup> Switzerland, which provided the administrative headquarters of the EBU, also produced some of the most successful recorder models of the 1960s, but the German Uher 4000, half the weight of the EMI product, soon became the favoured 'midget' recorder in BBC use.

By the mid-1960s so much tape was being employed inside the BBC that a tape reclamation service, already in existence for ten years, was central in a new Unit in Broadcasting House. There had been previous efforts by 'lapidarists' working at Maida Vale to re-grind the styluses that cut the old-fashioned discs, and now new equipment

<sup>2</sup> Moorfoot, *op. cit.*, pp. 8–9. He was recalling his own experiences.

<sup>3</sup> The transistorized version took advantage of work carried out by the Designs Department on the making of a tape recorder robust enough to withstand the rigours of a Transarctic expedition in 1957 (Pawley, *op. cit.*, p. 489).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 490. BBC engineers were regularly seconded to the EBU's Technical Centre.

was acquired to test old tapes, to use strong magnetization to erase from old tapes in bulk, and to join pieces of tape that were still usable. It was not only retrieval and storage that mattered. Mixing now became far easier as editorial processes were simplified, and editing itself became an art. Pop music was affected as well as the broadcasting of words. Meanwhile, quality remained an important criterion, particularly in the recording of music, although it proved difficult to apply common standards to the record industry and to broadcasting.<sup>5</sup>

Much changed in consequence of the development of recording, although the extent of the change was not immediately apparent. In time, even the appearance of Broadcasting House itself changed. There had once been crowds outside it 'in town tonight'. Now it was just as quiet on Saturday evenings as it was on Sunday mornings. Lime Grove lost its onlookers too, as television recording developed. Television Centre had never been 'in town', but its daily routines were affected also. On the day of its opening, two new recording machines were installed, VTRs 9 and 10. The acronym VTR was as new as the building.<sup>6</sup>

In television the technical difficulties of recording were greater than they were in radio, because far more electrical information had to be stored and retrieved; but before most people even in the BBC's Television Service knew what a videotape recording was, machines had been developed to record television pictures and sound on film.<sup>7</sup> 'Telerecording', a new word, was not popular with engineers,<sup>8</sup> but telerecordings were much in use before the advent of videotape and the opening of Television Centre. They provided a valuable means of recording events and programmes.<sup>9</sup>

It was not the quest for improvement of quality, but the desire on the part of producers to achieve a wide range of 'instant replay', that encouraged engineers to turn to tape. As its use increased, production techniques were transformed, offering producers a totally new kind

<sup>5</sup> Some measure of agreement had been reached in 1955, and was incorporated in recommendations of the International Electrotechnical Commission for discs and of the International Radio Consultative Committee for tapes.

<sup>6</sup> Hitherto VTRs had been known as VRs. Within two years the R was dropped. See J. Nash, 'Video-Tape's First Ten Years', *Ariel*, Nov. 1968.

<sup>7</sup> For early recording through film, see Pawley, *op. cit.*, pp. 491-2.

<sup>8</sup> In a *BBC Glossary of Terms* (1953 edn.), the word 'telerecording' first appears ('Telerecording, *abb.* for Television Recording'), before the advent of videotape recording, but the word was not to figure in the index of Pawley, *op. cit.*, although it crept into the text once on p. 492.

<sup>9</sup> See Briggs, *Sound and Vision* (1979), pp. 202, 255-6.

of freedom in dealing both with performers and with locations.<sup>10</sup> In drama, so-called discontinuous recording, far more expensive than continuous recording, gave the producer some of the flexibility of a film producer, and already by 1963 the practice had spread to music production, religious broadcasting, and school and adult education broadcasting.<sup>11</sup> A year later, there were complaints that very few directors had 'any experience at all of handling live productions'. *Z Cars* was the one exception.<sup>12</sup>

Editing too was transformed, as laborious cutting and joining of tape with adhesive strips and identification of where to cut by 'edit pulses' at marked points gave way to 'electronic editing'. Two videotape recorders were used, and accurate timing for replaying from replay to record and back again was perfected. So, too, was a control system to allow the edit to be rehearsed, re-rehearsed with timing changes, and finally carried through. One technology encouraged others.<sup>13</sup> 'Pre-editing', for example, saved time in the main editing suites after small helical scan VT machines were brought into use.<sup>14</sup>

As far as BBC engineers were concerned, the turning-point in relation to 'instant replay' seemed to have come in April 1958, with the demonstration of Britain's first videotape recorder, VERA (Vision Electronic Recording Apparatus), developed after six years of patient work by Dr P. E. Axon and his colleagues in the BBC Research Department and recording on half-inch magnetic tape running at

<sup>10</sup> See above, p. 213.

<sup>11</sup> An important memorandum on comparative costs was written by Joanna Spicer ('Spicer to Leonard Miall, Assistant Controller, Programme Services, Television, 'Discontinuous Pre-Recordings: Expenditure and Cost for the April/June Quarter 1963', 10 Oct. 1963 (T16/205/5)). She estimated that the cost was almost double, and that the practice was increasing rapidly. In 1967 it was estimated that general studio recording time was roughly three times the length of the final production. Two-thirds of the tape was left 'on the floor' ('Note by B. A. Batchelor, Organiser, Series, Drama, Television, 'Studio Recording Times', 5 April 1967 (T16/205/5)). See also important reports by Patrick Ramsay, the first of which ('The Use of Video Tape', March 1971 (TV Prog. Ops. File: Videotape, 1969-78)) stressed how 'the pace of the Television programme of the early seventies bears no relation to that of ten years ago', due to the use of videotape; and the second of which ('Recording Patterns', 21 Aug. 1974 (TV Man. Reg. file B804-2)) warned about the rising cost of rehearse/record techniques.

<sup>12</sup> \*Operations Meetings, *Minutes*, 22 Oct. 1964. Two of the consequences, Ian Atkins noted, were late starts and overruns. Programme logs reported 'fatalistic' attitudes on the part of camera crews—'Boom in shot', 'camera out of position', 'wrong cut cued', 'music late', and 'artists' fluffs' ('Atkins to Adam, 'Recording: Late Starts and Overruns', 17 Nov. 1964 (T16/205/5)).

<sup>13</sup> See L. Griffiths, 'Video Tape Recording', *Ariel*, 22 Oct. 1971.

<sup>14</sup> \*Ramsay, 'The Use of Videotape, March 1971'.

200 inches per second.<sup>15</sup> A week later, VERA made her debut in *Panorama*. Yet the début was a swan-song. VERA was obviously uncomfortable, and critics, whose main interest was in quality, thought that the best film telerecording remained superior.

The real turning-point had already come not in Britain but in America, where the far less romantically named American Ampex, created in California, had proved immediately successful after it was demonstrated at the annual convention of the National Association of Broadcasters in Chicago in April 1956. The name Ampex was derived from the initials of the company's president, Alexander M. Poniatoff, plus 'ex' for excellence, but the romance in this story lay not in the name but in the story itself. The model was devised by a group of young and relatively unknown engineers, most of them under thirty, working not within a huge corporation like RCA but within a small company.<sup>16</sup> The tape speed of the new Ampex was only fifteen inches per second, as compared with VERA's 200. It employed a reverse process to that followed in audio recording: the information was read across the tape, instead of on a continuous track along its length. A rapidly revolving scanning head rotated at 15,000 r.p.m.

The qualities of Ampex were fully appreciated by BBC engineers Bishop and McLean, who by a coincidence were in the United States at the time of its demonstration.<sup>17</sup> They were conscious of the fact that, as Norman Collins had put it when he worked for the BBC, the development of television recording was a top priority, and conscious too that ITV competition gave the issue a new urgency.<sup>18</sup> For this reason experiments with VERA had been described from time to time to the Governors, who realized how important it was for the

<sup>15</sup> See Pawley, *op. cit.*, p. 492.

<sup>16</sup> In 1947 the company had produced its first magnetic tape audio recorder. See C. Ginsburg, Manager of Ampex, 'The Birth of Video Recording', paper presented to the Eighty-Second Convention of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers, New York, 5 Oct. 1957. The first highly publicized American use of Ampex was for the inauguration of President Eisenhower in 1957.

<sup>17</sup> For the background of BBC visits to America see \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report of Director of Technical Services from 1st February to 30th April 1956'; Board of Management, *Minutes*, 20, 31 May, 23 Aug. 1957; and TV Controllers' Meeting, *Minutes*, 26 June 1957. BBC engineers recognized fully that because of the size of the USA and its division into time zones, finding an effective solution to television recording was even more urgent there than in Britain.

<sup>18</sup> See Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, p. 256. A 35 mm telefilm channel had been set up at Alexandra Palace in Nov. 1949, and a second channel was installed a year later. Recordings of programmes were made by filming a television monitor, but the results were not wholly satisfactory.

BBC to remain ahead in engineering at a time when talented BBC engineers were moving to ITV.<sup>19</sup> They were informed too when Associated-Rediffusion, which had been experimenting with tele-recording on closed circuit, was the first British television company to obtain an Ampex machine and to use it on air in its programme *This Week*, on 26 June 1958, having first demonstrated it in Television House on 24 June.<sup>20</sup>

A strong sense of competition between the BBC and ITV prevailed then and later in relation to recording. In 1960, for example, Ronald Waldman, then Business Manager, Television Programmes, wrote of 'spies' telling him of a deal between ATV and NBC for a supply of colour tapes.<sup>21</sup>

Although the BBC had ordered its first Ampex machine in the spring of 1957,<sup>22</sup> it did not arrive until the autumn of 1958, when it made its début, less ambitious than that of VERA, in a three-minute trailer for *A Tale of Two Cities* on 1 October. The cost was high, and remained high, but by September 1959 six machines, still thought far too few, had been purchased.<sup>23</sup> A mobile version was introduced in 1961, and five mobile recorders were soon employed in the Regions and one in London. In the same year, a central videotape recording area was created at Television Centre. With little fuss VERA had by then faded completely out of existence.<sup>24</sup> All that survived of her when Pawley wrote his history of BBC engineering in 1972 were one of the spools and some of the recording heads.

By then fifty-three Ampex videotape recorders were in use inside the BBC, forty-two of them capable of dealing with colour as well as with monochrome. The first of the latter (Ampex VR2000), a second-generation model, a term that was now being applied to computers, had become available in 1965. Nineteen were in the Regions, and eleven of them were mobile.<sup>25</sup> They had quickly become indispensable both in drama and in news, where despite the desire, whenever

<sup>19</sup> See above, p. 18.

<sup>20</sup> See *Audio-Visual Selling*, 4 July 1958. AR thought the name Ampex too 'olfactory', and replaced it by AV at AR (*Fusion*, AR's House Magazine, 1958).

<sup>21</sup> \*Waldman to Beadle, 'American Standards Equipment', 11 March 1960 (T16/205/5).

<sup>22</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 20 May 1957.

<sup>23</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report by the Director of Television Broadcasting, April-July 1959'.

<sup>24</sup> Bishop reported in 1959 that all work on VERA had stopped (\*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 3 Nov. 1959).

<sup>25</sup> Pawley, *op. cit.*, p. 494.



possible, to broadcast 'live', the whole format of news presentation was transformed by recording.<sup>26</sup>

In the televising of sports, producers and reporters had long hoped to be able to show instantly replays of goals or tries in football or rugby matches or to go back to disputed decisions; and in 1966 the BBC's Designs Department produced a machine capable of slow-motion replay of videotape, which was first used for the soccer World Cup.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately, the German video disc component in it was unreliable, and it was soon replaced by a more reliable Ampex machine, another example of a British recording device being soon superseded. By the end of the decade, replays in slow motion were taken for granted by all sports viewers; in time, they were to prove useful also to sports authorities. While producers exploited them as an art, particularly at the beginning and end of sports programmes, when the music became almost as important as the pictures, referees and judges of all kinds were now subject for the first time to a new televisual scrutiny. Through technology as much as through ideology, authority in sport, as in politics, was becoming more open to doubt.

Such technology remained costly. The first item to be costed was the machine itself. There were significant replacement costs too, apart from the cost of tapes. This was one of two points concerning technological development that Curran did not make in his Lecture, a point that was particularly but not exclusively apparent in the history of recording. Market competition—imperfect competition—determined the pricing of new communications devices like Ampex just as much as it determined the prices of star performers or of sporting events. What was 'economical', a favourite adjective, mattered, with hope lying in the reasonable expectation that, as the size of the market increased, prices would fall.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> See M. Peacock, 'News in Television', *EBU Review*, Jan. 1963; G. Cox, *See It Happen* (1983), p. 138. There was an early recognition of the BBC's need in a memo from Michael Peacock, Editor, Television News, to Donald Edwards, Editor, News and Current Affairs, 'Development of Television News', 7 Dec. 1962 (T16/117/3). The debate on whether there was a need to maintain 'live' broadcasting continued in sound as in television.

<sup>27</sup> In 1962 VTR had been used in horse racing to produce a slow-motion playback of the Grand National (BBC Press Announcement, 4 April 1962).

<sup>28</sup> By 1974 there was growing interest not only in market pricing but in the 'assessment of technology' within its social context. See F. Hetman, *Society and the Assessment of Technology* (1973). See also Sir Montague Finniston, 'The Culture of Technology', Thirteenth Maurice Lubbock Memorial Lecture (1979).

The second point relates to the choice of technologies. As far as new communications devices and packages are concerned, there are inevitably technological choices to make. Options may have to be taken up even when this means that the results of years of research must be discarded. During the 1960s and early 1970s they were usually difficult options too, for money was always at stake as well as quality. Nor was it always possible quickly to substitute one new technology for another. In consequence, there were sometimes long periods of overlap and duplication during which both diplomacy and patience were called for.

This was the case in relation to 405- and 625-line television; it was also the case in relation to colour television and, above all, VHF radio. Tape recording, however, became so indispensable to television programming that its speedy victory was certain. An article in *Ariel* in 1973 describes the BBC's Video Tape Recording Unit as 'one of the busiest sections' at Television Centre. The day started early there and lasted for eighteen hours; the library was a huge programme store that contained 'at least 25,000 tapes'; and the staff were dealing with up to 300 tapes a day. By then the VT recorder 'bore only slight resemblance to its more simple fore-runner of ten years ago'. The punch-line was: 'They've got the TV output taped.'<sup>29</sup>

## 6. VHF

BBC Governors, most of whom were technically unsophisticated, were made aware of some of the complexities not only of tape recording but of changing television from 405 lines to 625 lines and of introducing VHF radio. After the Television Advisory Committee had reported on the first of these subjects in 1959, they minuted their own view that 'questions of broadcasting policy of this importance, though they must necessarily be conditioned by the technical data, should not be governed by them and that other non-technical considerations would be more important in determining the future of the broadcasting services'.<sup>1</sup> On the second subject they had to take

<sup>29</sup> *Ariel*, 9 Feb. 1973.

<sup>1</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 19 March 1959. Change would have to take place, they stated, 'without prejudice to the interests of owners of present-day receivers capable only of receiving transmissions on 405 lines in Bands I and III'.

fuller account of the ramifications, refusing to allow technology by itself to set the pace.

The public always came into the reckoning also, particularly when VHF/FM radio was being discussed. Despite the serious interference after dark with reception on medium-wave broadcasting, there was no public demand for VHF. Apart from the initial costs of acquisition, there was as much awareness of the disadvantages of VHF as there was of its value. In particular, because in a few areas VHF was troubled by distortion and because in all areas careful directional adjusting of aerials was necessary, there was never any shortage of complaints.<sup>2</sup>

The idea of frequency modulation (FM) was not new: it dated back to 1902. The first British trials did not take place, however, until the last year of the Second World War, and it was only during the early 1950s that political pressures built up to speed its development. Some of the critics of 'slow development' in television were also advocates of more rapid development of VHF independently of the BBC.<sup>3</sup> Ian Orr-Ewing was prominent among them, and when Attlee's Labour Government refused to give a go-ahead for the BBC to plan immediately for national coverage of Home, Light, and Third Programmes on VHF in 1951, he and a group of MPs, who realized that VHF development could challenge the BBC's monopoly in sound, pointed out that VHF would open up 'an almost indefinite system of comparatively short-range wave bands', making possible an expansion both of regional and local radio.<sup>4</sup>

Six years later, when the House of Lords discussed broadcasting, Lord Chesham, speaking for the Government, put his trust in VHF for this and for other and older reasons.<sup>5</sup> It would eliminate background noise and interference. There had been a brief improvement in long-wave and medium-wave reception after a European wavelength plan agreed upon at Copenhagen in 1948 had been implemented after March 1950, but the situation had soon deteriorated again.<sup>6</sup> VHF offered a way out. It too, however, very quickly de-

<sup>2</sup> See Pawley, *op. cit.*, p. 488.

<sup>3</sup> Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 375, 379. The Beveridge Committee recommended experiments with VHF local stations (Cmd. 8116 (1951), *Report of the Broadcasting Committee, 1949*, paras. 198, 286).

<sup>4</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 502, col. 255, 11 June 1952; Pawley, *op. cit.*, p. 338. The Government's objections to the BBC plan in 1951 had been entirely economic: they related to national restrictions on capital expenditure, which applied also to television development.

<sup>5</sup> *House of Lords, Official Report*, vol. 201, col. 53, 23 Jan. 1957. See also above, p. 150.

<sup>6</sup> The Plan allocated to the BBC, represented by McLean, one long-wave channel, eleven medium-wave channels, and the use of two 'International Common Frequencies' for its domestic services plus two medium-wave channels for its European Services.

manded planning, and the first European Regional Conference to deal with the planning of VHF broadcasting bands was held at Stockholm in May and June 1952. Thirty countries participated. This was also the first such conference where a computer was used: the Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk employed it to prepare a frequency assignment plan.<sup>7</sup> It was agreed to arrange a second conference in 1957, but this was not in fact held until 1961.<sup>8</sup>

In the meantime, the Television Advisory Committee in London had recommended in December 1953 that FM should be used for any VHF radio services, and the Government had accepted its recommendations in February 1954.<sup>9</sup> Six months later the BBC was authorized to start work on a VHF station, and on 2 May 1955 a station at Wrotham in Kent, the site of which had been acquired in 1949, opened the BBC's first regular VHF/FM transmission of Home, Light, and Third Programmes, serving the London area and south-east England.<sup>10</sup> By the end of the year, two other stations had been added: one of them, Penmon, to carry the Welsh Home Service only, a portent in that it revealed clearly the possibilities of VHF/FM regionalizing and localizing sound broadcasting. Extensive 'field trials' continued with both VHF and UHF.<sup>11</sup> There was a reluctance to move fast.

<sup>7</sup> Pawley, *op. cit.*, p. 412. The Stockholm Conference assigned channels in Band II, one of five bands, to sound broadcasting, and channels in Bands I and III to television.

<sup>8</sup> The first conference had produced a Plan which was not signed by Eastern European countries. The second was.

<sup>9</sup> *Second Report of the Television Advisory Committee 1952* (1954). The argument as to whether to develop VHF/AM instead of VHF/FM had been protracted, and had involved radio manufacturers as well as the BBC. See Geddes, *The Setmakers*, p. 334. In his view the late launching of the VHF radio network was 'an extreme example of British broadcasting's tradition of tolerating delay in the interests of "getting it right"'. There was one unfortunate sentence in the Committee's report: 'The introduction of VHF sound broadcasting is an unwelcome complication.'

<sup>10</sup> Pawley, *op. cit.*, pp. 339-40.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 339, 524. The American story seemed illuminating. In the USA the merits of VHF/FM had been canvassed before the Second World War by the inventor Edwin Armstrong, and a number of stations had been opened. There was a post-War rush following the decision of the FCC to authorize a move to higher frequencies. By 1949, 976 stations had been authorized, and 687 were on the air. A peak of 733 was reached in 1951. Thereafter numbers declined until there was a new rise after 1957. From then onwards until the 1980s the average annual growth rate in profits was 15%. There was a difference in scope between Britain and the USA, where the wavelength band extended from 87.5 to 108 MHz; in Britain the span was limited to 87.5 to 100 MHz, the remainder being used for fire, ambulance, and other mobile users.

Chesham did not mention in his speech that VHF with FM would greatly improve the reception of music, or that it would now be possible to cater separately for education.<sup>12</sup> Both points were to figure prominently in the future. By the time he spoke, however, manufacturers were said to be 'turning out VHF sets in ever increasing numbers', and the BBC was promising to reach out to 96 per cent of the population—provided, the great proviso, that the listeners had the right sets.<sup>13</sup> By the end of 1958 a possible coverage figure of 83 per cent had already been realized; yet as late as 1972, despite the claims that had long been made for VHF/FM broadcasting, only about 40 per cent of the BBC's audience was equipped for reception of the VHF service. There were then 77 VHF/FM stations in operation, and coverage was 99.3 per cent.<sup>14</sup>

As the Director-General put it then, technological development had been rapid, but audience habits had changed slowly.<sup>15</sup> Old radio receivers were kept. They 'lasted' longer than television sets. Their prices had not fallen significantly either. There were few bargains. At the transmitting end however, there had been real progress. VHF radio and television had worked in harness, for the VHF stations, except for high-power Wrotham and two others, were co-sited with television transmitting stations. This was an 'economical' decision which saved considerable sums of money. The first unattended station, which saved even more money, was built at Llandrindod Wells in 1961, and Scotland secured its first unattended relay station at Oban two years later.<sup>16</sup>

During the long discussions leading up to *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, the future of VHF had figured prominently, particularly in relation to local radio and a new radio network for education.<sup>17</sup> Yet, as far as local radio was concerned, it was a relief to the BBC when Stonehouse agreed that local stations could also transmit on medium

<sup>12</sup> *The Economist*, 6 April 1957.

<sup>13</sup> In a report to the General Advisory Council, 'The Local Radio Experiment', 2 April 1969, the Board of Management had described VHF as 'a considerable limitation on audiences, though the trend in the number of VHF sets appears to be upwards'.

<sup>14</sup> Pawley, *op. cit.*, p. 487. For the extension of the network see *ibid.* p. 442.

<sup>15</sup> Curran, *loc. cit.*

<sup>16</sup> Pawley, *op. cit.*, pp. 443–4. The first fully transistorized station to be opened was Barnstaple (1968), and the last 'valved' station was Whitby (1969). The Orkney relay station (1958) produced an example of continuity in the history of technology. It was built on an old radar site.

<sup>17</sup> See above, p. 639, for the interrelationship between politics and the creation of local stations which broadcast on VHF only.

wave, mainly using the frequencies released by the ending of Regional opt-out programmes.<sup>18</sup> As far as a new radio network for education was concerned—and this was a main item in *Broadcasting in the Seventies*—no progress had been made by 1974.<sup>19</sup> This was for financial reasons. The BBC continued to argue, on familiar lines, that a new VHF network for this restricted purpose would both secure more broadcasting time for educational programmes and allow listeners the chance to hear the other programmes on VHF, thus eliminating interference from European stations after dark.<sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile, complaints continued to be received from listeners that VHF was difficult to tune—or to keep in tune—and not all receivers were equipped with the automatic frequency control which Curran himself advised. He noted that no receivers were being manufactured to allow for a possible introduction of a single side-band (SSB) system of transmission, which would both improve reception and increase the availability of channels.

## 7. Satellites

VHF did not greatly excite the large majority of listeners. The possibilities of satellite broadcasting were, however, beginning to excite viewers, even though the story of communications satellites was shorter. Satellite development was, indeed, the most glamorous field of communications technology. The cost of satellites—and the research necessary to develop them—was so great that, not surprisingly, the United States had secured a lead, although it was the Russian Sputnik I that had introduced the space age in 1957. Strange signals after midnight on 4 October 1957 had been picked up by BBC monitors at Caversham, who had informed the world of the movement of the first Soviet satellite Sputnik I, the existence of which had been unobtrusively announced in the June issue of *Sovietj Radio*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>18</sup> See above, p. 758.

<sup>19</sup> The first Open University programmes (10 Jan. 1971), broadcast from Alexandra Palace, original home of British television, were carried by Radio 3's VHF transmitters on weekdays and by Radio 4's VHF transmitters on Saturdays and Sundays. At these times the standard programmes of Radio 3 and Radio 4 were carried on medium wave only.

<sup>20</sup> *BBC Handbook, 1970*, p. 25. For the effects on VHF and wavelength discussions of the change of government in 1970 see below, pp. 885–8.

<sup>1</sup> *Ariel*, Nov. 1957, 'Tatsfield and the First Russian Satellite'; *Observer*, 6 Oct. 1957; G. S. Sponsler, 'Sputnik over Britain', *Physics Today*, July 1958.



It was not until 1977 that the editor of a new periodical with the title *Satellite Communication* could talk of 'the dawn of a new era' during which life-styles would be completely changed';<sup>2</sup> but already during the 1960s the story of satellites—and of man in space—had gone through several episodes, some directly concerned with communications and with the BBC. It had been as long ago as 1945, when the Germans had already introduced the world to rocketry, that the British writer Arthur C. Clarke, who was to make his mark in science fiction, had foreseen—with extraordinary brilliance of perception, but with no attempt to glamorize—the establishment of a system of satellites for communicating and broadcasting over great distances.<sup>3</sup>

Four months after Sputnik I, the United States had launched Explorer I, and four years later nearly 13 million BBC viewers had seen Colonel Glenn entering his capsule at Cape Canaveral before beginning his great orbital flight. An earlier report on the flight in *Tonight* attracted the biggest audience that the programme had ever achieved, nearly a third higher than the usual Thursday figure.<sup>4</sup> Listeners were as involved as viewers. In the words of the *Daily Mail*, 'the groups crowding round wireless sets were reminiscent of those who listened when Churchill spoke on the air during the war'.<sup>5</sup>

Glenn was not seen, of course, by satellite. It was film that carried the news of him across the ocean by transatlantic cable to Alexandra Palace, and nearly two hours elapsed before viewers watching the 1.25 p.m. Television News saw a section of NBC film, lasting fifteen seconds. It was not until the 9.15 p.m. News that viewers saw fifty seconds of the actual blast-off. The accompanying words had been written by sub-editors and passed over to the newsreader's desk as he was still reading the news. It was the BBC that carried this second film over the Eurovision network to most countries throughout Europe.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Satellite Communication*, no. 1 (Oct. 1977). 'Communication via satellite', its editor wrote, 'is just beginning.'

<sup>3</sup> *Wireless World*, Oct. 1945; 'Beyond Babel', *Courier Unesco*, March 1970. Unlike most others, Clarke had not been daunted by doubt that the booster problems involved in the development of rocketry would prove insoluble.

<sup>4</sup> *BBC Record*, 7 (March 1962): 'Watching the Space Flight'.

<sup>5</sup> *Daily Mail*, 5 Oct. 1962.

<sup>6</sup> Improvements in terrestrial physical communications preceded satellite development. In 1963, e.g., the completion of the Commonwealth Pacific Cable (COMPAC) opened up new fields of broadcasting co-operation with Australia. *World Roundup*, a short, fast-moving daily newsreel then part of the World Service, was sent by COMPAC to the Australian Broadcasting Commission, and was daily rebroadcast by sixty-eight

In the same year, July 1962, Telstar I relayed black and white pictures across the Atlantic, to be followed less than a week later by colour pictures (the pictures were poor), and in the same month the first live television programme exchange by satellite took place between Europe and the United States.<sup>7</sup> A year later, Syncom II was the first successful synchronous satellite, remaining 'stationary' over the Earth and thus permitting continuous transmission.

Economic and financial issues continued to remain as complex as technology—with rights and fees being introduced into the argument. As early as October 1962, S. J. de Lotbinière, Controller, Programme Services, Television, noted that Robin Day had raised the question of his own rights when Telstar carried 'his British performance to viewers outside this country. He suggests that he would get no extra money in spite of the fact that he would be appearing to a much larger audience and might be depriving himself of a transcription fee.'<sup>8</sup>

International communications, dominated by the United States, entered a new phase in April 1965, in terms of both technology and economics, when Intelsat launched 'Early Bird', the first satellite to deal on a commercial basis with international television and telephone traffic (the latter considered as a priority). The tiny satellite could carry only the visual components of a television broadcast, however, not the sound, so that the words used in the televised transmission of the inauguration of President Lyndon Johnson had to be sent by cable. Striking improvements were made thereafter as Early Bird was succeeded by Intelsats II, III, and IV, each with a greater capacity than its predecessor and each with a projected life of seven years. With each new Intelsat there was also a fall in the annual investment per circuit requirements.<sup>9</sup>

radio stations throughout Australia. (Cmnd. 2823) *Annual Report and Accounts of the British Broadcasting Corporation, 1964-65*, p. 73.)

<sup>7</sup> To get Telstar into operation required months of intricate negotiation involving ATT, the builders of Telstar, the American television networks, the BBC, the EBU, and the Post Office. Nine European countries saw the Telstar pictures thirteen days after the satellite was launched (Pawley, op. cit., p. 502).

<sup>8</sup> S. J. de Lotbinière to Holland Bennett, Head of Artists Bookings, 'Telstar: Performers' Fees', 5 Oct. 1962 (WAC file T38/25/3). Producers introduced interesting ideas about the possible range of programmes. Thus, on 22 Jan. 1963 Aubrey Singer, then Head of Outside Broadcast Features and Science Programmes, Television, suggested to Stuart Hood that Telstar should be used for a regular television 'Letter from America' with Alistair Cooke ('Programme Suggestion for Use of Telstar and Relay' (T38/25/4)).

<sup>9</sup> See *Saturday Review*, Oct. 1970, 'Toward the Global Village: Special Report on Communications Satellites', and *EBU Review*, Nov. 1968, Special Satellite Number.

As satellites began to be used—and their use remained expensive—there were many programming highlights for British viewers, like the Olympic Games in Mexico in 1968 and the Winter Olympics from Sapporo in Japan in 1972. The biggest event of all, however, was the American Moon landings in 1969, when Neil Armstrong ‘took one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind’. The transatlantic traffic was carried on the American 525-line system, and through the skill of BBC engineers converted to and from 625 lines at the European end. (‘Precision-cut quartz’ was described as ‘the secret of the converter’.)<sup>10</sup> By 1970 there were 1,214 channel hours of international television transmission: the figure for 1965 had been forty.<sup>11</sup>

In 1969 the Twentieth Century Fund in Washington had organized a Task Force on International Satellite Communication, ‘mainly for an American audience’, and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace had sponsored an unofficial international conference at Tallous in France, at which eleven countries, including Britain, were represented.<sup>12</sup> A second unofficial international conference, chaired by Jean D’Arcy, a key figure in the EBU and in the newly founded International Broadcasting Institute, later the Institute of International Communications (IIC), followed at Cap Ferrat a year later. Its purpose was to prepare for two forthcoming conferences of the ITU: the World Administrative Radio Conference, to be held in June 1971, and the Plenipotentiary Conference of the ITU, scheduled for 1973, the first of such conferences to be held since 1965.

The ITU, originally founded in 1865 to facilitate the international exchange of telegrams, was pledged to ‘maintain and extend international co-operation for the improvement and rational use of telecommunications of all kinds’, and it first turned its attention to radio communication through space at a conference held in Geneva in the aftermath of Sputnik I. Six years later in 1963, after its responsibility for space control had been confirmed by the United Nations, it convened a major gathering devoted exclusively to the subject, also in Geneva. Whereas the 1959 conference had set aside only 1 per cent of the frequency allocation for space activities, by

<sup>10</sup> *Ariel*, 2 Nov. 1973.

<sup>11</sup> For the rise in traffic see D. D. Smith, ‘Space Platforms and Television: Shaping the Future of the Medium’, Shoenberg Memorial Lecture, repr. in *Television*, Jan.–Feb. 1984. In 1980 the comparable figure was to be 15,000 channel hours.

<sup>12</sup> Twentieth Century Fund, *The Future of Satellite Communications* (1970). See also American Society of International Law, *Direct Broadcasting from Satellites* (1975).

1963 the figure had risen to 15 per cent. By then, too, the first communications satellites and the launching of manned space vehicles had made international co-operation more necessary.

In his 1969 lecture Redmond chose the televising of American elections, recently described by Paul Fox, as his example of the way in which satellites were already affecting broadcasting.<sup>13</sup> The 1960 American Presidential election had been covered by showing a teleprinter on the screen typing out results as they came in by wire from the United States. By 1968 television 'had taken wings', and viewers saw the proceedings live by satellite. Perhaps, Redmond concluded, the 1980 election would be seen by direct satellite. He added, however, that direct broadcasting to viewers' homes was a difficult technical proposition, and referred back to an earlier lecture by D. B. Weigall, Deputy Director of Engineering, who had concluded that the widespread application of direct broadcasting from satellites appeared to be 'a long way off'.<sup>14</sup>

Curran was clearly of this opinion when he brought satellite talk down to earth in the *BBC Handbook* for 1970:

It would be . . . foolish to expect too much too soon. A geostationary satellite designed for direct television broadcasting into the home would have to weigh several tons, compared with the two or three hundred pounds of the present generation of communications satellites. The technical problems at the transmitting end—weight of satellite, transmitter power, economic life span—are difficult enough. What about the receivers? [He did not mention 'the dish'.] The smaller the satellite the lower the power, the weaker the transmission and, consequently, the more elaborate and costly the modifications of receivers.<sup>15</sup>

Not surprisingly, there were no references to satellites in the *BBC Memorandum on Engineering* prepared for the Annan Committee in 1974.

<sup>13</sup> P. Fox, 'This is BBC-1', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 7th ser., 19 Feb. 1969.

<sup>14</sup> D. B. Weigall, 'Satellites—Present Use and Future Ideas in Broadcasting', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 6th ser., 28 Feb. 1968. 'In Europe', he also concluded, 'the most likely possibility for direct broadcasting on a national basis lies in the use of those microwave bands not yet fully occupied' (p. 15). Redmond stated that, in his view, satellites for direct broadcasting were likely to prove most attractive to larger countries with a common language such as the USA, Canada, Australia, and India. (Neither India nor Canada had a common language.) Cf. late 19th-cent. forecasts of where wireless would be most successful (Briggs, *The Birth of Broadcasting* (1961), pp. 34–5).

<sup>15</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1970, p. 32.

## 8. Colour Television

There were, however, many references to colour television, the second 'glamorous' technological development of the 1960s, which had itself seemed far off in 1955. By 1972, four years after the Government took the decision to introduce separate colour licences,<sup>1</sup> there were over 1½million colour television sets in use. The figure for 1974 was over 5½million. The rate of take-up in Britain during the first ten years of colour from 1968—there were to be more than 11 million licences by 1978—was greater than it had been during the first ten years of colour in the United States, from 1953 to 1963. Already by the summer of 1972 the proportion of colour sets in British working-class families (52 per cent) exceeded the proportion in middle-class families. Colour set viewers were watching television for more hours than other viewers, but were watching BBC more than ITV.<sup>2</sup>

Numerical comparisons between Britain and the United States or between colour set ownership in different social groups were not the only comparisons that were drawn. Although the first critical experiments in colour television had taken place in the United States, by 1972 the superiority of British colour over American colour had already become a point of pride. 'American colour often makes human complexions look like accidents in the embalmer's workshop', wrote Patrick Skene Catling in the *Spectator* in 1971. Nor was it only human beings that suffered. The colour of the Moon in the Apollo 14 photographs had appeared pale green even at the moment when one of the astronauts had described moon dust as looking like brown talcum powder. Catling's article ended triumphantly. 'At the end of the rainbow, there is a television set.'<sup>3</sup>

The BBC had started experimental transmissions in colour on 405 lines in 1955 from Studio A in Alexandra Palace, the original Marconi-EMI studio of 1936. The first transmissions employed one or two large colour cameras and one 16 mm film scanner designed by the Research Department; but for reasons of cost only colour films were transmitted between 1958 and 1960.<sup>4</sup> Reaction to the transmissions

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 545.

<sup>2</sup> \*Audience Research Report VR/72/430, 4 Aug. 1972.

<sup>3</sup> *Spectator*, 13 Feb. 1971. Catling described a rented colour television set which then cost 35s. a week, as 'the greatest cultural bargain of all time'.

<sup>4</sup> In 1967 Ian Atkins, a pioneer television cameraman and producer, then Controller, Programme Services, Television, described the first camera as 'greedy': 'it required a great deal of light to be put on the unfortunate subject before it would operate properly.' It



18. 'It's not that I'm against colour television; I just feel that bloodstains in black-and-white are more suitable for child viewers', Sprod in *Punch*, 1 March 1961.

confirmed that the system devised by the National Television System Committee (NTSC) in the United States was 'sound'.<sup>5</sup> Capable of presenting clear pictures in colour which could also be received in black and white on monochrome receivers,<sup>6</sup> it had been adopted by the Americans in 1953 after a domestic battle between CBS and RCA.<sup>7</sup>

also made the studio extremely hot ('Working in Colour', *BBC Lunch-Time Lectures*, 6th ser., 13 Dec. 1967). In a later transmission of 1956-7, cookery demonstrations, including paella in a copper dish with golden rice and a piece of Gorgonzola cheese, came up particularly well on the screen.

<sup>5</sup> *The BBC Colour Television Tests*, BBC Engineering Division Monograph, May 1958; \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Colour Television', 13 Sept. 1960.

<sup>6</sup> RCA had developed 'shadow mask' tubes from which more recent colour tubes have all descended. It was after seeing RCA operations in America that Jules Thorn, Chairman of Thorn-EMI, told his staff that he would make colour sets in Britain (Geddes, *The Setmakers*, p. 373).

<sup>7</sup> The struggle was similar to that in Britain before the War between the Baird and EMI television systems (see Briggs, *The Golden Age of Wireless*, pp. 524-38). The first CBS system in 1946 was based on a rotating wheel; the RCA system, also introduced in 1946, was electronic. The NTSC system involved the augmentation of the normal monochrome



The quality of NTSC was not perfect, a factor of importance in what proved to be the 'suspended development' of colour television in the United States during the late 1950s, when sales of colour receivers were extremely disappointing.<sup>8</sup> There had been no take-off. Yet, while NTSC was to serve as the principal basis of colour television world-wide, even in the late 1960s, when the experimental period was over, the jibe was often made that its initials stood for 'Never Twice the Same Colour'. George Campey, then BBC Head of Publicity, added a personal dimension to the critique when he reported after a visit to New York in 1967: 'In Leonard Miall's apartment the colour changes when you walk up to the set.'<sup>9</sup> There was always room, therefore, for alternative and, above all, adapted or improved derivative systems.

In Britain decisions relating to the colour system were bound up almost from the start with decisions relating to the line standards in television; and even after the Television Advisory Committee in May 1960 recommended a change in line standards from 405 to 625—on 8 MHz channels—and the introduction of colour only on UHF and on the line standard 625, the lines issue was not finally settled.

The BBC was represented on the Television Advisory Committee through its Director-General and on its Technical Advisory Subcommittee, the Committee's most important and influential subsection, by its senior engineers. The Post Office, however, which until that time was responsible both for national questions relating to transmitters and networks and for international negotiations involving frequencies and other technical matters, was the dominant influence.

system by a low-definition colouring signal which did not interfere with monochrome reception. The American body responsible for regulating decision making, the Federal Communications Commission, reversed a ruling favouring a new CBS system in 1953, and adopted the NTSC. The buildup of audiences was slow, with NBC being the only major American network transmitting in colour as late as 1961. In Britain Pye had acquired British rights to the CBS system, and Marconi, through their links with RCA, to NTSC (\*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Colour Television: Note by Sir Harold Bishop', 6 May 1953).

<sup>8</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Colour Television', 10 Sept. 1960. Bishop rightly described this finding as being of great importance, 'since the deficiencies of colour cameras and receivers can be removed by technological development, while any significant change in a transmission system is extremely difficult to make once it has been established for public broadcasting'. No systems research was then being carried out in Britain, but two firms, Thorn and Mullard, were working on colour tubes.

<sup>9</sup> \*H.P.'s Visit to Montreal and New York', 4 July 1967 (R78/555/1). The colour change in this case was not attributable to shortcomings of the NTSC system. It was the presence of tall and congested buildings. Problems of reception were to encourage the development of cable.

The BBC arranged an early demonstration for the Television Advisory Committee, followed at the request of the Postmaster-General, Reginald Bevins, by a further demonstration programme in January 1957 which was arranged for a very special audience of members of both Houses of Parliament gathered in a room in the House of Lords.<sup>10</sup> Some of the pictures that were transmitted experimentally by a modified version of NTSC were studio pictures. Others were films. Colour films could now be seen more and more often in cinemas, and Richard Cawston's monochrome film *This Is the BBC* had ended with a surprise sequence in colour.<sup>11</sup>

The Governors were regularly informed of progress. 'We are keeping an eye on the colour situation in the United States', Beadle told them in 1959.

Optimistic forecasts are reaching us from the RCA and its subsidiary company the NBC. These reports seem to indicate that colour television will make a big leap forward in the near future. But this group have been consistently optimistic about colour for five years. Most other people in America and Britain remain sceptical. However, we in the BBC are very anxious to be in the forefront of colour development in Europe as soon as it proves itself a practical proposition in America.<sup>12</sup>

The same point was made to the Governors by Bishop a year later. 'What research effort and expenditure should the BBC devote to colour?' he asked in September 1960. 'We lead the way in colour research and development in this country' was his own answer, 'and a great deal of information has been collected. It is felt that we should maintain our lead in this field by continuing and extending our work in conjunction with industry.'<sup>13</sup>

After considering Bishop's report, the Governors decided to spend £100,000 on 625-line colour tests and to explore the possibility of starting one hour a week of colour programmes in November 1961 in connection with the twenty-fifth anniversary of BBC Television.<sup>14</sup> The date demanded was shifted later to the fortieth anniversary of

<sup>10</sup> See BBC brochure, *Colour Television, Demonstration of Transmission and Reception by the BBC, Houses of Parliament, 30 and 31 January 1957.*

<sup>11</sup> See above, p. 236. The film *The Wizard of Oz* had introduced colour sequences in 1939, and the black and white films *Task Force* (1949) and *The Solid Gold Cadillac* (1956) ended in colour sequences (*Halliwell's Filmgoer's and Video Viewer's Companion* (9th edn., 1988), p. 154).

<sup>12</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, Report by the Director of Television Broadcasting, April–July 1959.

<sup>13</sup> \*Ibid., 'Colour Television', 12 Sept. 1960.

<sup>14</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 22 Sept. 1960.

the BBC in November 1962,<sup>15</sup> with four hours of programming now being suggested instead of one.

Given the advice of the Television Advisory Committee in May 1960 and the appointment of the Pilkington Committee soon afterwards, it was obvious that the Postmaster-General would not allow such a development of colour programming until after a final decision had been taken on line standards and the Pilkington Committee had reported. A wide range of considerations, economic and political, as well as technological, was involved from the start.<sup>16</sup>

One of the most useful and comprehensive papers on the early history of colour was that prepared by the secretariat of the Pilkington Committee at some date in 1961. It was admirably succinct, and it covered the attitudes of the radio manufacturers as much as those of the BBC.<sup>17</sup> Before the paper was drafted, however, the Committee had already decided at its tenth meeting that if a change to 625 lines were to be agreed upon officially—as it was to be—the first colour transmissions should be on that standard.<sup>18</sup> The NTSC system was taken as ‘satisfactory and likely to be adopted internationally’,<sup>19</sup> but doubts were expressed about the ability of manufacturers to produce colour sets and the willingness of the public to buy them at a high price.

The cost of a set was then estimated at around £200 to £250,<sup>20</sup> and the Secretary of BREMA was reported as saying that the industry wanted to evolve a more reliable receiver before colour was introduced.<sup>21</sup> Pye Radio was also reported as claiming that there would be no mass market for colour until colour sets cost only 10 per cent to 15 per cent more than monochrome. Finally, Sir Robert Fraser, Director-General of the ITA, was quoted as accepting this forecast and with it a further forecast that demand would not be high enough unless considerably more programmes were produced than the BBC proposed. In summing up, the Committee’s secretariat drew the attention of the Committee to the fact, pointed out to it by the BBC,

<sup>15</sup> ‘Colour Television’, Paper for the General Advisory Council, 25 Jan. 1961.

<sup>16</sup> Statement by Bevins, *Hansard*, vol. 632, col. 404, 14 Dec. 1960.

<sup>17</sup> PRO Papers HO 244/6, BC/Sec/85, ‘Colour Television’ (n.d.).

<sup>18</sup> HO 244/1.

<sup>19</sup> *The Economist*, 21 June 1958, had noted that ‘in this matter the ITA is content to follow the lead of the BBC’.

<sup>20</sup> It was added that Radio Rentals envisaged a weekly charge of about 30s.

<sup>21</sup> *Guardian*, 3 Jan. 1961. A few weeks earlier an unnamed manufacturer had been quoted as saying that colour sets could be produced within about one year (*Evening News*, 5 Dec. 1960).

that colour television had already started in the United States and was making progress in Japan and Russia. With every year that passed, Britain, it was claimed, was slipping behind its rivals, and export opportunities were being lost.<sup>22</sup>

It was only after the Pilkington Committee recommended in June 1962 that colour television should start, but only on 625 lines and in UHF—adding that its introduction should not hold back other more urgently required developments—that the Government itself was in any position to give a green light on colour in its keenly awaited White Paper.<sup>23</sup> With the approval of the Post Office, UHF trials with colour on 625 lines now began experimentally from Alexandra Palace in the same month, with the BBC, the ITA, the radio industry, and the Post Office co-operating. The experiments, which continued into 1963, favoured the BBC, since ITV would still be operating on 405 lines after BBC-2 had started on 625 lines. They included the recording of colour signals on magnetic tape and trials not only of NTSC but of a new French colour system, SECAM ('Séquentiel Couleur à Mémoire'), a variant on NTSC that had been proposed in 1960.<sup>24</sup>

By the time that the final decision was taken about the colour system in 1966, SECAM had been heavily publicized, and after 1963 both NTSC and SECAM had had a new rival in PAL ('Phase Alternation Line'), invented in Germany in 1963.<sup>25</sup> Like NTSC, both SECAM and PAL achieved compatibility by sending out a black and white signal on a monochrome service and by using a sub-carrier for the transmission of colour information. There were significant technical differences, however, between SECAM and the other two.

As the different systems were compared internationally, such technical differences, relevant though they were for governments, industry, and viewers, did not by themselves determine the outcome. The BBC, like the Television Advisory Committee, had originally and for long favoured NTSC because the system had been proved to work. It

<sup>22</sup> What was said about Russia exaggerates the progress there. There was, in fact, little comparison between what was happening in Russia and Japan. In 1960 there had been a joint meeting of the EBU and OIRT, the Eastern European broadcasting organization, at which colour was discussed, and OIRT representatives were invited to see British colour demonstrations (Pawley, *op. cit.*, p. 501).

<sup>23</sup> Cmnd. 1753 (1962), *The Report of the Broadcasting Committee, 1960*, paras. 789–90. Cmnd. 1770 (1962), *Broadcasting*, para. 56. See above, p. 305.

<sup>24</sup> 'The progress of Colour Television: The BBC tests two systems', *BBC Record*, 12 (June 1962).

<sup>25</sup> It was invented by Dr Walter Bruch of the Telefunken Company. SECAM was based on an original suggestion by Henri de France.

seemed superior to PAL both because it was cheaper and because it produced a less disturbing dot pattern on monochrome receivers. Before October 1965 the radio manufacturers shared the same preference. They were anxious for marketing reasons to see a colour service introduced at the earliest possible date. Later, however, like the BBC, they developed a preference for PAL, even though they knew that PAL receivers would initially cost 3.5 per cent more. They judged them highly immune to 'colour errors'.

Some of the manufacturers, however, introduced a further complication in 1965 by lobbying at a late stage for colour television on 405 lines as well as on 625 lines, and it was not until the Government made a clear statement in March 1966 that only transmission on 625 lines would be permitted that the lobbying ceased.<sup>26</sup> BBC-2 was to start to broadcast in colour towards the end of 1967 using the PAL system—unless the eleventh Plenary Assembly of the CCIR to be held in Oslo in the summer of 1966 made a different recommendation.<sup>27</sup>

There was lobbying about the system to the end, without agreement ever being reached either within EBU or at a series of international conferences. Political differences could never be settled. An EBU *ad hoc* group on Colour Television had been set up in November 1962 under the chairmanship of the German professor R. Theile; but although it studied every aspect of comparative performance and produced reports from its six subgroups, all it could do was to hand over to the CCIR the details of its technical investigations.

In continental Europe the economic pressures to introduce colour television were less strong than they were in Britain, but there were political pressures to adopt SECAM, a variant in itself, which by 1965 had developed three new variants of its own.<sup>28</sup> The Soviet Union, for example, whose leaders were anxious to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution in colour in November 1967, had been persuaded by General de Gaulle to favour SECAM—even before the BBC had had time to send test pictures to Russia on the

<sup>26</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 725, col. 1575, 3 March 1966. The Television Advisory Committee had advised the Postmaster-General in Nov. 1965 that colour should be transmitted on 625 lines only. Even as late as July 1966 the Liberal MP Dr Michael Winstanley was still pressing in Parliament for colour on 405 lines (*Hansard*, vol. 731, cols. 629–30, 6 July 1966).

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, col. 1576. The BBC had submitted seventy documents to CCIR between 1958 and 1966 (Geddes, *Broadcasting in Britain, 1922–1972* (1972), p. 49).

<sup>28</sup> See R. J. Crone, *The Politics of International Standards: France and the Colour TV War* (1979). The USSR subsequently devised its own variant, SECAM IV (see Pawley, *op. cit.*, p. 520), but details of it were presented too late to influence international decision making.

alternative systems through Eurovision and Intervision networks.<sup>29</sup> Some other European countries favoured PAL, as now did Tony Benn, Bevins's successor as Postmaster-General.<sup>30</sup>

By 1965, all European countries except Britain had completely ruled out an American rather than a European system, but thereafter agreement ceased, as it had done in the EBU, and most of the broadcasting bodies represented at Oslo, except the BBC, were in favour of postponing yet again a decision on a common standard, however great the difficulties. The British delegation flew back from Oslo to London, where at a hastily summoned meeting Fraser, speaking for the ITA, supported delay: at that stage the ITA was not as interested in speedy action as the BBC.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, there was a dramatic moment at the General Assembly of the EBU, which was being held at the same time as the Oslo Conference, when the Chairman of the Technical Committee was called away in the middle of his report to take an urgent message from Oslo. On his return he was greeted with enthusiastic applause, but he had to announce that no consensus had been reached.<sup>32</sup>

Thereafter, the quest for a common colour system was abandoned, both in Europe and in the world. Britain settled for PAL, as the Postmaster-General had proposed. So did most of Western Europe, including Yugoslavia, along with a group of countries outside Europe including Australia, New Zealand, China, and Brazil. France, the French colonies, the Soviet Union, Greece, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran (among others) settled for SECAM. The United States, Canada, and Japan, among others, retained NTSC.

Having failed for no reasons of its own to function as a conciliating mediator, the BBC now sought to perfect a technological invention that would make programme exchange possible: a standards converter that would make it possible for countries to switch from one colour system to another as well as from one line system to another. Already in 1952 the BBC had pioneered the use of converters in

<sup>29</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Report by the Director of Engineering', 10 Nov. 1964; Pawley, *op. cit.*, p. 519.

<sup>30</sup> In May 1965 Benn told the House of Commons, which had 'aired' the subject the day before, that 'we are anxious to make an early start' with colour television. 'The BBC is anxious to get on with it. The ITA is interested. There are export possibilities. . . . It would be a real tragedy if Europe were to abandon standardisation just at the moment when the exchange of programmes is becoming so much easier. . . . In this case, it is better to be right than to be first' (*Hansard*, vol. 712, cols. 735-6, 13 May 1965).

<sup>31</sup> \*'Note of a Meeting held at the Post Office Headquarters Building', 14 July 1966 (Man. Reg. G111-1).

<sup>32</sup> Pawley, *op. cit.*, pp. 520-1.



exchanges with France, which then used an 819-line system, and later, after Ampex videotapes were available, it was possible to convert tape recordings as well as direct broadcasts for British use.<sup>33</sup> Conversion of American programmes meant that a solution had to be found not only to the problem of the different number of lines which made up the picture (525 as against 405 in Britain at that time), but also to the fact that the American system transmitted at a different number of pictures per second (thirty as against twenty-five in Europe—usually expressed as sixty and fifty fields per second).

Peter Rainger and his colleagues in the Designs Department of the Engineering Division, using solid state physics, had already made great progress before 1966. Indeed, Rainger had won the 1963 Geoffrey Parr Award of the Royal Television Society for his part in producing the first all-electronic standards converter in the world.<sup>34</sup> The early line and field-store converters were not capable of dealing with the colour element, however, and work continued in the Designs Department and in the Research Department. In August 1968 Eric Rout and a team from the Research Department, including R. E. Davies, were successful in producing a field-store television standards converter that could accept pictures on NTSC colour on 525 lines and convert them to PAL on 625 lines.<sup>35</sup>

This more sophisticated converter, which cost about £250,000 to develop, won not one award but several, including a Queen's Award and an 'Emmy' given by the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences in the United States.<sup>36</sup> Without the converter there could have been no free movement of colour programmes across the Atlantic. Two of them were installed at the Television Centre in time for the satellite relays of the Mexico Olympics in October 1968. Forty-five hours were broadcast live in colour for BBC-2. BBC-1 and ITV also showed pictures from Mexico in monochrome. Eleven European television services in nine countries took the converted programmes.<sup>37</sup> The converter was employed in reverse in 1969 to

<sup>33</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1961, pp. 98–100.

<sup>34</sup> Pawley, *op. cit.*, p. 521.

<sup>35</sup> The story is told in *Ariel*, Jan. 1969. An agreement was signed with Rank Precision Industries Ltd. under which the Rank Organization would manufacture the new converter under licence and market it abroad. This was an example of the kind of co-operation with industry that Redmond advocated (see above, p. 832).

<sup>36</sup> *BBC Record*, 65 (May 1969). The converter was described as 'the most intricate, complex and sophisticated piece of broadcasting equipment the BBC has ever used'. Queen's Award, No. 2, was made in 1974. See *Ariel*, 1 May 1974.

<sup>37</sup> *Ariel*, Jan. 1969.

carry the Prince of Wales's Investiture ceremony to a world audience of 500 million, including millions of viewers in the United States.<sup>38</sup>

Politics had continued to influence the timetable at almost every stage. When it was learned that France was due to start regular colour transmissions in the autumn of 1967—with a satellite transmission of the Revolution Day Parade from Moscow—the BBC changed its own carefully worked out plans which had involved a starting date in December 1967. Determined not to be outstaged by the French, it now introduced what it called 'a Colour Launching' on Saturday, 1 July 1967, the final week of Wimbledon. Other programmes included *Whicker's World*, *Man Alive*, and *The Andy Williams Show*.<sup>39</sup>

Very few people at that time had colour sets—they were more expensive than had been anticipated, and were only trickling into the market<sup>40</sup>—but those who did, and the Press, were particularly excited over what they saw at Wimbledon. The *Sunday Mirror*, for example, commented ecstatically that 'it was so unlike any other year's televised Wimbledon that one must simply sum up this first transmission to the public in colour as "Marvellous"'.<sup>41</sup> The *Daily Express* remarked more mundanely that colour TV was worth the money.<sup>42</sup> Julian Critchley in *The Times* compared favourably the colour provided with that in the United States and Canada, while Kenneth Baily of *Scrapbook* fame called the quality of the pictures 'a triumph for BBC technicians'.<sup>43</sup>

It had been planned earlier in 1967 to transmit between fifteen and twenty-five hours of colour television a week—four or five times as much as any other broadcasting network was doing at that time—and for a time *Late Night Line-Up*, transmitted live in colour from Studio B, one of two 'colourized' studios at Television Centre, had provided invaluable initial experience both for production staff and for engineers. The staff responsible for the experimental transmission

<sup>38</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1970, p. 39.

<sup>39</sup> \*Board of Management, *Papers*, 'A Colour Launching Service', 4 Jan. 1967; *BBC Record*, 50 (May 1967).

<sup>40</sup> Most manufacturers had submitted examples of their sets to the BBC, whose engineers suggested significant modifications. The first models had to have 405-line capacity to receive BBC-1 and ITV, as well as 625-line capacity for BBC-2.

<sup>41</sup> *Sunday Mirror*, 2 July 1967.

<sup>42</sup> *Daily Express*, 3 July 1967. It added, however, that 'if only the set-makers could have matched Attenborough's confidence there would have been far more than myself and Charlie Drake and a few colleagues at the Première of one of the most important revolutions in entertainment'. Some manufacturers complained about the early launching, although they had been fully consulted.

<sup>43</sup> *The Times*, 3 July 1967; *The People*, 2 July 1967.

from Alexandra Palace had moved earlier into Studio H, a small studio in Lime Grove where three-week familiarization courses were organized for complete production teams—producers, directors, make-up and costume supervisors, and engineers.

David Attenborough, Controller, BBC-2, believed that colour was 'natural', a point particularly relevant to the wildlife films which he made so brilliantly, but which was also stressed by McLean and Redmond. He was determined, therefore, that 'colour expertise' should become as widespread as possible among the BBC's staff, and saw that the easiest and swiftest way of achieving this would be not to follow the Americans and present a number of 'colour spectacles', but rather to include in the daily schedule a number of 'simple undemanding colour programmes'. Producers, designers, and engineers would thereby learn 'the grammar of colour in uncomplicated situations'.<sup>44</sup> Because most viewers were still likely to be watching in monochrome, the number of colour screen monitors in the production gallery was kept deliberately limited.

Between July 1967 and 2 December, when a full colour service began on BBC-2—with the potential coverage estimated at 52 per cent of the population<sup>45</sup>—five hours a week of colour were offered. Outdoor events were broadcast, including football under floodlights, and classical music from concert-halls. When France inaugurated its own regular colour service in October, that was broadcast too. Germany, ironically, had got in before France: the inaugural German programme had been broadcast in August. On 10 September 1967 live colour pictures on American standards were relayed via the Early Bird satellite from the World Golf series finals in Ohio.<sup>46</sup> Golf was to be one of the games which colour television could most effectively promote. The white ball stood out clearly against the green. 'Do you remember the finish of the Ryder Cup [of 1969]?', Curran asked in the *BBC Handbook* for 1970. 'I shall never forget it.'<sup>47</sup> Soccer looked different too in a new style *Match of the Day*.

<sup>44</sup> \*K. Adam, 'Colour Planning', 9 Dec. 1966 (Man. Reg. file G111-1).

<sup>45</sup> \*F. C. McLean, 'Introduction of a Colour Television Service', 15 Feb. 1967 (same file).

<sup>46</sup> *BBC Record*, 53 (Sept. 1967). The first American news report shown in colour on BBC-2 was on 31 Aug. 1967. This was the first use of the electronic standards converter.

<sup>47</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1970, p. 14. In the same *Handbook* (p. 41) details were given of golf tournaments: the Open, Dunlop Masters, and Piccadilly World Match Play. For a fuller account of the relation of other factors to colour in the broadcasting of golf, see T. C. Worsley, 'Up with the colours', *Financial Times*, 13 March 1968: 'Golf, like cricket, must have its stretches of inaction if the drama of the action is to have full effect. Certainly the long, careful, studied appraisal of a hazardous approach shot . . . is an essential part of the total drama . . . Colour . . . adds its layer of verisimilitude.'

A technological development with a direct impact on colour television was the small, compact Plumbicon camera developed by the Philips Company, with pick-up tubes for colour greatly superior to the image-orthicon tubes, three (and later four per camera) and large in size, which had hitherto been in use and which had been employed in the early colour trials. In 1964 when preparations for colour broadcasting were beginning, the only Plumbicon cameras were then at an experimental stage. None was operational.<sup>48</sup> Yet, after improvements had been introduced by Philips and CBS across the Atlantic and Plumbicons had been brought into regular service, the BBC took the bold decision to base all its colour output on them.<sup>49</sup> The three-tube Plumbicon camera was actually lighter than existing monochrome cameras.<sup>50</sup> It also reduced 'lag' or 'trailing' which blurred images. It was an invaluable asset. Bridgewater vividly recalled the welcome given to it at the time as a 'potential saviour'.<sup>51</sup>

A similar bold decision was taken by the BBC to base colour filming entirely on the 16 mm film gauge, even though its standards of professional processing were unproven. How to match exactly the colour of television shots filmed on celluloid with the studio output of electronic cameras was a source of considerable concern to Atkins and his colleagues, and this decision was taken on economic rather than on technical grounds. To have settled for the comparative safety of 35 mm film would have multiplied the costs of BBC colour filming ten times.<sup>52</sup>

The economics of colour always had to be taken extremely seriously, both at the production and at the reception end. Studio space was scarce. Colour film stock and film processing were both costly. So, too, was the price of cameras, and huge purchases had to be made from a number of suppliers.<sup>53</sup> A higher level of lighting was needed,

<sup>48</sup> Another tube, the photoconductive Vidicon, which was on offer in the late 1950s, was small in size, but it blurred images on movement, and had limited applications. It was ruled out for general purposes, including colour.

<sup>49</sup> Geddes, *Broadcasting in Britain, 1922-1972*, p. 56. The Plumbicon was so called on account of its photoconductive layer of lead monoxide. The first unimproved Plumbicons showed some falling off in response at the red end of the spectrum.

<sup>50</sup> 'The Colour Service', paper for the General Advisory Council, 16 June 1967.

<sup>51</sup> Note from Bridgewater to the author, 7 Dec. 1992. The first colour mobile control room (CMCR), equipped with three Plumbicon cameras, was acquired in May 1967. It was replaced with a heavier vehicle in 1972 (Pawley, *op. cit.*, p. 471).

<sup>52</sup> Atkins, *op. cit.*

<sup>53</sup> Coincidentally the move into colour ushered in a new era in camera design. A single zoom lens displaced the cumbersome turret that had featured in all camera designs since 1945.

and there had to be a greater expenditure on make-up and costumes. All in all, it was estimated that the cost of colour programmes would be 20 per cent higher than that of monochrome programmes. Yet it was rightly insisted in the course of making such calculations—and subsequently checking them—that colour was now the norm and that monochrome was the exception. There would be no need, therefore, to pay performers more for appearing in colour. Moreover, apart from small increases in the size of engineering crews, there would be no need to increase the numbers of staff. Such considerations were decisive when the BBC was beginning to face serious financial difficulties.<sup>54</sup>

The only concession to expensive colour was the transfer, despite its name, of *The Black and White Minstrel Show* from BBC-1 to BBC-2 once a full colour service began in December 1967. This was BBC-2's only spectacular. Yet 25½ hours of colour television were offered in the first week instead of the originally promised 15 hours, and in Christmas week 1967 the total rose to 41½ hours. During the course of 1968 and 1969 almost all BBC-2 programmes were available in colour. They included *Play School*, the Boat Race, the Derby, the Test Matches, Kenneth Clark's thirteen programmes on *Civilisation*—and the satellite relay of the Apollo Moon shots.<sup>55</sup>

Given the separate colour licence, the BBC had an obvious interest in increasing the number of viewers, and if only for this reason it recognized the importance of converting BBC-1 to colour as quickly as possible. It also produced a successful travelling exhibition 'Colour Comes to Town'. Three hundred thousand people are said to have seen it.<sup>56</sup> It remained the policy of the BBC 'to help the trade to sell colour television' after ITV moved into colour along with BBC-1 on 15 November 1969.<sup>57</sup>

In a statement made to Parliament in February 1967, the then Postmaster-General, Edward Short, had authorized both BBC-1 and

<sup>54</sup> See above, p. 536. For the success of different ways of watching costs see 'Colour Television: A Report on Progress', paper for the General Advisory Council, 25 March 1968. The increase in costs was less than 20%, and the quality of the monochrome service had not fallen.

<sup>55</sup> These were organized by the Current Affairs Group, as were subsequent shots of Apollo 9 and the first live pictures of man walking in space. A colour camera aboard Apollo 10 gave viewers the first live colour pictures of the Moon's surface, and on 21 July 1969 viewers saw man's first steps on the Moon.

<sup>56</sup> 'General Advisory Council, *Papers*, 'Colour Television: A Report on Progress', 25 March 1968.

<sup>57</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1970, p. 14. \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 6 Feb. 1974, which noted a BREMA campaign to sell more sets which would cost £140,000.

ITV to broadcast in colour on 625 lines 'within the next three years',<sup>58</sup> but progress in selling colour receivers proved slow partly because only one channel provided it, partly because aerials as well as sets needed conversion, but partly, too, because of high purchase tax and credit restrictions.<sup>59</sup> BREMA delivery of colour sets to the British market was only 155,000 in 1969, when imports of colour sets reached 37,000. The price of a 19-inch colour receiver was then £285, a 22-inch £334, and a 25-inch £391, and current rental charges ranged from 25s. to 40s. a week.<sup>60</sup>

Pressure by the BBC and by BREMA on Stonehouse, Short's successor, led to no immediate changes in Government policy,<sup>61</sup> but in May 1969 it was publicly announced that both BBC-1 and ITV would start colour broadcasting on 15 November.<sup>62</sup> An updated 'Colour Comes to Town' exhibition was now on show in Leicester and Stockport before moving to the forecourt of Euston Station in London. It ended in Birmingham and Glasgow.<sup>63</sup> *The Times* too produced a special supplement in which the first article was headed 'Audience Rise is Crucial'. 'The aim of the broadcasting organizations and the set manufacturers', it went on, 'is to make everyone colour conscious, an operation which has already started. With colour representing an investment of around £15 million by the five independent companies alone plus another £10 million or so each by the ITA and the BBC, it is not surprising that they want to increase their audiences as rapidly as possible.'<sup>64</sup>

They needed good colour programmes to achieve this. Two of them dealt with the royal family, the first of them a shared BBC/ITV enterprise using a BBC crew. Richard Cawston's brilliant 105-minute film called *Royal Family* was broadcast in 1969 on both BBC-1 (first) and ITV. On its first BBC showing—in black and white as part of the BBC/ITV deal—it was seen by 23 million viewers; on its second ITV showing—in colour—by 15 million, 8 million of them viewing for the second time. The film, often to be reshowed, placed the Queen in a family setting. The second royal series in January 1970 turned back

<sup>58</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 741, col. 532, 15 Feb. 1967.

<sup>59</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 28 April 1969.

<sup>60</sup> \*Note by Redmond for the Finance Committee of the Board of Governors, 'Television Receiver Statistics', 21 Feb. 1969 (R78/555/1).

<sup>61</sup> \*Lord Hill, Chairman of the BBC, to Stonehouse, 17 April 1969 (R78/555/1).

<sup>62</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 19 May 1969.

<sup>63</sup> \*'Exhibition and Campaign Notes', 3 Nov. 1969 (R78/555/1).

<sup>64</sup> *The Times*, 15 Nov. 1969.



to history. *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* also attracted a huge audience, and again the colour factor was itself a main attraction.<sup>65</sup>

The peak year for sales of monochrome sets was 1970, when according to BREMA, production of colour sets reached 467,000, and in 1973 more colour sets were being imported (691,000) than BREMA had then produced and than there were colour licences in 1970. Credit restrictions had been greatly eased in a 'mini-budget' in 1971, and both wage and price movements encouraged increased consumer expenditure.<sup>66</sup> Although in 1973 there was a reverse move back to 'austerity', when the Chancellor of the Exchequer claimed that he was dealing with 'the gravest situation since the end of the War',<sup>67</sup> and although Curran was cautious in his statements on the subject to the General Advisory Council, the crucial breakthrough had been made.<sup>68</sup>

Leaving on one side the economics of the breakthrough, the timing of the introduction of colour television in Britain was propitious in terms of the timing of other technological advances in communications.<sup>69</sup> Indeed, the advance seemed to be directly related to the conversion of the world into a 'global village', as McLuhan had conceived of it.<sup>70</sup> This was not simply through the flow of news and documentaries, or through the universalization of sport. The same television productions that were designed to entertain were now being seen in many parts of the world, and some of them were now being produced by international consortia. Whether the term 'global village' was well chosen was a legitimate matter of controversy, and so, too, was the spread of colour itself, which even revived an old controversy as to whether people dreamed in colour or in black and white.

There were some surprising reactionaries. The fact that Muggeridge was among them does not surprise. The fact that George Melly was

<sup>65</sup> See below, pp. 937–8.

<sup>66</sup> *Annual Register of World Events, 1971*, pp. 475, 497.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 1973, p. 22.

<sup>68</sup> During the boom of 1972 Curran told the General Advisory Council that the increase in the number of colour licences had been 'predicted' (*Minutes*, 18 Oct. 1972), and after the boom he warned that BREMA had estimated that sales in 1974 would fall by 750,000 (*ibid.*, 6 Feb. 1974). In fact, the figure of BREMA deliveries to the British market (not the same as sales) fell by only 306,000. BREMA noted that, despite inflation, the price of a colour television set that would have cost £257 in 1968 was £253 in 1974 (*Board of Management, Minutes*, 22 April 1974).

<sup>69</sup> See McLean's BBC Lunch-Time Lecture 'Colour Television', 15 March 1967: 'we have seen colour taking over in the photographic fields and films, and I am sure that it will take over in television.'

<sup>70</sup> See M. McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962), p. 31.

among them does. Writing in the *Observer* in 1969, he spoke of the 'self-induced hysteria' of media controllers when they referred to colour, and tried to stand back and look in a more detached fashion at a world said to be 'waiting for the sunrise'. He even forecast a 'small resistance movement of middle-class intellectuals, the children of those who in the early fifties wouldn't have the telly at all', who would 'equate black and white with high seriousness'.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>71</sup> 'The Colour Fanfarade', *Observer*, 16 Nov. 1969.

# X

---

## The Jubilee—Before and After

It is an open world that the broadcaster inhabits . . . When the world is stormy, the BBC feels the wind and the weather, the gales and the gusts. It cannot escape. Nor should it. An odd tile may come off the roof but the foundations are firm.

LORD HILL, Address to Luton Rotary Club, 11 May 1972

Anniversaries of nations and institutions alike can encourage . . . nostalgia for a golden age. The BBC, by giving its staff an extra day off, has made sure that it surveys its past glories within a suitably restricted time limit. There is a great deal to be proud about and a fair amount to be done.

STEPHEN HEARST, Controller, Radio 3, *Ariel*

At the moment . . . things are calmer for us than a few years ago . . . but things could very easily change.

SIR MICHAEL SWANN, 'A Year at the BBC', January 1974.

It was no time for coming to conclusions. Questions had to remain open, just as key characters had to live for ever—or at least to the end of the serial, and there was always the prospect of a revival when that was over. Life, ever more reflecting the media and its idiom, became at its best a cycle of lucrative runs and repeats.

NORMAN SHRAPNEL, *The Seventies*, 1980

---

## 1. Taking Stock

When Queen Elizabeth visited the BBC on the occasion of its golden jubilee in 1972, she was presented with a video-recorder. In an age of television, video-recorders were then usually thought of less as heralds of a revolution in communications technology than as novel electronic toys. Technology did not figure once in the Queen's speech when she opened the BBC's fiftieth birthday exhibition in the old Palm Court of the Langham building opposite Broadcasting House. Instead, she concentrated on the institutional record of the Corporation. 'Social attitudes and public morals may change,' she declared, 'but honesty, integrity and objective judgement are values which should not be lightly cast aside for the sake of fashion or passing popularity. It is these values which have made the BBC a byword for truth and respect in the communications world, and given the BBC and Britain herself reason for pride and confidence.'<sup>1</sup>

The jubilee was an occasion to take stock, but the year 1972 itself was scarcely a year well suited to provide a vantage-point.<sup>2</sup> Nor was the year 1974, when the Committee chaired by Lord Annan, first promised in 1970, was at last brought into existence and began to look into the future of British broadcasting.<sup>3</sup> The economic and political situation had sharply deteriorated between 1972 and 1974, a year of record inflation and of two general elections, so that in retrospect the BBC's jubilee figures only as one event, if an especially

<sup>1</sup> *BBC Record*, 83 (Dec. 1972); *The Times*, 2 Nov. 1972.

<sup>2</sup> The celebration of the BBC's fiftieth anniversary had been the subject of a paper prepared for the Governors in June 1969. The Guildhall was suggested as the most appropriate setting for a banquet (\*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'The BBC's Fiftieth Anniversary Celebrations', 26 June 1969; *Minutes*, 3 July 1969).

<sup>3</sup> When the idea of the Annan Committee was dropped in 1970, different views were expressed inside the BBC (\*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 27 July 1970). The BBC had been well prepared for action, however, and papers had begun to be produced before the Board of Governors noted Annan's appointment in May (\**ibid.*, 21 May 1970). Colin Shaw, who had taken Curran's former place as Secretary of the BBC in Dec. 1969, produced an important and characteristically lucid and cogent paper, 'The Annan Committee: The BBC's Purposes', which was considered by the Board of Management on 28 May and by the Board of Governors on 4 June. On 11 June, when Curran chanced to meet Annan at a lunch, he promised him copies of Vols. I and II of my *History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom* and a copy of Vol. III when it was published in the autumn. For the return of Annan in 1974 and the appointment of his Committee see below, pp. 995-7.

instructive event, both in the broadcasting history and in the national history of the early seventies.

Appropriately one of the first new radio programmes of the new decade was *Start the Week*, broadcast first on 6 April 1970, with Richard Baker as the first host.<sup>4</sup> Starting the decade was more hazardous. There was less of a sense of promise than there had been ten years before. Yet throughout the decade, in the background, the advance of communications technology continued, and that had its own timetable. As apposite an event as *Start the Week* was the landing at Heathrow of the world's first 'jumbo' jet on 22 January. Communications technology was to change society more than most people realized, even if, as in the Queen's jubilee speech, it was to figure far less prominently in the final report of the Annan Committee, which appeared in 1977, than 'social attitudes, public morals . . . integrity and objective judgement'.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. The General Election of 1970

One of the first events of the new decade was a general election, which was announced, to most people unexpectedly, on 28 May 1970. The date was carefully chosen by Harold Wilson, who stated that he had decided on it 'pretty firmly' several weeks before.<sup>1</sup> He had noted in April and May, one year before Labour's full term of office was due to come to an end, that according to the polls—and the municipal election results—the tide of opinion was at last

<sup>4</sup> The first programme contained items on pigeons, tax reform, Wordsworth, and cookery. One of the early contributors was Monty Modlyn, described as 'the roving microphone'. The 1960s had been seen out on television with a large-scale farewell programme on the decade. Those taking part in what was essentially a media event commemorating the media included the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Heenan, Yehudi (later Lord) Menuhin, Enoch Powell, Malcolm Muggeridge, John Peel, and Jimmy Savile. Savile is reported as having asked Cardinal Heenan 'How're things with the church now, business-wise, as it were' (quoted in R. Dougall, *In and Out of the Box* (1973), pp. 304–5).

<sup>5</sup> \*In a note from Donald Hodson, just retired as Controller, Programmes, External Broadcasting, to Kenneth Lamb, Director, Public Affairs, 5 June 1970, headed 'Annan', James Redmond, Director of Engineering, is reported as saying that there was no technical advance in sight which would affect the basic broadcasting operation. Technical advances would come in two sectors: in the means of distribution of programmes and in means of recording television either off the air or in cassette form for subsequent reproduction (Man. Reg. file D215–8–1).

<sup>1</sup> Wilson interviewed on the BBC, 28 May 1970.

flowing in Labour's favour.<sup>2</sup> Until then, the polls since the summer of 1966 with rare exceptions had, suggested a Conservative majority.<sup>3</sup> Polling was now to take place after thirty-one days on 18 June, as short a campaigning interval as there had been in 1966.

Wilson announced the election to the nation on television from a comfortable chair in the garden of No. 10 Downing Street, with Peter Hardiman Scott, the BBC's Political Editor, as his respectful interviewer; by contrast, his opponent, Edward Heath, was interviewed by Robin Day in a television studio.<sup>4</sup> Both leaders shared one thought—the thought that they would win—but popular enthusiasm was limited from the start, and when the election was over, it was described in the eighth Nuffield College survey of British general elections as an 'unpopularity contest', a choice between 'lesser evils'.<sup>5</sup> Certainly the percentage turn-out was lower in 1970 than at any election since the Second World War.

The authors of the Nuffield survey, unlike the most active participants in the campaign, thought of it as being more like a beauty contest than a pitched battle. Indeed, in the light of their own experience, they were at pains to insist that metaphors of war were extremely misleading in relation to general elections, and to this general election in particular.

The headquarters have very little control over their volunteer armies; they cannot even coordinate very closely the salvos fired by their big guns. The two sides seldom encounter each other on the field . . . Each party tends to campaign on its self-chosen battleground against straw men of its own devising. There is no obligation to answer the challenges of the other side; the general view is that it is a strategic mistake ever to do so. Little evidence exists to show any link between the firing of campaign ammunition and the achievement of the strategic objective—more votes.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In 1968 and 1969 the Government's share of support had scarcely risen above 25% in public opinion polls. Fifteen by-elections were lost in Labour-held seats between 1966 and 1970, and one MP crossed the floor.

<sup>3</sup> In the twenty monthly polls from Dec. 1967 to July 1969 the size of the Conservative lead dropped below the high figure of 15%, reached in 1966, only three times. It was over 20% in nine of them. In 1970 two polls were being carried out that had not been carried out in 1966: Marplan, commissioned by *The Times* in 1968, and Harris, commissioned by the *Daily Express* in 1969.

<sup>4</sup> Day also interviewed the Liberal leader, Jeremy Thorpe, who had replaced Jo Grimond on 18 Jan. 1967. Wilson's other interviewer on ITV was George Ffitch, who had worked full-time in ITV news and current affairs programmes from 1955 to 1967 and was now Political Editor of *The Economist*.

<sup>5</sup> D. Butler and H. Pinto-Duschinsky, *The British Election of 1970* (1971), p. xiv.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137. For a searching contemporary study of the forces operating in British politics see D. Butler, *Political Change in Britain* (1969; 2nd edn., 1974).



As far as broadcasting was concerned, metaphors of contest were more appropriate than metaphors of war for a quite different reason.<sup>7</sup> 'Rules' continued to be laid down, as at previous general elections, by the back-stairs Meeting on Party Political Broadcasting. Both BBC and ITV broadcasters were expected to operate within a framework which they had neither agreed upon nor, indeed, about which they had ever been fully informed. During 1969, when there was a change in the *aide-mémoire* that had shaped the pattern of Ministerial broadcasting since 1947,<sup>8</sup> the Meeting had already turned its attention to election broadcasting, and it went on to reach important decisions in March 1970.<sup>9</sup> Clause 6 of the new *aide-mémoire* disposed of the difficulties which had been apparent at the time of Suez in 1956.<sup>10</sup> It now read: 'When the Opposition exercises [its] right to broadcast, there will automatically follow, *as soon as possible*, arranged by the BBC, a broadcast discussion.' Other changes were related.<sup>11</sup> There was no change, however, in political broadcasts put on by the political parties themselves, although Lord Hill and Hugh Greene in alliance had proposed in 1968 that they should end after the next general election.<sup>12</sup> The ratio for party election broadcasts on

<sup>7</sup> Anthony Sampson claimed that television played politics as in the ITV series *The Power Game*. He added, crossing channels, that 'it is hardly more possible to imagine Wilson not being at No. 10 than it is to imagine Brian Stead not being Managing Director of Mogul'. Stead was a character in the BBC series *The Troubleshooters* (*Observer*, 21 June 1970).

<sup>8</sup> For the *aide-mémoire*, revised in 1948, see Briggs, *Sound and Vision* (1979), pp. 581 ff. and 1033-4. See also above, p. 92. It was Heath who suggested change in 1965 ('Heath to Normanbrook, 18 Aug. 1965; Normanbrook to Heath, 6 Sept. 1965 (R78/708)'), but agreement on change was not reached until Dec. 1968 ('Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'The Aide-Mémoire: Note by the Director-General', 5 Dec. 1968; *Minutes*, 12 Dec. 1968). For the new *aide-mémoire*, see Appendix E below.

<sup>9</sup> Election broadcasts were discussed on 17 Nov. 1969, when Curran and Lamb, then Director, Public Affairs, from the BBC and Sir Robert Fraser and Cecil Bernstein from ITV had met Fred (later Lord) Peart and William (later Lord) Whitelaw. There were further discussions on 1 Dec.

<sup>10</sup> See above, pp. 97-8, and below, p. 1009.

<sup>11</sup> There were seven Ministerial broadcasts between 1 April 1969 and 31 March 1970, three in sequence on industrial relations, when the speakers were Barbara Castle, Secretary of State for Employment and Productivity, Robert (later Lord) Carr, who was to succeed her after the general election, and Dr Michael Winstanley (Cmnd. 4520 (1970), *Annual Report and Accounts of the British Broadcasting Corporation, 1969-70*, p. 46).

<sup>12</sup> Lord Hill, *Behind the Screen* (1973), pp. 120-1. A majority of Governors were doubtful as to the wisdom of abolishing them. So, too, were some members of the BBC's staff. Curran wrote a note to Oliver Whitley objecting to the proposed changes on 15 Nov. 1968. 'What I think I should like to see', he said, 'is the circulation of the suggestion in a form which would permit some reconsideration after the Election.' 'I realise', he added, 'that this loses some of the advantages of making the statement when both parties think they can win' ('Party Political Broadcasts' (Man. Reg. file B415-1-1, Pt. 3)).

television in 1970 was fixed, as in 1966, at 5 : 5 : 3, at a meeting at which no Liberals were present when it was also decided that all broadcasts were now to be ten minutes in length, not fifteen, and were to be timed both on BBC and ITV at 10 p.m., not 9.10 p.m. as before.<sup>13</sup> On radio the two main parties were allotted four ten-minute periods at 5.40 p.m. on Radio 4 and three five-minute periods at 8.01 p.m. on Radios 1 and 2, while the Liberal Party was allotted two on Radio 4 and two on Radios 1 and 2.<sup>14</sup> For both the BBC and the ITA the timing of the broadcasts was difficult, as, indeed, was the timing of the general election as a whole. The Derby, Ascot (in colour for the first time), and a cricket Test Match had all been scheduled for 'the week [sic] in which the election would fall';<sup>15</sup> Wimbledon was to follow four days later; and the Commonwealth Games after that. There was no shortage of sporting contest.

Arrangements for broadcasting by the minor parties, which were agreed upon at a meeting on 25 March, remained restricted and controversial. Plaid Cymru and the Scottish Nationalist Party had asked to be allowed to attend the meeting: they had been refused peremptorily. Nor was there any consultation with them before they were each granted one five-minute radio broadcast and one five-minute television broadcast at times not chosen by themselves.<sup>16</sup> This was the same allocation as that granted to parties which nominated fifty candidates on a national basis. There were to be few references in the national news bulletins to the activities of these parties.<sup>17</sup> The Communist Party, for example, which cleared the

<sup>13</sup> Meeting on Party Political Broadcasting, *Minutes*, 9 March 1970.

<sup>14</sup> The BBC originally wanted the party election broadcasts to be on Radios 2 and 4 only.

<sup>15</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1971, p. 15.

<sup>16</sup> Meeting on Party Political Broadcasting, *Minutes*, 25 March 1970. This was an enlarged meeting to discuss detailed arrangements at which Thorpe, Eric Lubbock, and Mike Steele represented the Liberal Party. When the new *aide-mémoire* concerning Ministerial broadcasts was considered by the Board of Governors in 1968 (*\*Minutes*, 12 Dec. 1968), Professor Glanmor Williams had drawn attention to the position of the Scottish and Welsh nationalist parties: 'he could well imagine a time when these parties, having increased their electoral support, would be in a position to demand that separate counterpart discussion programmes, with themselves represented, should be arranged in their respective countries.'

<sup>17</sup> In Scotland, however, there were distinctive programmes dealing with politics during the election, including *Scottish Viewpoint*. In Ulster, where Ian Paisley's Protestant Unionist Party, renamed in 1972 the Democratic Unionist Party, failed to secure an election broadcast, the BBC covered the election in every seat in the province, and ended the campaign with a two-hour programme in which thirteen candidates from four seats answered viewers' questions.

fifty-candidate hurdle, was badly treated in relation to times, to prior announcements of when its broadcasts would be on the air, and to reporting of its pronouncements and activities.

The meeting had been hastily reconvened at 12 Downing Street on 19 May 1970, one day after Wilson's announcement,<sup>18</sup> when those present included (for the first time) the political parties' broadcasting officers. There were still no representatives, however, either of BBC or ITV producers, and this added greatly to subsequent grass-roots suspicion of what went on behind closed doors.<sup>19</sup> The minutes of the meeting, which reflect this restrictive approach, are unrevealing on many points of substance. Most of them were 'noted' rather than formally settled. It seemed clear, however, that there was to be no political broadcasting on Sundays, that there was to be no direct political confrontation face to face, and that there would be no political broadcasts on the eve of polling day.<sup>20</sup> As in 1964 and 1966, full consultations with party headquarters were required both about which speakers could be invited to speak on radio or television and about which constituencies should be selected for media survey.<sup>21</sup>

One interesting suggestion had been made, however, at the meeting on 25 March 1970. Harry Nicholas, a trade unionist, suggested that 'time should be provided on Radio 1 for political broadcasts to

<sup>18</sup> Meeting on Party Political Broadcasting, *Minutes*, 19 May 1970. See \*Note for Curran prepared by Lamb, 19 May 1970 (R78/1420/1).

<sup>19</sup> The suspicion was shared by some members of BBC and ITV staff above the producer level; e.g., John Grist, Head of Current Affairs Group, Television, who was in charge of the BBC's arrangements, complained that this, like earlier meetings, 'created a suspicion—perhaps more than a suspicion—that election broadcasting is a private carve-up between the broadcasters and politicians in which the public has been left out . . . I think what I object to most is allowing the broadcasting authorities to be accused of conniving a deal against the public interest' ('Television and the 1970 Election', *Journal of the Society of Film and Television Arts*, Summer 1970). In a later paper, 29 March 1971, John Tisdall, an Assistant Head of Current Affairs Group, Television, concluded that 'the public and the BBC interest might be better served if the BBC clarified the extent of agreements with the Parties' (\*'The 1970 General Election: An Aide-Mémoire' (R78/1453/1)).

<sup>20</sup> Care had to be taken in the studios to prevent face-to-face confrontations even in the corridors. None the less, there was an element of indirect confrontation when politicians were interviewed in immediate succession by the same interviewer or when they were asked in turn to comment in the same programme. Roy (later Lord) Jenkins and Reginald Maudling, Peter Rawlinson and Richard Crossman, Robert Carr and Barbara Castle, were three of the 'pairs'. The interviewer of Jenkins and Maudling was Ludovic Kennedy. Meanwhile, Francis Hope (*New Statesman*, 12 June 1970) noted correctly that 'the debate between leading figures is by no means a guarantee of serious television'.

<sup>21</sup> At the last general election, Lamb noted, 'we observed this rule, but ITV carried interviews with the three main party leaders. This time, the rule should either be enforced or abandoned' (\*Lamb to Curran, 'Meeting with the Parties: Election Broadcasts, 19th May 1970', 19 May 1970 (R78/1420/1)). There was a curious tailpiece to this note: 'It may be wise to tell the Parties we rely on them not to use subliminal techniques.' Lamb added in ink the words 'of a kind banned by the Minister'.

give particular access to young people on the electoral roll for the first time, who formed the bulk of the audience for Radio 1'. According to the Minutes, the suggestion was sympathetically heard on behalf of all parties on the assumption that it would not entail 'any technical or insuperable programming difficulty'. Curran pointed out that Radio 2 had more national coverage than Radio 1 and was the main replacement for the old Light Programme, but he promised to consider the matter.<sup>22</sup>

In the judgement of Martin Harrison, who studied in detail the political arrangements at the election, the rules were 'invoked more rigidly and restrictively' than before.<sup>23</sup> One of the casualties was a BBC-2 proposal to transmit two long Sunday evening debates before an audience that would have included businessmen, trade-union leaders, lawyers, and academics. 'After three elections with a steady increase in discussions between the parties,' Harrison also concluded, '1970 brought a clear decline.'<sup>24</sup> Yet it was 'clear' to him that 'television's election was increasingly taken for "the" election, at least in the sense of being a faithful microcosm'.<sup>25</sup>

Robin Day was delighted with this outcome. The atmosphere throughout the campaign had been for him 'much less inhibited and much more challenging' than it had ever been before. There had been 'longer and deeper discussions' and more 'rigorous' interviewing. Far from 'trivialising issues', as critics in Parliament and in the Press complained, television had 'developed issues, restated issues, raised issues, analysed issues' in a way that had never been done before.<sup>26</sup>

The parties produced their own manifestos on 26, 27, and 28 May, with the Conservative Party leading the way and the Labour Party

<sup>22</sup> Meeting on Party Political Broadcasting, *Minutes*, 25 March 1970.

<sup>23</sup> M. Harrison, 'Broadcasting', in Butler and Pinto-Duschinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 202. None the less, a new Representation of the People Act, 1969, amending Section 63(1) of the earlier Act, granted both BBC and ITV the same standing as the Press in respect to certain aspects of campaign coverage. Candidates were allowed to express views on the air which were not 'about the constituency or electoral area'. Candidates who did not wish to appear were allowed 'to consent to the programmes continuing without them'. Not all did. The legal restraint still mattered. In his paper of 29 March 1971, based largely on the Minutes of the News and Current Affairs meeting, Tisdall ('loc. cit.') wrote that 'the Act offered broadcasters as much editorial freedom as it seemed the BBC would wish to seek'.

<sup>24</sup> Butler and Pinto-Duschinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 211.

<sup>26</sup> *Journal of the Society of Film and Television Arts*, Summer 1970. The trivializing charge had been made in *The Times* and elsewhere. See, e.g., *Evening Standard*, 17 June 1970: 'OMO Wilson or DAZ Heath'. For Day's opinions on the power of television to create events as expressed at this time, see 'Troubled Reflections of a Television Journalist', *Encounter*, Spring 1970.

standing on its record: while offering 'A Better Tomorrow', the title of its manifesto, it offered no new 'socialist' proposals. Thereafter, the two main party leaders, on whom most of the attention of the public was focused, handled the campaign in contrasting ways. Heath liked set speeches: Wilson preferred 'walkabouts', what were described as 'meet the people' tours. Compared with his rivals, Jeremy Thorpe, the Liberal Party leader, was handicapped in having to spend a considerable amount of his time in his own constituency in North Devon, where his majority seemed vulnerable.

The state of the economy and its future prospects provided the main theme of the election, with Heath concentrating on the rising cost of living and on an imminent economic crisis and Wilson pointing to reassuring signs of economic recovery.<sup>27</sup> Other issues, like foreign affairs, education, and social services, were either underplayed or neglected. It was the economy, too, which was the subject of one of the major broadcast contributions made by non-politicians to the election discussions. Lord Cromer, a former Governor of the Bank of England, and Lord Kearton, a prominent industrialist with Labour Party sympathies, an ill-balanced pair who appeared on television in *Panorama* on 1 June, were shown to be in agreement on the seriousness of the economic problem. To politicians this appeared as a somewhat disconcerting alliance.

The Labour Party, in particular, was not helped by this broadcast. Nor was it helped by alarming balance of payments figures that were announced on 15 June, three days before the poll. Wilson, however, spoke like a statesman. After Heath had recalled what had happened in 1966 and had forecast a period of austerity that would end in a further devaluation, Wilson dismissed the Conservative Party as 'the Misery Party'. It was ready, he claimed, to say anything, 'however irresponsible, however damaging to the nation, which they hope will win votes'.

The role of television during the different stages of the campaign was argued about in the periodical Press while the campaign lasted and by broadcasters—and others—after the election had been won by Heath and the Conservatives.<sup>28</sup> So, too, was the role of the BBC

<sup>27</sup> Thorpe received far less attention. All in all only forty-four politicians were referred to by name in the news bulletins broadcast during the campaign (Butler and Pinto-Duschinsky, op. cit., pp. 207–8).

<sup>28</sup> 'In general, there is more gloom and apprehension about the box's coverage than events justify', wrote Francis Hope in the *New Statesman*, 12 June 1970. Before the campaign began, Sean Day-Lewis wrote an interesting piece on television and elections called 'Does it all matter?'. 'It would be good to think', he added, that the Annan

and of the ITA as broadcasting agencies, for, since the campaign coincided with the soccer World Cup to which both the BBC and the contracting companies had committed substantial peak time—and funds—before Wilson's election announcement was made, the Cup, not the general election, dominated the evening's viewing.<sup>29</sup> In consequence, the BBC's election team were free late in the evening to spread their election programmes, but political reporting through ITN was hit particularly hard. *News at Ten*, with Alastair Burnet as its anchorman, had only five minutes extra time at its disposal each evening to cover the election.

In order to cope with the election, the BBC for the first time united its News and Current Affairs groups. Its news bulletins were under the same control, that of John Grist, as its *24 Hours Campaign Report*—just what earlier critics of its news policies had most feared<sup>30</sup>—and the *Campaign Report* was pitted against *News at Ten* in a deliberately competitive posture. *Campaign Report*, adventurous television, gave a bigger place throughout to minor political figures than they were capable of achieving in the news bulletins themselves. *Election Forum* continued on the same lines as had been laid down in 1966,<sup>31</sup> while *Panorama* devoted special editions to election issues, among them the economy, industrial relations, and foreign affairs. So also did *The Money Programme*, although politicians refused to take part in it.<sup>32</sup>

In *The Question Why*, a Sunday programme which had a large audience that had reached 5 million in 1970, there was a discussion of the moral issues in the election, with Denis (later Lord) Healey, Malcolm Muggeridge, and Quintin Hogg (earlier and later Lord Hailsham) among the panel. This programme had an invited audi-

Committee, which had just been announced by Wilson, would throw light on the influence of television on politics. 'Is there any evidence', he asked, 'to justify the extraordinary awe in which the medium is thus held?' (*Daily Telegraph*, 18 May 1970). See also David Wood, 'Politics on TV' (*The Times*, 18 May 1970), and W. F. Deedes, 'Political Television, a Paper Tiger', *Sunday Telegraph*, 24 May 1970. For the BBC's plans see *Radio Times*, 13–19 June 1970. The frontispiece was headed 'BBC Election 70: Who's going to get in?'

<sup>29</sup> It also influenced the imagery of the election. After 'it's all over now', as *The Economist* put it (20 June 1970), Wilson's 'footwork' was said to have left the defeated England team 'standing'.

<sup>30</sup> See above, p. 328.

<sup>31</sup> See above, p. 555. BBC estimates of the numbers viewing *Election Forum* in 1970 were Wilson 8m., Heath 5.2m., and Thorpe 4.5m. (\*Audience Research Report LR/70/1066).

<sup>32</sup> Robert MacNeil, the presenter who 'explained' industrial relations, had just written a book on television politics, *The People's Machine* (1970).



ence also. Meanwhile, regional politics were covered in *Question Time*, which had an audience of nearly 3½ million.<sup>33</sup> The new BBC local radio stations were active also. Radio Stoke, for example, offered nine hours of local election broadcasting.<sup>34</sup>

The Labour and Liberal Parties' own election broadcasts, which, like the Conservative Party broadcasts, attracted a far smaller audience than in 1966,<sup>35</sup> broke little new ground, and there was much straight talking to camera in them, some of it well received, as were broadcasts by Roy Jenkins and Jeremy Thorpe.<sup>36</sup> The Labour Party relied more on the support of media specialists than before, and worked initially through an unwieldy Campaign Committee established in August 1969, but dissolved when the campaign actually began.

In the campaign itself there was little continuity of theme between the individual broadcasts: the idea of dismissing the Conservatives as 'Yesterday's Men', which had been suggested by a voluntary committee of advertising men, had been quickly abandoned.<sup>37</sup> Stanley Hyland was still at the centre of the stage. The Conservative Party, with John Lindsay as Head of its Broadcasting Section, was more original in its approach, and made a number of breakthroughs. It had been preparing for the election for over a year, with advertising agency support, under the highly professional direction of two experienced broadcasters, Christopher Chataway and Geoffrey Johnson-Smith.

The packaging team, ready for action, included the film-maker Bryan Forbes; Geoffrey Tucker, the Party's Director of Publicity and a director of the Young and Rubicam advertising agency; and from

<sup>33</sup> The average viewing public for *24 Hours Campaign Report* was 4.4m. The three election editions of *Panorama* attracted audiences of 4.4, 4.2, and 4.6m., all below the recent pre-election average. The average audience for the news bulletins was 7.1m. (\*LR/70/1066).

<sup>34</sup> Butler and Pinto-Duschinsky, op. cit., p. 216.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227.

<sup>36</sup> Chris Dunkley in *The Times*, 4 June 1970, praised Thorpe's solo performance, a monologue delivered without an Autocue, as 'old-style', but effective. None the less, he awarded Round One to the Conservatives. Hugh Massingham in the *Sunday Telegraph*, 31 May 1970, claimed that while Thorpe and Heath might not have won many votes, they had not lost any. Wilson, he added, 'cannot afford to be so complacent'. By contrast, *The Economist* (6 June 1970) called Wilson's first broadcast 'a brilliant performance' which for 'sheer eloquence and effrontery' Heath 'could not hope to match'. All in all, Heath, who was determined to master the medium, appeared for ten of his party's fifty minutes of broadcasts, Wilson for twenty.

<sup>37</sup> According to *The Economist*, 30 May 1970, David Kingsley's advertising advice involved 'knocking copy' at a time when Wilson was setting his face against 'argy bargy'. It also showed Heath dominating his team. For the *Yesterday's Men* programme see below, pp. 892-901.

other agencies Barry Day, creative director of McCann-Erickson, and James Garrett, head of James Garrett and Partners, Britain's largest firm of makers of television commercials.<sup>38</sup> The Conservative Party programmes followed a *News at Ten* format, with breaks for commercials, and at Barry Day's suggestion there was ample *vox pop* in carefully filmed sequences, as much, indeed, as there was in current advertising, a substantial proportion of it drawn from street interviews. One critic compared their first programme with *On the Braden Beat*.<sup>39</sup>

There was also a determined and sustained appeal for the women's vote, to which one programme was specifically devoted. Interest was shown, too, in the attitudes of young voters, for, as Nicholas had noted at the Meeting on Party Political Broadcasting, this was the first general election at which the 18 to 21-year-olds had the right to vote. The BBC itself, which during the 1960s had concerned itself increasingly with the interests and concerns of that age-group, was also devoting its attention to women. *Woman's Hour*, which in 1970 was attracting audiences of between 2 and 3 million, was allotting more time to 'consumer interests' in a series called 'Watchdog'.<sup>40</sup>

On 'reconstructed radio', which at this time played a subordinate part to television in the strategy of all the parties, one Conservative broadcast by the playwright Ronald Millar, who was in charge of scripting the whole series, proved at least as controversial as the 1950 broadcast of the then Dr Hill, now Chairman of the BBC, had been. Millar, speaking as a former Labour voter, attacked Wilson 'as the man who shrank in his job in order to keep it'. Wilson himself was the main Labour Party speaker. Others included Jenkins, Tony Benn, and Barbara Castle. The Liberal Party chose for one of its Radio 1 and 2 broadcasts a dialogue between the Young Liberal's Political Vice-Chairman and the drummer of a pop group.

Other features of the election campaign were more interesting, in retrospect at least, than the role that the BBC played, although the

<sup>38</sup> K. Fleet and E. Goodman, 'The Selling of a Prime Minister—a Triumph for Conservative Technique', *Daily Telegraph*, 20 June 1970.

<sup>39</sup> C. Dunkley, *The Times*, 4 June 1970. He noted that Wilson had the timing of John Gielgud. *On the Braden Beat* was an ATV show which was first televised in 1962. It was a unique mixture of entertainment and investigation into consumer complaints. Braden, a Canadian by birth, was the Variety Club's Personality of the Year in 1965. Three years later he moved to the BBC, presenting *Braden's Week*, which ran from 9 Nov. 1968 to 29 April 1972. It introduced Esther Rantzen to television. See below, pp. 964–6.

<sup>40</sup> Cmnd. 4824 (1971), *Annual Report and Accounts of the British Broadcasting Corporation, 1970–71*, p. 35. It also introduced discussion sessions on decimalization, pollution, and women's liberation.

role was in several respects a significantly different one from that played in earlier elections. For once, part of the competition was silenced: staff on national newspapers (and at Granada Television) were on strike for significant parts of the campaign, and the reporting of news was left to television and radio. This was the first election, too, since the advent of colour television. 'Why was Mr. Maudling in colour and Mr. Jenkins in monochrome?', *The Economist* asked. There were few references to the role of colour in newspapers or periodicals.<sup>41</sup> In a Labour Party broadcast James Callaghan, forgoing colour, appeared in black and white from Cardiff. Whether pictures were in colour or in black and white depended on local camera and studio facilities.

The most publicized of all the features of the election was the role of the public opinion polls, which had increased significantly in numbers between 1966 and 1970. They now hit the headlines, including the headlines of the BBC's news bulletins, and did much to set the tone of the campaign. They continued through to the day of the election, when the BBC itself carried out its own poll in Gravesend, the results of which were broadcast twenty minutes before the first declaration of results.<sup>42</sup>

The Speaker's Conference on Electoral Law in June 1967 had recommended that the publication of polls be banned for seventy-two hours before polling day.<sup>43</sup> The recommendation, however, had been turned down. Instead, the pollsters themselves tried to emphasize their sense of responsibility in the middle of the 1970 campaign by giving the public details of their *modus operandi*. 'We recognise', a joint statement of theirs declared on 22 May, 'that the standards, techniques and presentation of opinion polls are matters of legitimate public concern. We believe it is in the public interest that the methods used by the polls should be open to public scrutiny.'<sup>44</sup>

Another novel feature of the broadcast campaign was the exceptional role played in it by a politician who was neither a party leader nor a chosen representative of either of the main political parties. The Conservative back-bencher Enoch Powell, who undoubtedly

<sup>41</sup> *The Economist*, 20 June 1970.

<sup>42</sup> It indicated a swing to the Conservatives of 4.4%, which, it said, would give them a small overall majority. Gravesend was described as 'the country's most typical constituency' (*Ariel*, July 1970).

<sup>43</sup> Cmnd. 3275 (1967). *Conference on Electoral Law: Letter Dated 24th April, 1967 from Mr. Speaker to the Prime Minister*.

<sup>44</sup> Butler and Pinto-Duschinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

added to the campaign a sense of drama, a favourite commodity with television producers, was always in the forefront. By raising immigration as an issue he undoubtedly embarrassed Heath, who for party reasons refused to disown those of his own candidates who followed a 'Powellite' line. Demands for repatriation of immigrants and claims that the Foreign Office might have been infiltrated by 'enemies of the country' were calculated to irritate Wilson, not to speak of Benn, who was drawn into a personal argument with Powell.<sup>45</sup> Inevitably, therefore, they guaranteed news coverage. It was alleged, indeed, that in showing pictures of minor disturbances at Powell's meetings, television was being used 'to cast a mantle over disorder'.<sup>46</sup>

Powell received slightly more attention than Thorpe,<sup>47</sup> and his views on matters other than immigration were given disproportionate attention. Francis Hope suggested in the *New Statesman* that he was 'manufacturing' his appearances in what had become 'Enoch's own show',<sup>48</sup> but if so, for Powell it was a serious show, less concerned with votes than with destiny.<sup>49</sup> Anthony Sampson compared Powell with a character from the *Revenger's Tragedy* who jumped on the stage on the wrong night in the middle of Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot*.<sup>50</sup>

If Powell disturbed Heath more than Wilson, the latter had other grievances too in contemplating what was happening, specifically in relation to the BBC, and there were renewed complaints from influential sections of the Labour Party of 'BBC bias' against it.<sup>51</sup> There was an early wrangle, too, about *Panorama*; for Wilson wished to have a discussion on foreign affairs with Michael Stewart, then

<sup>45</sup> See J. Adams, *Tony Benn: A Biography* (1992), pp. 306–11, for a useful summary.

<sup>46</sup> Butler and Pinto-Duschinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 209. Harrison thought that this complaint, quoted there, was unjustified, and noted that 'less overtly disruptive behaviour was seen and heard than in either 1964 or 1966'. In fact, the role of television in portraying disturbances had become far more controversial since 1966, and aroused considerable disquiet.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208.

<sup>48</sup> *New Statesman*, 19 June 1970.

<sup>49</sup> Some broadcast commentary, 'analytical' in character, suggested that the real struggle within the Conservative Party was between Heath and Powell, and that if Heath lost the election, Powell would be a formidable rival (see Butler and Pinto-Duschinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 211). Benn believed, wrongly, that if Heath won he would not be able to resist Powell's pressure (Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 308).

<sup>50</sup> *Observer*, 14 June 1970. For the role of Powell, see also *Annual Register, 1970*, pp. 15–16.

<sup>51</sup> Wilson had his problems with ITV also. In a rough ITV interview by Robert Kee, which Kee did not handle well, Wilson stated that he had been received with more civility by the BBC. The incident attracted widespread Press interest. Throughout the election the media were watching each other as well as the candidates.

Foreign Secretary, representing the Labour Party, substituted for a discussion on defence, with Healey as the Labour Party spokesman.<sup>52</sup> This was a blatant interference in BBC programming, which wasted a great deal of producers' time; and Hill and Curran, in a joint statement made on 16 June, accused Wilson of seeking to change the understandings reached in the Meeting on Party Political Broadcasting.

Another note by Curran, of a telephone conversation between himself and Wilson on 17 June 1970—this was one of several such notes—described complaints made by Wilson about the balance of news reporting of himself and Heath. 'Mr. Heath had been given a full opportunity to make his policy point about the economy . . . Mr. Wilson . . . had been shown only very briefly, and with no real chance to make his counter-argument.' Curran's note added that 'Mr. Wilson said that his attitude to the BBC would be conditioned by the evident predisposition which had been shown that evening. We should have to talk about the matter after the Election. In the meantime, he expressed the view that we might seriously have affected the outcome of the Election.'<sup>53</sup> After the election, Wilson was said to be so 'bitter about the BBC' that in future he wished all Labour party political broadcasts to be done by Granada.<sup>54</sup>

In a well-attended 'debate' organized by the Society of Film and Television Arts, Grist described the joint statement by Hill and Curran as being of 'major importance';<sup>55</sup> but his somewhat gloomy general account of the way that the role of broadcasting had been assessed during and after the election was challenged by Day, who,

<sup>52</sup> The programme went out on 15 June 1970. See *The Times*, 18 June 1970.

<sup>53</sup> \*Curran, 'Note of a Telephone Conversation between D.G. and The Rt. Hon. Harold Wilson on 17th June 1970. Subject: BBC-1 8.50 p.m. News Bulletin', 18 June 1970 (Man. Reg. file B561-5-1970). While Wilson was criticizing the BBC from the Left, Ian Gilmour was criticizing the BBC from the Right, claiming that Wilson's annoyance with the BBC was only a smoke screen to divert attention from the BBC's left-wing bias (*Sunday Express*, 31 May 1970).

<sup>54</sup> \*Grist to Curran, 'Political Matters', 14 July 1970, reporting a comment of Stanley Hyland (Man. Reg. file N449, Pt. 2). In July 1970 the Board of Management (*Minutes*, 20 July 1970) was told of a *Private Eye* report that Wilson would write occasional articles for the *New Statesman*, and that the first of these would be on the BBC. The last television party election broadcast in 1970—by Wilson—had attracted the largest audience, of 24.6% (\*LR/70/1066). Wilson's worries persisted. Joe Haines, Chief Press Officer to the Prime Minister, rang Kenneth Lamb in Nov. 1970 to ask why Lord Avon and Harold Macmillan had been shown on BBC News at a Requiem Mass for General de Gaulle while Wilson was not (\*Lamb to Hill, 'The BBC and Mr. Wilson', 16 Nov. 1970 (N449, Pt. 2)).

<sup>55</sup> *Journal of the Society of Film and Television Arts*, Summer 1970.

speaking as a 'humble worker', thought that the country could be 'pretty proud' of the way television had covered it.<sup>56</sup> Alastair Burnet, disclaiming any wish to be too 'self-congratulatory', agreed. He added, however, that some way had to be found of 'identifying ordinary voters' with what was going on. Jeremy Isaacs's position was closer to that of Grist, who criticized 'television journalism': 'we didn't know what was happening and we should have done.' It was his view that 'politicians' mastery of the medium has grown much faster in the last ten years than has television's ability to handle politics responsibly in its programmes'.<sup>57</sup>

There were other post-mortems, less public in character. Inside the BBC, the Board of Management met on 22 June, when J. H. Arkell, Director of Administration, began a very frank discussion by claiming that the BBC's election coverage had been 'first class and remarkably well-balanced', 'more impartial', he added impressionistically, than 'normal current affairs coverage'. In the latter, he added, he had detected 'a slight bias to the left'. In reply, John Crawley, Editor, News and Current Affairs, explained this phenomenon, which he did not seek to dispute, in terms of the fact that at election times 'one had to take the politicians more on their own terms, but that in between Elections there was more scope for scepticism which gives an "anti-establishment" impression'.<sup>58</sup>

Comparing the performance of BBC and ITV, Curran began not with the campaign but with the presentation of *The Results Nationwide*. The maximum BBC audience had been 15 million between 11.00 and 11.30 p.m., when the ITV audience was only 4 million; and although between midnight and 1.00 a.m. the numbers had fallen from 9 million to 2 million, there were still 1½ million people watching the BBC from 3.00 to 3.30 a.m. and a quarter of a million watching ITV.<sup>59</sup> There was one innovation before the results

<sup>56</sup> Grist felt that for several months there had been 'a growing gap between the government's ideas of the journalist's independence of the BBC and that held by the BBC itself'. For Day's assessment see above, p. 873.

<sup>57</sup> *Journal of the Society of Film and Television Arts*, Summer 1970. Isaacs was then Controller of Features at Thames Television. Mostly a producer with ITV, he had worked briefly with BBC Television Current Affairs from 1965 to 1967. In 1981 he was appointed the first Chief Executive of Channel 4.

<sup>58</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 22 June 1970. Crawley, who had been Foreign News Editor from 1963 to 1967, had been Father of Chapel and Chairman of the Branch of the National Union of Journalists in Bush House during his early years in the BBC after 1945. In Jan. 1968 he had a long and friendly conversation with Hill about BBC news policy (Note by Crawley, 31 Jan. 1968 (Crawley Papers)). In 1976 he became Chairman of the Trustees of Visnews.

<sup>59</sup> \*Ray Marler, Day Press Officer, 'Election Night TV Audiences', 25 June 1970 (Man. Reg. file B561-4).



came in. A comedy satire, 'The Campaign's Over', was broadcast at 10.05 p.m. It starred Eric Sykes, Warren Mitchell, and Spike Milligan, who, having been 'up the polls', met in a public bar to discuss the election. Greeted as 'welcome relief' by many viewers, it met some criticism in the Board of Management.<sup>60</sup>

Richard Francis, then Head of Special Projects, Current Affairs Group, Television, who arranged the BBC's results programme, described general elections as being to television what wars were to the aircraft industry. They forced development and invention.<sup>61</sup> Certainly computers were now used to such an extent that in the preparations for the election a BBC memorandum, worthy of satire, described its plans as 'computer-driven'. 'The classic studio News operation is based on Press Association tape and ordinary graphs will be required only for back-up purposes. The McKenzie Boards will give way largely to electronic displays (including light-pen routines and Photomotion animations.' ANCHOR, the Alpha-Numeric Character Generator developed by the BBC Engineering Designs Department, produced perfect colour-coded curves and diagonals on the screen.

The technological language was new. In 1970 computers were in vogue in Television Centre—Huw Wheldon, Managing Director, Television, was singing their praises<sup>62</sup>—and their application to 'psephology' seemed a scientific advance. 'The computer will produce on-line broadcast-standard displays of individual results, cumulative analysis and routines on demand. It will also produce C.R.T. displays for closed circuit previews and distribution of information, and will drive Gensign score-boards and master tables on-line.'<sup>63</sup>

For all the new methods, Curran thought that ITV had given facts and figures 'slightly quicker', and that their 'billboards and graphics

<sup>60</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 22 June 1970. For what was on offer on election night see *Radio Times*, 13–19 June 1970, which identified 100 key seats 'to see the way the nation's going' in an eight-page 'Election Special' which also included 'your guide to Electionese'.

<sup>61</sup> *Ariel*, July 1970. For the lead-up to the night see *Radio Times*, 13–19 June 1970, which described 'BBC Election 70' as 'the biggest ever news operation'. One subsection was headed 'How the crucial results can reach your screens in 1.5 seconds'. See also Cmnd. 4824 (1971), p. 19.

<sup>62</sup> In the *BBC Handbook, 1971*, Wheldon stressed how 'we [in television] have brought in computers to help us, and this on a massive scale. We have brought in new methods of work to help the computers. It has been an extensive operation, and it is working' (p. 14).

<sup>63</sup> \*Project Editor, 'General Election Plans', 30 Sept. 1968 (TV Central file: Talks: General Election 1970: Planning and Policy).

had been better'. On the other hand, 'the BBC had excelled at interpretation of the results', to which Wheldon replied that ITV had relied on two star performers, Burnet and David Frost. David Attenborough, Director of Programmes, Television, observed that ITV concentrated on 'lay reaction' to the results, 'from persons such as Peter Cook, John Braine and Marty Feldman, rather than on supplying professional comment and insight'. If the BBC had done that, he added, 'it might well have been accused of "trivialising" the event'. Even without them it was so accused. Radio, however, which Day called a more serious, more intelligent, medium than television,<sup>64</sup> avoided the charge. Rounding off the Board of Management discussion, Ian Trethowan, Managing Director, Radio, stated that Radio 4 had conducted 'a very successful small operation', and had broadcast results more quickly than television. The programme had been relayed to stations in the United States, which had continued to take it through the night of 18 June. Gerard Mansell, Director of Programmes, Radio, added that Radios 1 and 2 had also done 'an excellent job'.<sup>65</sup>

Four days later, Crawley initiated a second discussion at a News and Current Affairs meeting, at which Curran was also present. He began on this occasion by raising a point not raised at the meeting of the Board of Management. Oliver Whitley, then Managing Director, External Broadcasting, had complained that the BBC had spent too much time on 'the sterile questioning of politicians'. Grist observed that the run-up to the election had been short and that, given the unwillingness of the parties to allow their spokesmen to appear in the presence of audiences drawn from 'ordinary members of the public', it had been difficult to discuss issues.

David Webster, who had been interviewed with Tony Whitby for the post of Controller, Radio 4, and who was then an Assistant Head of Current Affairs Group, Television, stressed, as he did at the public post-mortem, that the most important conclusion was that during 'peacetime', that is between general elections, a 'pattern of programmes' should be devised 'which would serve the BBC well during the run-up to a General Election and during the campaign itself'. As far as the war between the BBC and ITV had gone, Grist had no

<sup>64</sup> *Encounter*, May 1970.

<sup>65</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 22 June 1970.

doubt of the superiority of the BBC over ITV. It had covered the campaign better than ever before, and had 'knocked *News at Ten* sideways'.<sup>66</sup>

The victory of the Conservatives was narrower than their majority suggested. Had the swing in their favour been 1.5 per cent less, 'Wilson would have come near to his goal of making Labour the normal governing party'.<sup>67</sup> As it was, the very first election result to be announced—that at Guildford—showed a significant swing away from Labour. So, too, did the second result from a very different part of the country—West Salford. Even before midnight, the computer predicted that Heath would win.

By 2.00 a.m. the Labour Party too had conceded defeat, although Wilson did not acknowledge it until the following afternoon. Against the pre-election odds, the Conservative Party ended with 330 seats as compared with 262 (and with 46.4 per cent of the poll), and the Labour Party with 287 seats as compared with 341 (and 43 per cent of the poll). Two of the defeated Labour candidates were George Brown, the former Foreign Secretary and Deputy Leader of the Party, and Jennie Lee, who had done so much to bring the Open University into existence.<sup>68</sup> The Liberal Party lost more than half its seats, the number of Liberal MPs falling from thirteen to six. Of their 332 candidates, 182 forfeited their deposits.

### 3. The Effects on Broadcasting

The general election had two immediate effects on the future of broadcasting. The Annan Committee had not yet met. Indeed, only the Chairman, Annan himself, had been chosen. One of the first decisions of Heath's Government was to dispense with the Chairman and to abandon the idea of the Committee.<sup>1</sup> Heath had said six

<sup>66</sup> \*News and Current Affairs Meeting, *Minutes*, 26 June 1970. See also \*Tisdall's post-mortem, 'The 1970 General Election: An Aide-Mémoire', 29 March 1971. A paper was also prepared for the General Advisory Council ('The BBC's Coverage of the 1970 General Election', 7 July 1970). See also General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 7 July 1970. The Council noted 'the heavy strain on the BBC's resources of money, manpower and equipment'.

<sup>67</sup> Butler and Pinto-Duschinsky, *op. cit.*, p. 2. Wilson had long aspired to achieve this.

<sup>68</sup> See above, p. 493.

<sup>1</sup> \*Annan wrote to Curran on 22 June 1970 saying that he was waiting to see whether or not the new Government would continue his inquiry (Man. Reg. file D215-8-1).

months before the election that he would do this if elected, stating that there was 'little justification' for again pulling up broadcasting 'by the roots in order to have another good look at it'.<sup>2</sup> His choice of the experienced broadcaster Chataway as his Minister of Posts and Telecommunications implied that it would be Chataway and not Annan who would be looking at it—not for the first time.

Ironically, it was ITV which was to be given the first look-over, neither by Chataway nor by Annan. The Select Committee on Nationalized Industries examined the Reports and Accounts of the Independent Television Authority in 1971 and 1972, and produced a careful and readable report.<sup>3</sup> While finding the Authority well established and the service 'popular and profitable', the Committee made thirty detailed recommendations.<sup>4</sup> It noted, too, that ITV's share of the total television audience had fallen from 64 per cent in 1965 to 55 per cent in 1969.<sup>5</sup> In its valuable survey and its cogent analysis it owed much to Professor Hilde Himmelweit who acted as consultant. The Report took a far more positive attitude to technology than the Annan Report was to do.

The second effect of the 1970 election was different but related. Commercial local radio had figured in the Conservative election manifesto, and the question of when and how it should be introduced now became a matter of practical politics. One major reason why there was to be no public inquiry, it was suggested, was that the Government wished to be unimpeded in introducing it. Chataway was a keen supporter. He had told a meeting of Young Conservatives in London in September 1970 that he did not understand how the

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in a survey by G. Ffitch in *The Economist*, 17-July 1971. Heath stated at the same time that there was 'no problem in broadcasting and television' which could not be 'settled amicably and sensibly with the [BBC] and the [ITA] by any government'. The Board of Governors (*Minutes*, 4 Dec. 1969) had noted that during the previous day's debate in the House of Commons on broadcasting (see above, p. 775), Heath had been careful to avoid committing a future Conservative Government to any specific course of action, and that he had firmly repudiated the idea of a Committee of Inquiry.

<sup>3</sup> The inquiry was chaired by a Conservative MP, Sir Henry D'Avigdor Goldsmid. Two of its members were John Biffen and the Labour MP Russell Kerr. The first witness was D. G. C. Lawrence, who was then Under-Secretary, Broadcasting Department, Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications.

<sup>4</sup> *Second Report from the Select Committee on Nationalised Industries: Independent Broadcasting Authority (formerly Independent Television Authority)*, Aug. 1972.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 100, p. xlvi. For the Report in the context of IBA history, see J. Potter, *Independent Television in Britain*, Vol. 3: *Politics and Control* (1989), ch. 4. A *Daily Mirror* headline on the report (28 Sept. 1972) ran 'Probe MPs Pan the Sleepy Watchdogs of Telly'. Lord Aylestone, Chairman of the IBA, called the Report 'scathing and partial'. The report was debated in the House of Commons in 1973 (*Hansard*, vol. 855, cols. 1479 ff., 3 May 1973).

BBC monopoly had lasted so long.<sup>6</sup> It was clear now, therefore, that at the very least the BBC would be called upon to face new competition in radio—on local ground that it had first staked out for itself, albeit with the threat of commercial television always in mind. At the worst, the whole radio scene would change. After meeting Chataway in June 1970, Trethowan, an old friend, feared that he was seriously considering closing down Radio 1 and the whole of BBC local radio.<sup>7</sup>

A change of Government policy was announced in the Queen's speech immediately after the election, but it was not until March 1971 that a White Paper, described by the *Financial Times* as 'vague and imprecise', proposed the creation of sixty commercial radio stations.<sup>8</sup> It was debated at length in the House of Commons in May 1971, when the House divided on a Labour amendment objecting to the policy which was defeated by 247 votes to 214.<sup>9</sup> By then, however, Radio 1 was safe, as were the BBC local stations, and William Whitelaw, Leader of the House of Commons from 1970 to 1972, proved himself well disposed to help the BBC in what were difficult times.<sup>10</sup> Chataway himself, in opening the debate, described his plan as 'a logical, and perhaps overdue development of our mixed system of broadcasting'.<sup>11</sup> Trethowan, delighted by the go-

<sup>6</sup> *The Times*, 10 Sept. 1970.

<sup>7</sup> I. Trethowan, *Split Screen* (1984), p. 128. The reason Chataway gave was shortage of frequencies, and the two men spent an afternoon poring over maps. Trethowan won what he called 'a stay of execution, but not a reprieve'.

<sup>8</sup> Cmnd. 4636 (1971), *An Alternative Service of Radio Broadcasting*; *Financial Times*, 30 March 1971. For *The Economist* (3 April 1971), it was so 'imprecise in its proposals' and left so many questions unanswered that it could well have been produced as a Green Paper for discussion. See also *The Times*, 30 March 1971, for a highly critical judgement. There is a lively account of the prehistory of local commercial radio by Anthony Blond in the *New Statesman*, 8 July 1973. He describes the setting up for a few hours of a pirate local radio station on the North Downs in July 1970.

<sup>9</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 818, cols. 391–512. The Government motion taking note of the White Paper was carried without a division. The debate went over much familiar ground. One of the speakers, Wilfred Proudfoot, Conservative MP for Brighouse, described himself as a former radio pirate. 'It has given me great pleasure', he said, 'to nod vigorous agreement every time hon. members opposite have talked about people lining their pockets. That is only another expression for economic growth' (col. 473).

<sup>10</sup> 'Why do you want all that pop?', Heath had asked Trethowan (op. cit., p. 128). Whitelaw saw the merits of the BBC as a public service organization serving all sections of the public, including pop fans.

<sup>11</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 818, col. 391. He raised questions of news policy. 'One can have a high regard for Mr. William Hardcastle without necessarily believing that the public interest demands that he should have a monopoly of current affairs coverage in peak day-time hours' (col. 396). Julian Critchley, Conservative MP for Aldershot, took exception. There were 'several views' about Hardcastle, he suggested (col. 425), and he himself did not approve of the way the BBC handled news. 'I like my news straight, especially on radio.'

ahead for BBC local radio, told the Board of Management that Chataway felt that the BBC ought not to provide local radio on medium wave until commercial radio could do the same.<sup>12</sup>

Commercial local radio had its financial problems also, despite familiar talk of a 'gravey train'. When Hill and Trethowan lunched with Chataway on two consecutive days in December 1970, there was a sense in the background of 'the tenuous financial viability of commercial local radio, which would need about 50 stations on medium-wave very quickly . . . in order to maximise advertising revenue'.<sup>13</sup> It was not until October 1973 that the first two commercial London stations—LBC and Capital Radio—were to go on the air, to be followed in December by Radio Clyde.<sup>14</sup> By then, BBC Radio London had been on the air for three years, and BBC local radio had achieved its own 'crucial breakthrough' by getting on to medium wave.<sup>15</sup>

The supervision of the new commercial local radio system by the ITA, which, by the Sound Broadcasting Act of 1972 now became the Independent Broadcasting Authority, did not greatly appeal either to

<sup>12</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 6 April 1971.

<sup>13</sup> \**Ibid.*, 14 Dec. 1970.

<sup>14</sup> For LBC see *Television Mail*, 5 Oct. 1973; \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 8 Oct. 1973, which reports a false statement in the *Guardian* that the BBC had banned all references to commercial radio. Curran wrote to the *Guardian*, which published his letter on 10 Oct. 1973. Both LBC and Capital Radio received considerable Press publicity. See *Television Mail*, 5 Oct. 1973: 'Despite our reservations about the structure, what we know about the new broadcasters is extremely encouraging. The Act requires an alternative service: the people in the new broadcasting companies seem to be interested in providing just that. The ILR stations' debt to existing media will be small, and to the old-established media minimal. We find it very gratifying that the journalists of the new radio are being drawn from *Time Out* rather than the *Telegraph*, from the ITV news magazines rather than from *Panorama*, from on the whole young people rather than old people. Nobody expects, or even wants, the new stations to be outposts of radicalism or of outrageousness: but then nobody wants them to be extensions of the existing media either.' For contrasting views see the *Spectator*, 6 Oct. 1973, and the *New Statesman*, 16 Nov. 1973, which gave its own account of the relative merits of LBC and Capital Radio. Meanwhile, commercial radio was being satirized in *Private Eye's* accounts of Radio Neasden.

<sup>15</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Local Radio', 25 April 1973. Trethowan noted that the move to medium wave had doubled the daily audience, although he conceded that it had exacerbated local radio's financial problems. BBC Radio London opened on 6 Oct. 1970 on VHF only on the same day that the Campaign for Independent Broadcasting launched a pamphlet, *The Shape of Independent Radio* (*The Economist*, 10 Oct. 1970). This was one month after the BBC's Radio Bristol and in the same month as Radio Oxford. Martin Rosen wrote to *The Economist* (17 Oct. 1970), stating the Campaign's position. It wished to see a body like the Press Council in structure created to issue renewable licence frequencies to operators. BBC's Radio Birmingham opened in Nov. 1970, and Radios Solent and Teesside in Dec. BBC Radios Blackburn, Humberside, and Derby followed in 1971. For talk of the move of 'the giants' into local radio see the *Sunday Times*, 21 Nov. 1971, and Blond, loc. cit.



the ITA or to the supporters of the commercial local radio lobby which had been active behind the scenes before 1970. None the less, John Whitney, the co-founder in 1964 of the Local Radio Association, which in 1971 was seeking to establish 100 local stations, became first Managing Director of Capital Radio under the new dispensation, and in 1982 he was to become Director General of the IBA.<sup>16</sup> A more recently founded body, Commercial Broadcasting Consultants, followed a line of its own. It did not want commercial radio to be strait-jacketed.<sup>17</sup> As it was, a newcomer to the Authority, John Thompson, with an impressive publishing record behind him, was to set the ground rules firmly and to remain in office as IBA's Director of Radio until 1987.

Once the decision had been taken to introduce commercial local radio, Health, who faced a far wider range of problems than he may have anticipated, tried to leave broadcasting alone. Indeed, in March 1973 his new Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, Sir John (later Lord) Eden, who had succeeded Chataway in April 1972, announced that the Charter of the BBC—and the Independent Television Act—would be extended to 1981.<sup>18</sup> There was feeling of relief in both sectors, restrained, however, by the fact that a number of opinion groups and pressure groups both on the Left and on the Right strongly objected to the decision. Moreover, the Labour Party immediately declared that if it returned to power it would not be bound by it.

Some of the opinion groups had already been brought into existence during the late 1960s. One of the chief of them, the 76 Group, which had now lost the rationale for its name, was united only in its

<sup>16</sup> For a critical left-wing account of the story, well documented, see Local Radio Workshop, *Capital: Local Radio and Private Profit* (1983). Competitors for the franchise included Radio Piccadilly, headed by film producer Lord Brabourne, and Network Broadcasting, headed by Lord Willis and with Ned Sherrin as a director. Both Capital Radio and LBC made heavy losses during their first year, and there was talk of a merger (*The Economist*, 19 Oct. 1974). *The Economist* added, however, that the BBC was 'even deeper in the red', and that new commercial local radio stations in Glasgow, Manchester, and Birmingham were 'doing well'.

<sup>17</sup> *The Economist*, 17 Oct. 1970. A. Roth, 'Huckster Radio—A Flop?', *New Statesman*, 9 Oct. 1970, presented a picture of the commercial radio 'lobby' similar to the older picture presented by Wilson of the commercial television lobby. It forecast a far more rapid development than was achieved.

<sup>18</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 852, col. 861, 12 March 1973. See also Cmnd. 5244 (1973), *Independent Broadcasting Authority (Formerly Independent Television Authority: Second Report from the Select Committee on Nationalized Industries: Observations by the Minister of Posts and Telecommunications and the IBA*. Eden claimed that until 1981 the structure of broadcasting would, broadly speaking, remain unaffected by major technical developments.

demand for a large-scale official inquiry.<sup>19</sup> From local radio it turned to television, launching a new campaign in November 1971 to prevent the fourth channel being handed over to the IBA, a hand-over that had been vociferously demanded since the 1960s by a powerful lobby. The manifesto of the anti-ITV-2 campaign, *Opportunities for the Fourth Channel*, presented to Chataway on 10 December 1971, urged that 'the Church (the BBC) and the Kings and Barons (ITV) must move over: it is time we had a Parliament'.

The campaign organizers prepared a petition, and in November and December 1971 collected MPs' signatures for a series of early day motions demanding an inquiry. The first of these had forty-seven signatures, including those of Phillip Whitehead, Andrew Faulds, Gerard (later Lord) Fitt, John Cunningham, Hugh Jenkins, Joan Lestor, and Dennis Skinner. Outside Parliament the campaign claimed the support, among others, of Hilde Himmelweit, Lord Olivier, Kenneth Tynan, Ken Russell, Arnold Wesker, Stuart Hood, Tom Margerison, Chris Dunkley, Peter Fiddick, and Frank Kermode.<sup>20</sup>

Pending an inquiry, the groups concerned multiplied. So, too, did the number of suggestions from individuals. Tony Benn continued to urge the Labour Party to 'think out its attitude to the whole of the media in contemporary society';<sup>21</sup> Brian Groombridge emphasized the need for access, participation, and 'democracy' in broadcasting;<sup>22</sup> Julian Critchley pleaded, as before, for an independent Broadcasting Council;<sup>23</sup> Anthony Smith fought hard for a National Television Foundation, first suggested in December 1971, and was backed by the ABS in 1973.<sup>24</sup> Whitehead, who was a committed Fabian, belonged to more than one group, but followed his own course, continuing to press for a large-scale inquiry with consistency and enthusiasm after the Government refused one.<sup>25</sup> The Standing Conference on Broadcasting, founded in 1973 with funds from the Rowntree Trust through the Acton Society, 'brewed evidence' for a

<sup>19</sup> See above, p. 795, for the name. The year 1976 was the date of expiry of the existing Charter.

<sup>20</sup> The campaign was launched following a conference called by the Free Communications Group (see above, p. 794) and *Time Out* magazine at the London Central Polytechnic on 13 Nov. 1971. The conference was attended by 200 people.

<sup>21</sup> 'A Socialist Policy for the Media', *New Statesman*, 14 Aug. 1970. See also below, pp. 993-4.

<sup>22</sup> B. Groombridge, *Television and the People* (1972), a book which drew on North American and European experience.

<sup>23</sup> *Spectator*, 26 Feb. 1972.

<sup>24</sup> *The Listener*, 4 Oct. 1973.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 Oct. 1973.

public inquiry while treating its own inquiry as a valuable substitute.<sup>26</sup> It was charged *inter alia* with providing 'a clearing house of ideas and research on broadcasting'.

Chaired by Roy Shaw, former Chairman of Radio Stoke, who in that capacity took an active part in the proceedings of the BBC's General



19. Mrs Whitehouse as seen by Cole in *The Times*, 4 Feb. 1974.

Advisory Council, the Standing Conference discovered strange allies; for Shaw, who was bitterly opposed to Mrs Whitehouse, as he had often explained in public, found his Standing Conference now supported by her National Viewers' and Listeners' Association.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, it was she who used the word 'bedfellow'. 'Although the Standing Conference and ourselves were in some regards strange bedfellows,' Mrs Whitehouse wrote later, 'we shared its conviction

<sup>26</sup> Lord Annan, 'The Politics of a Broadcasting Enquiry', Ulster Television Lecture, 29 May 1981. Greene gave a Granada Guildhall Lecture in 1972 on 'The Future of Broadcasting in Britain'.

<sup>27</sup> For the Standing Conference see a letter to *The Listener*, 15 Nov. 1973. A correspondent replied that he had heard of the Flat Earth Society, but not of the oddly constituted Standing Conference on Broadcasting. For Mrs Whitehouse's activities in this connection, see *The Economist*, 5 June 1971.

that "British broadcasting is run like a highly restricted club—managed exclusively by broadcasters according to their own criteria of what counts as good television and radio". 'Its recommendations', she went on, 'were not by any means dissimilar to our own recommendations for a Broadcasting Council made more than a decade earlier.'<sup>28</sup> One inquiry into broadcasting which did not favour such a Council (by a majority) was the Commission on Broadcasting of the General Synod of the Church of England.<sup>29</sup>

It was generally recognized by people on the Right as well as on the Left—and, not least, in the centre—that many urgent issues remained unresolved.<sup>30</sup> Yet not everyone attached importance to the issue of how to allot the fourth channel. For the *Spectator* it was 'the channel nobody needs', whether it was commercial, Welsh-language, educational, or 'free access', 'run by programme makers, technicians, maybe liftmen and tea-ladies'. The last of these choices, however, might be 'fun', 'except that we'd all have to pay for it'.<sup>31</sup>

Given the variety of views on the future of broadcasting, which focused on the role of producers (in television and in radio) as much as on ownership and the role of the profit motive,<sup>32</sup> it was obvious that any future inquiry when it came would have to be the most

<sup>28</sup> M. Whitehouse, *A Most Dangerous Woman?* (1982), p. 78. See also *The Future of Broadcasting*, a publication of the Social Morality Council, Jan. 1974. The Report was drafted by a team which included Dame Elizabeth Ackroyd, Dr Jeremy Bray, Sir Ronald Gould, and Jack Straw.

<sup>29</sup> *Broadcasting, Society and the Church: Report of the Broadcasting Committee of the General Synod of the Church of England* (1973). For the BBC's views on it see 'Board of Management, *Minutes*, 15, 22 Oct. 1973. The Report included what the Board of Management minuted as 'a not very well informed critique of the consequences of competition'. It also criticized the BBC's alleged 'neutrality about Christian values'. When the General Synod debated the Report on 8 Nov. 1973, it was attacked by a number of speakers, including Robert (later Lord) Runcie, future Archbishop of Canterbury, at that time Bishop of St Albans and Chairman of the Central Religious Advisory Committee, and was sent back to Diocesan Synods for discussion (\**ibid.*, 12 Nov. 1973).

<sup>30</sup> See *The Times*, 16 Dec. 1971, which reported a Parliamentary debate under the title 'ITA's concept of TV-4 has advantages'. See also *New Statesman*, 24 Dec. 1971: 'Greedy TV Tycoons'. A later wide-ranging and well-informed article on the subject was written by A. Howard, 'Must the Media Moguls Win?', *ibid.*, 3 Aug. 1973.

<sup>31</sup> *Spectator*, 1 Sept. 1973. 'Crucifer' in the *New Statesman's* London Diary predicted quite wrongly on 16 March 1973 that the Government would give it to ITV 'by this time next year'. Curran talked to the Critics' Circle about the channel on 10 July 1973. He was misreported, he felt, except by Sean Day-Lewis and Terry Hughes, but he 'took some comfort from the fact that the reporters' stories at least served to propagate the idea that it would be a mistake to allocate the fourth television channel to ITV-2' (\**Board of Management, Minutes*, 16 July 1973).

<sup>32</sup> See a letter to the *New Statesman* from Stuart Hood, 2 July 1971: 'It is true that the mandarins in the BBC leave some vital decisions to producers far down the line; but this is not, as the present director-general has pointed out, so as to give real power to what he calls "juniors"'. This letter was written after Hood's talk with Curran.

comprehensive ever undertaken, and the delay in starting it was regretted by individuals as different as the Labour MP Russell Kerr and the former Conservative Minister Aubrey Jones, head of the National Board for Prices and Incomes from 1965 to 1970, the latter drawing particular attention to the significance of technology in shaping the future. It was desirable, Jones wrote, that there should be a 'public debate' on the 'social implications of the present organizations' in broadcasting and on possible 'other forms of organization'. While technological forecasting was difficult because of the rapidity of change, 'adaptation is more difficult still, for it is slower to effect'.<sup>33</sup>

Six months later, the *Television Mail* was still pressing hard for an inquiry. 'One cannot but be disappointed that five more years will have to pass before we even get our teeth into it. We can only hope that those five years will be used constructively by the interested parties to find out exactly what it is we ought to be inquiring into.'<sup>34</sup> The hope was only partially realized.

#### 4. *Yesterday's Men*

Despite—or because—of Heath's decision in 1970 not to pursue the Annan inquiry, a decision that was to be reaffirmed in 1973, broadcasting figured prominently on the agenda between 1970 and 1973, not least on the agenda of politicians. And two BBC programmes in particular provided special occasions for controversy. *Yesterday's Men*, broadcast on 17 June 1971, further alienated Wilson and the Labour Party, and put the spotlight not on the politicians but on the broadcasters. Unlike the BBC, the Labour Party had carried out no extensive post-mortem on the 1970 election. It was forced now to consider not an election, but a social system. A very different programme, *The Question of Ulster*, broadcast on 5 January 1972, alienated Heath, who pressed for the programme not to be broadcast at all. In each case the political argument surrounding the programmes exposed the vulnerability of the BBC on the eve of its jubilee in the autumn of 1972.

<sup>33</sup> *The Times*, 31 Oct. 1972. Kerr's letter, which led Jones to write, was published on 26 Oct. 1972.

<sup>34</sup> *Television Mail*, 16 March 1973.

*Yesterday's Men*, a title taken ironically from the Labour Party's description of the Conservatives on the eve of the 1970 election, was a 24 Hours television documentary that provoked what one writer with a special personal interest in it, Anthony Smith, described as 'the biggest and most furious row that a television programme in the English language has ever provoked'.<sup>1</sup> The idea and the title of the programme were proposed to Paul Fox, Controller, BBC-1, in October 1970, soon after the election, by David Dimbleby, then a reporter under contract, who had interviewed Wilson at 10 Downing Street on the day after his defeat.<sup>2</sup> Dimbleby had thought of the programme in June, with a view to filling a Tuesday documentary slot, but he did not prepare a synopsis until October.<sup>3</sup>

The idea behind it did not immediately appeal to Grist, who thought that viewers would be tired of politics after the election. Yet it was a serious idea. What was it like to lose high office suddenly and unexpectedly? Interviews with ex-Ministers were the only way to find out. Those chosen were Wilson himself; Jenkins, who had become Deputy Leader of the Party in July 1970; Crossman; Callaghan; Healey; Castle; and Anthony Crosland. The title used by Dimbleby at the head of his first synopsis was not, however, revealed to them, an omission which was later—and correctly—judged to be a mistake.

By the time that Grist had accepted the idea and told Dimbleby to go ahead, Dimbleby himself and the young free-lance producer working with him, Angela Pope, both of them busy with other programmes, had themselves become somewhat tired of the idea, and suggested that it either be dropped or treated quite differently. Yet, since letters had already been sent out to Wilson and the other Labour politicians involved, again not without irony, on 5 November,

<sup>1</sup> He also wrote that 'if you examine all the newsprint which was inspired by . . . *Yesterday's Men* . . . it covers a good-sized lawn' (A. Smith, *New Statesman*, 16 June 1972). A correspondent suggested (23 June 1972) that, by comparison with the row caused in the USA by CBS's *Selling of the Pentagon* in 1970, the row over *Yesterday's Men* was 'a tiny chapter of toytown politics'. Smith, a brilliant writer on broadcasting issues, who was actively involved in the controversies about the fourth channel, had left the BBC the previous year after the *Yesterday's Men* row. In 1979 he was to become Director of the British Film Institute, and in 1988 President of Magdalen College, Oxford.

<sup>2</sup> The detailed chronology is set out in a confidential paper for the Director-General prepared by M. O. Tinniswood, Director of Personnel: 'Yesterday's Men', 7 July 1971 (Man. Reg. file C105-5).

<sup>3</sup> See Michael Tracey's interesting account of *Yesterday's Men*, based largely on oral interviews, in *The Production of Political Television* (1977), ch. 10.



Grist now felt that it should go ahead.<sup>4</sup> There was, from the start, an awkward snag. Although billed as a *24 Hours* programme in order to find a slot, *Yesterday's Men* was under the oversight of John Tisdall, Grist's new Assistant Head, and not that of Anthony Smith, who was then Editor, *24 Hours*.<sup>5</sup> Smith had no place, therefore, in the editorial chain.

Tisdall approved of half-hour interviews and of the associated filming arrangements, which began in March 1971, although these involved at least one tendentious item that had not been mentioned to Wilson, the showing on screen of a set of photographs of Grange Farm, which Wilson had acquired as a residence. There had been arguments about describing this—and Wilson's house-hunting problems—in *The World This Weekend* much earlier in June 1970, and Curran had apologized in a personal letter to Wilson.<sup>6</sup>

A different kind of property was to ignite the flames. When being interviewed, Wilson objected forcefully to any questions being put to him about the amount of money that he had received from his publisher for a volume of memoirs that he was then writing, and at his request it was agreed that the portion of his filmed interview which dealt with this question should be deleted. There were to be misunderstandings later about the extent of this arrangement: Was it one or more than one question in the interview that was involved? How much of the film should be destroyed?

Crawley, now Chief Assistant to the Director-General, disagreed with Joe Haines, Wilson's Press Secretary, on the extent of the arrangement.<sup>7</sup> He claimed that only one question was involved: Haines believed that there were three. The matter was not cleared up, and as late as 16 June, the day before the broadcast, Wilson and

<sup>4</sup> Tracey, *op. cit.*, suggests that the reason was that if the programme had been dropped, there would have been complaints of a very different kind from those which were to be made after the programme continued. Grist (Note for John Cain, 14 Nov. 1984) gives as the reason unwillingness on the part of people in Lime Grove, a very different cultural habitat from Broadcasting House, to allow Curran and Lamb, ensconced in Broadcasting House, another excuse for attacking Lime Grove.

<sup>5</sup> Tisdall, a former news editor, who had been working with John Crawley in Broadcasting House, replaced Derrick Amooore, who became Editor, Television News. Before that Amooore, the last editor of *Tonight* (1964–5) and later editor of *24 Hours*, had been Assistant Head of the Current Affairs Group.

<sup>6</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 22 June 1970. Anthony Howard had apologized at the end of the programme. On 22 Dec. 1971 Curran wrote to Wilson thanking him for a card he had received—a 'happy picture of you both at Grange Farm' (Man. Reg. file N449, Pt. 2). There was to be a strong attack on Wilson in the *New Statesman* on 26 May 1972.

<sup>7</sup> *Guardian*, 15 July 1971. Crawley was also News Representative on the Board of Management.

Haines understood that all three would go. They understood too that Crawley, who had been abroad but had dealt with Haines after Wilson had raised the matter, had, in fact, accepted Haines's version, and had written in a note of 12 May that 'the incident' seemed to be over. Crawley soon realized, however, that, in his own words, this note had been 'over sanguine in its conclusion',<sup>8</sup> and by June the flames were being fuelled by the Press, which published a number of leaks concerning a behind-the-screen row.<sup>9</sup>

Wilson was not satisfied with other portions of his filmed interview. Nor were some of his colleagues with theirs. They had realized that what they said in their interviews would necessarily have to be cut, but they were not told how their interviews would be juxtaposed—this was common practice—nor—and this was uncommon—that incidental music, satirical in character, was to be introduced into the film. It would be performed by a pop group called 'The Scaffold', which, had they known its name, would in itself have sounded ominous. The music had been specially commissioned in May 1971. This matter was not 'referred up'. This in itself was a mistake.

Already there had been many complaints of 'trivialization' during the election of 1970 and before it—and they were to be repeated at the next election in 1974. Now in 1971 the complaints were to seem more than justified to critics of the programme even if they never saw it. Dimbleby and Pope chose to offer little serious discussion of political issues in the programme, although some of the most controversial of these, like industrial relations,<sup>10</sup> and Britain's entry into the EEC, had been raised during the interviews.<sup>11</sup> They were issues, too, concerning which the different participants in the programme had differing views, and viewers clearly had an interest in how within the same party politicians approached problems that were to increase in importance in British politics between then and 1974.

Before the programme was shown, Wilson's protests had reached the highest levels of the BBC, and not only Tisdall but Curran and Wheldon were involved on 16 June, as was Wilson's solicitor, Lord

<sup>8</sup> Note from Crawley to Curran, 12 May 1971. Crawley referred to the title of the programme as 'A Year in Opposition' (Crawley Papers).

<sup>9</sup> *Evening Standard*, 10 June 1971.

<sup>10</sup> Details of the Conservative Government's Industrial Relations Bill were published in Dec. 1970.

<sup>11</sup> Grist was directly concerned at this time with several BBC programmes dealing with Britain's entry. Talks on the subject had opened on 30 June 1970, and on 24 June 1971 it was announced that the EEC had agreed on terms for Britain's entry. Their terms were opposed by the Labour Party.

Goodman. They all met in Goodman's flat, not far from the BBC, where there was even talk of an injunction being served to prevent the programme being broadcast.<sup>12</sup> Hill took no part in these discussions, although efforts were made by Wilson to draw him in; but it was Hill, with Curran, who decided during the night of 16–17 June that the members of the Board of Governors should have the chance of seeing the film before it was broadcast. Those Governors who were members of the Finance Committee, which was meeting that day, took it: a Press showing in Television Centre was attended by some of them—and by Haines.<sup>13</sup>

After the programme had been shown to the Press and the public, *The Times*, which had no political sympathy for Wilson, complained that 'the leading Labour politicians had all been treated as if the great questions of public affairs played no part in their lives, and were mocked by a pop song to make "good television"'.<sup>14</sup> This had not been real political television, but rather the television of *The Power Game*—Who was contending with Wilson for the leadership?—and of *The Money Programme*—Which politician was getting what, and what had each politician forgone? Yet this was not the only Press response. The *Daily Express*, for example, praised *Yesterday's Men* for 'turning yesterday's people of power into real people'.<sup>15</sup>

Dimbleby, who in November 1974 was to become the new presenter of *Panorama*, filling a role that his father had played before him, albeit in a very different way, defended the approach to politics in *Yesterday's Men*, an approach which he and Pope, members of a younger generation than the writer of *The Times* leader, believed to be appropriate and even sympathetic. Dimbleby argued that television should be free to describe 'political events' as it wished, in the same way as an 'ordinary newspaper'.<sup>16</sup> At least one newspaper, the *Daily Telegraph*, while describing the programme as one of the most interesting programmes on politics shown on television, none the less maintained that it went 'well beyond the fringe'. 'Disrespect' and 'irreverence', it argued, were essential parts

<sup>12</sup> The contentious dialogue in the programme was leaked to the Press on 18 June.

<sup>13</sup> Greene did not see it. Hill and the Vice-Chairman, Lady Plowden, did. Later Curran was at pains to insist that the Governors were not 'previewing' *Yesterday's Men*, but were rather looking at it to decide whether they approved of an editing decision taken by the Director-General (\*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 3 May 1976).

<sup>14</sup> *The Times*, 19 June 1971.

<sup>15</sup> *Daily Express*, 18 June 1971.

<sup>16</sup> Television interview with William Hardcastle, 11 Nov. 1974, printed in *The Listener*, 28 Nov. 1974.

of Dimbleby's technique.<sup>17</sup> They were also expressions of a Lime Grove ethos.

Robert Kee, who had tussled with Wilson in 1970, counter-attacked by defending 'disrespect'. It was, he claimed, 'the duty of a healthy Fourth Estate to reflect some of it'. For him, *Yesterday's Men* was 'a vulgarly brilliant equivalent of the newspaper cartoon', and criticism in the 'quality Press' was 'bitchy—the Top People's paper siding instinctively with Top Labour People'.<sup>18</sup> For such observers the BBC's cautious reaction to the fuss about the programme marked the end of the 1960s. Significantly, Greene had been the only dissenter when the Board of Governors decided before the programme was shown to interpret the pledge to delete certain sections of the film as Haines had interpreted it.<sup>19</sup>

*Yesterday's Men*, whatever it was, was not a political event. It was rather what came to be called a media event, and, broadcast at the time when it was, it did not fit easily into any politician's agenda. The approach, which *The Economist* called 'trendy and slick',<sup>20</sup> looked wrong too in the light of a straightforward *24 Hours* programme broadcast the following night which soberly celebrated, the appropriate word, Heath's first year in office. The fact that it was called *The Quiet Revolution* seemed to have no irony about it, and the programme was in no sense satirical.

As far as viewers were concerned, the front pages of the *Radio Times*, printed before *Yesterday's Men* was broadcast, had given no intimation of the particular slant of the programme, although on the daily programme page the title and comment did. The verse from The Scaffold's song was printed there, and the slant of the programme was not only made clear but further accentuated. The six Labour MPs, the write-up ran, had been 'given their cards last year in an election which upset all the pundits'. The programme would reveal, it promised viewers, 'what it's like to be out of office and in some cases, short of money, prestige, glamour and a chauffeur driven car'.<sup>21</sup>

It was in very different vein that David Jenkins had referred in the front pages of the *Radio Times* to two quite different political interviews that he carried out on his own. He had talked to two MPs,

<sup>17</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 19 June 1971. Dimbleby's and Pope's names did not appear in the list of credits at the end of the film. Dimbleby said that his name had not been given at his request (*Guardian*, 19 June 1971).

<sup>18</sup> *The Listener*, 22 July 1971.

<sup>19</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 17 June 1971; Hill, op. cit., p. 183.

<sup>20</sup> *The Economist*, 26 June 1971.

<sup>21</sup> *Radio Times*, 10 June 1971.

Joan Lester, who had been a Labour Minister at the Department of Education and Science, and Norman St John Stevas (later Lord St John of Fawsley), the Conservative MP who, after an election which had 'tremendously cheered' him, had moved to the Department himself.<sup>22</sup> What they said to their interviewer was serious—and the matters about which they talked to him were serious too.

As a case study in programming, *Yesterday's Men* can be considered from many different angles. Some of the issues which it raised concerned the sometimes complicated relationships in the making of a current affairs programme between the reporter, the producer, and the broadcasting organization. What form should 'editorial control' take? How much control should there be? What should be referred up? Some of the contentious issues concerned the sensitivities of politicians: Were they becoming too sensitive? Other issues concerned the attitudes and activities of television journalists: Were they getting to be too big for their shoes? What ought to be the relationships between politicians and journalists? Finally, a number of issues were administrative and political: What was the role of the Governors? If only because of the range of questions, the aftermath was no more straightforward than the incident itself.<sup>23</sup>

The Governors felt that whatever else they might do, they could not remain detached, and on 21 June Hill instituted an internal inquiry to be conducted by Maurice Tinniswood, recently appointed Director of Personnel, and Desmond Taylor, Editor, News and Current Affairs.<sup>24</sup> They worked quickly, and produced a Report which was delivered to a special Board meeting on 7 July and subsequently printed in *The Listener*.<sup>25</sup> It was an attempt at a detailed refutation

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* On the same page there was an announcement of a radio interview in *Analysis* of Edward Heath by Ian McIntyre. When Evelyn King suggested in a brief Parliamentary debate on *Yesterday's Men* that the whole House should resent the evident 'trickery' in the programme, St John Stevas urged that MPs not be too sensitive. 'Is not the possibility of an error of taste of this kind a worthwhile price to pay for freedom from censorship which would be infinitely worse in its effects?' (*Hansard*, vol. 820, col. 374).

<sup>23</sup> See Briggs, *Governing the BBC* (1979), pp. 222 ff. *The Economist*, 26 June 1971, pointed out that, while Chairman of the ITA, Hill had drawn up a sensible code of practice for editing film interviews to ensure that the interview as transmitted did not distort the interview as filmed.

<sup>24</sup> Taylor had recently succeeded Crawley. In a note of 28 June 1971 Crawley wrote that Curran had told Lamb and himself that he had been 'instructed' (the word used) by Hill and the Governors to set up the inquiry to discover 'all the facts' and to examine 'all concerned'. On 29 June 1971 Crawley told Hill that he did not favour the choice of Tinniswood, which Hill explained in terms of 'anti-whitewashing' (Crawley Papers).

<sup>25</sup> *The Listener*, 15 July 1971. The same number included an article by William Hardcastle, 'The BBC's Backbone'. One of his comments was that 'it is perhaps easier to stand firm against an Opposition than a Government'.

of all charges levelled, including some made in the Press after the programme had been completed. The biggest attack had come from one of the ex-Ministers interviewed, Crossman, who was now Editor of the *New Statesman*. 'How was it possible', he had asked, 'for a responsible public corporation to present a current affairs programme which fraudulently misrepresented both collectively and individually the attitudes of the ex-ministers invited to participate?'<sup>26</sup>

On most of the charges the BBC found itself not guilty, but it admitted that the title of the programme should have been given to those taking part in the filming, that sections of the film were frivolous, that the leaks, which were not entirely the responsibility of the BBC, had done damage to the Corporation, and that it had been an error to place the *Yesterday's Men* and *Quiet Revolution* programmes on consecutive nights. All these points were made in a report on behalf of the Governors which was drafted by Hill himself and which included the sentences 'We shall do nothing that could put at risk the independence of the BBC. Broadcast journalism has special obligations, but it cannot surrender to any individual or party or government—any more than can the press—its right of independent editorial judgement.' The admissions, which were substantial, received less publicity than the defence of staff. 'BBC Rejects Change' ran one headline; 'BBC defends Dimbleby' ran another. A third read 'Carry on Dimbleby'.

Dimbleby did carry on, although there were other BBC casualties.<sup>27</sup> One was John Grist. He was never reprimanded, but he was out of favour, and although in July 1972 he was made Controller, English Regions, in succession to Pat Beech, he felt that his BBC career was effectively at an end.<sup>28</sup> As for Wilson, he continued through Goodman to ask for a full apology to be trailed on the air, for his solicitor's costs to be paid, and for a contribu-

<sup>26</sup> *New Statesman*, 25 June 1971.

<sup>27</sup> Dimbleby was to chair *The Dimbleby Talk-in* from 1971 to 1974. He also presented *Election Campaign Report* in 1974.

<sup>28</sup> When Hill saw Crawley on 29 June 1971, he was reported as saying that Grist 'would have to be moved in due course . . . and hoped that we would not say no successor could be found'. He threw up the name of Robin Day; Curran mentioned Alasdair Milne (Crawley Papers). As part of a reorganization of Current Affairs in July 1972, Desmond Taylor was given a fuller responsibility for all current affairs programmes, spending more time at Lime Grove, and Brian Wenham, then editor of *Panorama*, became Head of the Current Affairs Group. In 1978 Grist became United States Representative. He retired early in 1981, and from 1982 to 1988 was Managing Director of the Services Sound and Vision Corporation.



tion to be made to a charity named by him. Hill called this 'grovelling'.<sup>29</sup> Instead, a limited apology was made by the BBC on 6 August. Some of the questions continued to linger. The Labour MP Jack (later Lord) Ashley, for example, had persisted in raising some of them at the General Advisory Council meeting on 14 July 1971, when he won a measure of support, although only a minority of the members wished the council to 'repudiate' the Governors' Report.<sup>30</sup> He found 'deplorable and distasteful' a statement that had been prepared by the Governors after studying the report. There had been evidence in the story, Ashley believed, not only of bad taste but of 'bad faith'.

Hill himself, who genuinely liked asking questions, now asked himself whose duty it was to protect those who believed that they had been unfairly treated by the BBC. The Governors had vetted the programme, and some had seen it. *Quis custodiet?* The upshot was the setting up in October 1971 of a BBC Programmes Complaints Commission, which issued its first Report in May 1973.<sup>31</sup> Lord Parker, a former Lord Chief Justice, was its first Chairman, and the other two members were Lord Maybray-King, a former Speaker of the House of Commons, and Sir Edmund Compton, the former Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration, an elaborate title for Ombudsman. All the names had been suggested by Hill himself.<sup>32</sup> Parker added the word 'Programmes' to the first

<sup>29</sup> The issue at this stage was the use by the BBC of privileged material—Wilson's memoirs. See Hill, *op. cit.*, pp. 190–1; \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 19 July 1971. George Campey, Head of Publicity, claimed that by then the Press 'seemed to have wearied of the discussion of this particular programme', although Haines had written an article in the *Guardian*. A settlement was reached on 5 Aug. Wilson did not broadcast on any BBC programme after his memoirs were published, but did appear on ITV (\*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 26 July 1971).

<sup>30</sup> Ashley had worked in the BBC in radio and television from 1951 to 1966. One of his critics on the Council was Professor Roy Shaw. At the same General Advisory Council there was a far shorter discussion on the BBC's coverage of Britain and the EEC following a question from the Labour MP Alfred Morris, who stressed that the 'debate' on the EEC was 'far more intra-party at this stage than between parties'. The BBC's coverage was praised, but Peggy Jay, wife of a strong Labour anti-Marketeer, who had praised the Governors' report on *Yesterday's Men*, complained that announcers' 'tone of voice' gave the impression that they were 'longing to get out the champagne bottles': any reference to going in was 'good', any 'hitch in the process' had to be 'bad' (\*General Advisory Council, *Verbatim Record of Proceedings*, 14 July 1971).

<sup>31</sup> BBC Programmes Complaints Commission, *Annual Report, 1972–3*. A report on the first three months of the Commission's work was sent by \*Parker to Hill on 14 April 1972 (Man. Reg. file D348-4-1).

<sup>32</sup> Note by Crawley, 8 Nov. 1971 (Crawley Papers). Lord Parker died in Sept. 1972, when Compton took his place as Chairman and Sir Henry Fisher joined the Commission. There were only three adjudications in 1972/3 and two in 1973/4.



20. 'I wish he'd stop fuming about yesterday's man . . . and thank his lucky stars we're not today's men', Emmwood in *Daily Mail*, 23 June 1971.

proposed BBC title, and changed 'Committee' to 'Commission'. 'Complaints Commission', he remarked, put him in mind of Selfridges or Harrods.<sup>33</sup>

The setting up of the Commission did not satisfy those among the BBC's critics who clamorously demanded a Broadcasting Council. Nor did it please Greene or Sir Robert Lusty, who objected to any such Commission, whatever it was called, on the grounds that it curtailed the responsibilities and powers of the Governors. More significantly, Heath did not like it either. He told Curran privately before the setting up of the Commission was announced that he considered that it evaded the main point of criticism of the Governors—that is, their failure to maintain programme standards. It was 'merely an attempt at a diversion'. If the BBC went ahead with it, he added, 'it should be clearly understood' that it was 'on their own responsibility—as they are entitled to do'.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> \*Shaw to Curran, 'Meeting with Lord Parker, 14 Sept. 1971', 15 Sept. 1971 (Man. Reg. file D348-1).

<sup>34</sup> \*Note from Curran's Private Secretary, 5 Oct. 1971 (D348-1).

## 5. Northern Ireland

Heath made no direct intervention as Prime Minister in the furore surrounding *The Question of Ulster*, which raised several quite different issues from *Yesterday's Men*. None the less, it necessarily involved an examination of some of the same relationships, including the relationships between politicians and journalists. The serious issue at its heart, the impact of 'the Irish Question' on British politics—and British broadcasting—was to remain serious after the debate on the programme was over, while *Yesterday's Men* faded into history. The furore about *The Question of Ulster* was described by Hill as 'a storm of a severity unprecedented' in his experience.<sup>1</sup> Yet Richard Francis, who was the Executive Producer, preferred the word 'ballyhoo'.<sup>2</sup>

The issues were not new in 1972: they had already been opened up in Northern Ireland during the disturbances of 1969, when the BBC was faced with what were described mutedly at that time as 'unique editorial difficulties'.<sup>3</sup> A year later, two BBC engineers and three workmen from a firm of local contractors were killed by a land-mine when on their way to work on a transmitter that was being constructed at Brougher Mountain. There would have been another tragedy too had not a soldier, Sergeant Green, removed the detonation device at the transmitting station near Newry only a few seconds

<sup>1</sup> Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Question of Ulster', *Ariel*, 21 Jan. 1972. Francis provided an account of what had happened in long interviews with Frank Gillard for the \*Oral History Project in Oct., Nov., and Dec. 1986. See also his lecture to the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 'Broadcasting to a Community in Conflict', 22 Feb. 1977 and J. Darby, *Conflict in Northern Ireland: The Development of a Polarised Community* (1976).

<sup>3</sup> See \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 8 Sept. 1969; Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 11 Sept. 1969; Hill to Waldo Maguire, Controller, Northern Ireland, sending a message of appreciation and confidence to him and his staff, 15 Sept. 1969 (R78/696/1); and \*Report by Maguire, 'BBC and the Northern Ireland Crisis', 24 Sept. 1969 (R78/696/1). In a Belfast Press Release, 3 Oct. 1969, the Council expressed confidence, following protests, in Maguire and the BBC news staff for 'the manner in which the events of recent months had been reflected'. See also \*Northern Ireland Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 3 Oct. 1969, for a wide range of views. There had been two major rows ten years earlier over an Alan Whicker item in *Tonight* (9 Jan. 1959) and the broadcasting of an American film *Small World*, in which the actress Siobhan McKenna described the IRA as idealists. The then Controller, Northern Ireland, Robert McCall, apologized to the Northern Ireland public, saying that he had given advice which had been ignored concerning the Whicker programme (\*Statement of 10 Jan. 1959 (T16/487)), and *Tonight* did not return to Northern Ireland for five years. After the American film had been shown, Brian Faulkner, later to become Prime Minister, resigned from the Northern Ireland Regional Council. For an assessment of 1969 see K. Kyle, 'The Ulster Emergency and the BBC's Impartiality', *The Listener*, 4 Sept. 1969.

before it had been timed to explode a large 48 lb. gelignite bomb attached to the mast.<sup>4</sup>

There certainly was no place for understatement by 1972, for the Northern Irish situation had further deteriorated sharply. The first British soldier serving in Northern Ireland had been killed on 6 February 1971, and in August 1971 the IRA had threatened a bombing campaign on the British mainland. A bombing campaign began in Northern Ireland in December 1971 while *The Question of Ulster* was being planned, and on 30 January 1972, less than a month after the programme was broadcast, 'Bloody Sunday' disturbances at Londonderry, in which the paratroops were involved, left thirteen civilians dead.<sup>5</sup> On 24 March 1972 the Northern Irish Parliament at Stormont was to be suspended, and William Whitelaw was to be put in charge of the province, which was now to be under direct rule. The position remained extremely tense following a huge, well-organized Protestant protest. There was to be no subsequent resolution of conflicts or issues, whether they related to policy or to broadcasting.

The buildup to the Northern Irish crisis in 1972 had been long, centuries old, and by broadcasting standards the topical programme dealing with it, *The Question of Ulster*, broadcast while the situation was changing daily, had a long buildup also. Yet the progress of the project, which was designed to be informative, had been frustrating: there were changes of mind and elaborate political manoeuvres at almost every point, both in Belfast and in London. It was on 12 October 1971 that Francis, then an Assistant Head of Current Affairs Group, Television, and Tam Fry, who was to produce the programme, discussed how television could best handle it.<sup>6</sup> Further discussions took place in October in Belfast and in London, and on 8 November a possible placing for the programme, then provision-

<sup>4</sup> \*Maguire to Lamb, 'Thanks to Sergeant Green', 20 Jan. 1971 (R78/697/1); Cmnd. 4824 (1971) p. 60.

<sup>5</sup> Philip Taylor, who was sent to Northern Ireland to report on 'Bloody Sunday', wrote an account of his experiences then and later in 'Ties of Blood', *The Listener*, 3 Aug. 1989. This issue of *The Listener*, which also included articles by Roger Bolton, who had worked in current affairs for both BBC and ITV, and Geoff Druett, producer of ITV's *First Tuesday*, had as its subtitle 'Twenty Years' War: Reports from the Frontline'. For BBC attitudes towards Northern Ireland 'censorship' on the eve of 'Bloody Sunday' see *Ariel*, 3 Dec. 1971.

<sup>6</sup> Fry had joined the Television Presentation Department as a production assistant in 1963 and in 1968 moved to Current Affairs Group, where he stayed until his early retirement in 1988.

ally given the most neutral of titles 'The Question of Ireland', was fixed for 5 January.

Two days later, Francis and Michael Bukht, the programme's editor, discussed in detail the content of the programme, stressing that it was designed not 'to apportion blame for the past', but to 'air' solutions for the future.<sup>7</sup> It was to be a 'long, cool programme of talk not action' which it was hoped 'would do something to complement the day-by-day news film of violence and disorder'.<sup>8</sup> A few days after their talk, a format was agreed. During this and later planning phases all difficult issues were referred for decision to the 'highest level within the BBC'.<sup>9</sup>

The first name suggested for Chairman of the programme was Lord Gardiner, a former Labour Lord Chancellor, but after he had been selected for work on the Northern Ireland Commission he was replaced by Lord Devlin, and it was after Devlin agreed to take part that the term 'tribunal' began to be used and with it other legal terms like 'expert witnesses'.<sup>10</sup> This language was bound in itself to be controversial, but the expert witnesses, who were to be summoned to give evidence, were required to be uncontroversial and, therefore, acceptable to the 'protagonists' on each side. Alongside Devlin there were to be two experienced politicians—Lord Caradon (Labour), a former Governor of Cyprus, the first to be approached, and Sir John Foster QC, a Conservative MP and prominent international lawyer.<sup>11</sup>

It was agreed that the programme would open with a short historical introduction, after which eight 'protagonists', representatives of different Irish political and social interests, would each

<sup>7</sup> Bukht, who, after joining the BBC in 1963, worked both on *Mrs. Dale's Diary* and *Tonight*, was editor of *24 Hours* and an executive producer in Current Affairs Group from 1969 to 1972, before joining Capital Radio as Programme Controller. In 1992 he was to become Programme Controller, Classic FM.

<sup>8</sup> \*R. Francis, 'The Question of Ulster', draft article (unpublished) for the *EBU Review*, 10 May 1972 (TV Central file: The Question of Ulster).

<sup>9</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 26 Jan. 1972. Curran told the Council that he had given his approval on 30 Nov. 1971, and that thereafter the Board of Governors had frequently been consulted.

<sup>10</sup> Devlin, who was a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary from 1961 to 1964, was Chairman of the Press Council from 1964 to 1969. The word 'Tribunal' was typed with a capital 'T' on the copy of a producer on location, and this itself caused trouble. The BBC did not use the word in its first public announcement of the programme (\*BBC Press Announcement, 4 Jan. 1972 (Man. Reg. file C165)), but it appeared in small letters in a draft *Radio Times* billing sent by Francis to Curran on 10 Dec. (same file).

<sup>11</sup> Lord Butler was considered as an alternative to Foster. So, too, was Lord Boyle (\*Francis, Bukht, and Fry, 'Revised Outline "The Question of Ulster"', 29 Nov. 1971 (C165)).

make a short statement on policy. The intention was 'to give a say both to majorities and minorities' and to maintain a balance between Protestant/Catholic, Loyalist/Republican, and right-wing/left-wing views. The protagonists were asked to submit written depositions beforehand in order that inflammatory passages could be vetted before the broadcast, and so that during the broadcast representative views could be presented in the most appropriate order. They were to be allowed to use photographs, maps, silent film, and stills to back their case. At the end of the programme it was agreed that the Chairman and his colleagues would sum up their views on what had been said, but would not attempt to judge whether they were right or wrong. In Curran's words—and he was looking at the issues from above and not at the grass roots—the aim of the programme was 'to show the complexity of the task which faced any Government in dealing with the Irish question'.<sup>12</sup>

During the ten days after Devlin's acceptance, 19 November to 29 November 1971, most of the important decisions were taken both about the format of the programme and about names of participants.<sup>13</sup> Robin Day was to be the BBC Chairman, and the eight 'protagonists' would include the Ulster Unionist Minister of Commerce, Robin Baillie, the first 'protagonist' to be approached, and the Revd. Ian Paisley, already well known on the television screen.<sup>14</sup> The Stormont Government was to be given a chance to state its case before the hearings began, 'thus giving it something of a first and last position'.<sup>15</sup>

In the event, Day was to disappear from the lists and be replaced by Ludovic Kennedy, but Paisley was to stay: he was then a Protestant Unionist MP at both Stormont and Westminster. Paisley kept out

<sup>12</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 26 Jan. 1972.

<sup>13</sup> It was agreed that not all three members of the tribunal need examine each of the protagonists (\*Francis to Desmond Taylor, Editor, News and Current Affairs, and Brian Wenham, Head of Current Affairs Group, Television, ' "The Question of Ulster"—Sitrep', 6 Dec. 1971 (C165)).

<sup>14</sup> In 1969 several Governors, including the Vice-Chairman, had complained about coverage given to Paisley, and had expressed concern that it would be a stimulus to violent feelings (\*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 11 Sept. 1969). There was opposition too to the broadcasting of the activities of the Ulster Volunteer Force, a proscribed organization, which James Chichester-Clark (later Lord Moyola), then Northern Ireland Prime Minister, in a letter to Lord Dunleath had described as 'mischievous'. Greene defended such reporting, arguing that the 'BBC should resist the temptation to pretend that the situation was other than it was. In Northern Ireland moderate opinion was not dictating the course of events. The dynamic came from the extremists.' Lord Constantine strongly dissented from the view that the BBC should put news values first.

<sup>15</sup> \*Francis, ' "The Question of Ulster"—Sitrep'.



Roy Lilley, the Political Correspondent of the *Belfast Telegraph*, whose presence, in effect, he vetoed.<sup>16</sup> The Stormont Government, which eventually refused to be involved, had the benefit of neither the first nor the last word.

By 8 December seven of the participants approached had accepted, but Baillie still had not replied definitely. Curran was able to tell the Home Secretary, Maudling, therefore, that 'nearly all the people concerned had agreed to take part'.<sup>17</sup> Yet there were rumours galore, and the first Press stories in Ireland began to appear on 11 December. It had been hoped that the programme would go out on Wednesday, 5 January, but because of uncertainties the *Radio Times* for the first week in January had to go to Press on 13 December without any mention of *The Question of Ulster*.<sup>18</sup>

Most of the difficulties had by then come to a head. The first of them provided a portent of serious further difficulties to come. Brian Faulkner, then Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, who had taken office in March 1971, wrote a friendly letter to Curran questioning the wisdom of the programme being shown while people were being killed. 'Extreme views on both sides' would be bound to be expressed, and these could add to the violence. Faulkner also suggested that the balance of participants was wrong. Baillie—and he had agreed with him that he could take part—was a good choice, but there should be more than one Ulster Unionist to state the Northern Ireland Government's case. There were to be two members of the Irish Dail, and the three Westminster MPs, who included Fitt and the civil rights leader Bernadette Devlin as well as Paisley. In Faulkner's view, a correct view, these were all opposed to his administration.<sup>19</sup>

After receiving Faulkner's letter, Curran wrote to Maudling, who had a specific responsibility for Northern Ireland, describing what was being planned, and Maudling replied immediately, stating that he too felt great concern about the programme being broadcast. His, too, was not an unfriendly letter in tone, and he stated specifically

<sup>16</sup> The *Belfast Telegraph*, an evening newspaper, had a larger circulation than the Unionist *Belfast Newsletter* and the Nationalist *Irish News*. For the role of the Press see Darby, op. cit., pp. 141 ff.

<sup>17</sup> \*Curran to Maudling, 10 Dec. 1971 (C165).

<sup>18</sup> On the same day the Board of Management considered the programme (\*Minutes, 13 Dec. 1971).

<sup>19</sup> \*Faulkner to Curran, 9 Dec. 1971 (C165). The letter was telephoned to the BBC when it had not arrived on 9 Dec. The BBC had kept its own 'balance chart' relating to each of the protagonists. Curran replied to Faulkner on 10 Dec., saying that he would discuss the matter with Hill. He referred to the 'responsible programme editor'. See also Hill, op. cit., p. 219.

that he had 'no control over the actions of the BBC', nor did he seek it in any way.<sup>20</sup> He suggested a meeting at the Home Office, which took place four days later, when he told Hill and Curran privately how 'disquieted' he was by the project. It was, he said, 'potentially dangerous'.<sup>21</sup>

Maudling had already objected to BBC reporting of events in Northern Ireland, and after a series of incidents<sup>22</sup> Hill had written to him in mid-November defending the BBC's record and intentions, but ending with words that were often to be quoted later: 'In short, as between the Government and the Opposition, as between the two communities in Northern Ireland, the BBC has a duty to be impartial no less than in the rest of the United Kingdom. But, as between the British Army and the gunmen the BBC is not and cannot be impartial.'<sup>23</sup>

Earlier in the year, when a BBC *24 Hours* reporter, Bernard Falk, had refused to answer questions in court about IRA men whom he had interviewed,<sup>24</sup> it was noted that he had not been 'properly briefed' about BBC guide-lines.<sup>25</sup> He had been sentenced to four days imprisonment for contempt of court.<sup>26</sup> At the end of the same month Curran banned all interviews with members of the IRA without his express permission, and three requests to do so were all turned down.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>20</sup> \*Curran to Maudling, 10 Dec. 1971; Maudling to Curran, 10 Dec. 1971 (C165).

<sup>21</sup> Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

<sup>22</sup> On 11 Aug. 1971, e.g., Faulkner had phoned Whitley to complain of a *World at One* programme which had *inter alia* 'reflected the activities' of an illegal IRA radio station. The BBC after investigation had found the complaint justifiable (\*Whitley to Curran, 'The World at One' on 10th August 1971 and Northern Ireland', 11 Aug. 1971 (R78/698/1)). See also \*News and Current Affairs Meeting, *Minutes*, 13 Aug. 1971, and an article by Dennis Kennedy in the *Irish Times*, 16 Aug. 1971: 'Processing the News'.

<sup>23</sup> The letter is printed in *Ariel*, 3 Dec. 1971.

<sup>24</sup> *Guardian*, 23 April 1971.

<sup>25</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 26 April 1971.

<sup>26</sup> *Irish Times*, 28 April 1971; *Irish Press*, 28 April 1971; Board of Management, *Minutes*, 3 May 1971. Hill had lunch with Faulkner on 4 May when this and a number of other matters were discussed (\*Chairman's Lunch with Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, 4 May 1971 (R78/697/1)). At a later News and Current Affairs Meeting (7 May 1971) it was noted that Bernard Falk had served his prison sentence of his own choice, and had spent 2½ days in Crumlin Road Prison. It was also noted by Curran that David Dimbleby, whose role in *Yesterday's Men* was to be so controversial, would spend 'some time in Ulster, not on a reporting assignment, but to increase his personal knowledge of the situation'.

<sup>27</sup> The first protests about IRA interviews had followed a *Nationwide* item about the IRA on 26 May 1970; it included interviews with IRA members and a film of training in progress. See \*Maguire to Crawley, 'Filming of Illegal Organisations', 2 June 1970 (R78/697/1); Board of Management, *Minutes*, 1, 8 June 1970; Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 4 June 1970. A *Panorama* programme dealing with Ireland on 6 July had not been shown

Hill's statement assumed new significance in the light of the increasingly public argument about *The Question of Ulster* which reached the Dublin and London Press in mid-December. The first London newspaper to comment, the *Daily Mirror*, launched the argument by claiming that the BBC had called the programme off after representations from Stormont. The report was totally untrue.<sup>28</sup> Hill had told Maudling that the BBC could not accept advice that it should not broadcast the programme.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, Hill was determined that the programme should proceed: he regarded it as a test of the BBC's independence.

The Governors considered the matter on the day that the *Daily Mirror* report appeared. Dunleath agreed that it should go ahead—it was 'possibly fruitful'—but questioned the balance, and said that he understood Faulkner's and Maudling's point of view. Sir Ralph Murray thought that if there were further difficulties the programme should be abandoned. Lady Plowden thought that it should be 'low key'. Desmond Taylor, who was present for the discussion, was pressed to have the programme pre-recorded, and, despite his objections, a vote was taken (four to three) urging this. At this point, Day was still thought of as Chairman, and going ahead was agreed to '*nem. con.*'. When it had been suggested that if Stormont refused to be represented the programme should not go ahead, Taylor had complained that to make Stormont participation a pre-condition would be to give it 'effective editorial control'.<sup>30</sup>

On 24 December, in its Peterborough column, the *Daily Telegraph* embarked on an all-out attack on the programme, claiming that Maudling had 'blown his top' when he had met Hill and Curran: as he had told Curran, he had known about the programme before

in Northern Ireland. A News and Current Affairs Meeting (\**Minutes*, 12 Feb. 1971) did not support a total ban on IRA interviews, however, and Curran had then concurred (*ibid.*, 26 Feb. 1971). For policy later in 1971 see \*Appendix to News and Current Affairs Meeting, *Minutes*, 1 Oct. 1971: 'Standing Instructions on Coverage of Events in Northern Ireland' printed below Appendix F. The *Minutes* of the News and Current Affairs meeting were leaked to *Private Eye* (*ibid.*, 5 Nov. 1971). See also T. C. Worsley, 'Concerns and the Crisis', *Financial Times*, 10 Nov. 1971. Further BBC guide-lines were laid down in a statement circulated by Trethowan, 'Northern Ireland', 25 Nov. 1971.

<sup>28</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 16 Dec. 1971; \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 20 Dec. 1971. Trethowan reported at this meeting that radio would also be dealing with Northern Ireland on 11 Jan. in *It's Your Line*, a 'live phone-in' current affairs programme, which had been first broadcast on 13 Oct. 1971. Robin Day presided. The BBC had unsuccessfully tried a television phone-in called *Hot Line* in 1965, but had been forced to abandon it for technical reasons.

<sup>29</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 16 Dec. 1971; Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 219.

<sup>30</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 16 Dec. 1971.

Curran wrote to him. For 'Peterborough', viewers were now 'to be entertained with a kind of "Famous Trials" enactment of a contemporary situation, in which fellow citizens are being bombed and murdered. It is scarcely surprising that some MPs believe there are no limits to the irresponsibility of the Corporation.'<sup>31</sup>

The BBC replied five days later, reaffirming that it believed the programme 'to be in the public interest' and maintaining that 'the suppression of views, however unpopular, would be both unwise and dangerous'. At the same time, however, it observed that 'such a programme depends on the willingness of governments to co-operate in providing authoritative spokesmen'. Faulkner had not gone so far as to ask the BBC to ban the programme, but if it were true that the Stormont Government was 'unwilling to co-operate', then the programme on 5 January could not proceed on the same lines as had been originally planned.

In the meantime, strenuous efforts were being made to find a Unionist participant, for, as Bukht reported on 20 December, some of the other people scheduled to take part were expressing concern that Stormont had not declared its hand, and were consequently refusing to continue work on the programme. Bukht reported, too, that most of them had said that they would not take part if the programme were pre-recorded.<sup>32</sup> It would have to be done live. Bukht, despite the Governors' vote, had the full backing of Hill. Curran, too, was fully committed, and wrote accordingly to Sir Philip (later Lord) Allen, Maudling's Permanent Secretary at the Home Office.<sup>33</sup> At no stage did Hill or the producers lose their confidence.

It was after Allen had written to Curran, expressing disappointment about the Board's conclusion, that the BBC issued a Press Statement including the words that while the BBC recognized 'the formidable difficulties of producing such a programme', it was 'confident of its ability to do so'. What it could not accept was that 'it should be diverted from its public purpose of presenting all points of view by a campaign of pressure by a newspaper or anyone else'.<sup>34</sup>

Press opinion in London was as divided on the merits of this statement as political opinion in Ulster was divided on the merits of

<sup>31</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 24 Dec. 1971.

<sup>32</sup> \*Bukht to Francis, 'The Question of Ulster', 20 Dec. 1971 (C165).

<sup>33</sup> \*Curran to Allen, 21 Dec. 1971 (C165).

<sup>34</sup> \*Allen to Curran, 24 Dec. 1971 (received 29 Dec.) (C165); BBC Press Statement, 28 Dec. 1971.

the constitution.<sup>35</sup> 'Lord Hill should not give up', the *Guardian* stated. 'Stop this mock trial', demanded the *Sun*.<sup>36</sup> The day before, the *Belfast Telegraph* had actually printed as a news item that the BBC was not now going ahead with the programme, a point taken up by the *New Statesman*, which wrote of the 'almost certain demise of one telly spectacular'.<sup>37</sup>

With very little time to go, Hill summoned special meetings of senior staff involved in the programme and of Governors who were available. Two of the Governors, Plowden and Robert Allan, had asked for a meeting, thought of by Hill at first as a meeting of London Governors only,<sup>38</sup> and it took place in the Chairman's office on 31 December, with Hill, Plowden, Allan, Murray, Tom Jackson, and Dame Mary Green present. (Allan, later Lord Allan of Kilmaheew, a former Conservative MP, was a new Governor appointed in July 1971.<sup>39</sup>) Eventually, a little known Unionist MP at Westminster, Jack Maginnis, a farmer and a former sergeant in the Royal Ulster Constabulary, agreed to take part. With no support from Faulkner, he none the less felt that the Unionist case had to be presented on the screen.

Six available Governors, including a brand new Governor, the poet Roy Fuller, confirmed at a further meeting in the Chairman's office on 3 January that the programme should now go ahead, with Hill attempting to sound out the rest of the Governors.<sup>40</sup> He reported that on the basis of his soundings, nine Governors were in favour of

<sup>35</sup> Curran claimed that the *Daily Telegraph* was 'the target of several leaks from the Home Office' (\*Curran interviewed by Leonard Miall for the Oral History Project, Jan. 1978).

<sup>36</sup> *Guardian*, 29 Dec. 1971; *Sun*, 29 Dec. 1971.

<sup>37</sup> *New Statesman*, 31 Dec. 1971. \*P. J. Robinson, BBC Information Officer, Northern Ireland, sent a long telex to George Campsey in London on 19 Dec. giving details of Irish Press reactions. The *Belfast Newsletter* had printed a leader headed 'Fanning the Flames', in which it claimed that the impartiality of the BBC was being called into question. Meanwhile, the *Dublin Irish Press* attacked Faulkner under a heading 'Shying away from Scrutiny' (C165).

<sup>38</sup> Colin Shaw sensibly pointed out to Curran the advisability of a 'general invitation' (\*Shaw to Curran, 30 Dec. 1971 (C165)). Curran was not well at the time.

<sup>39</sup> Dunleath, the Northern Irish Governor, had written to the Chairman expressing the view that the programme could not go ahead without the support of Stormont. Allan thought that 'a sacred cow was being made of the BBC's independence', and Green said that it was not enough to demonstrate the BBC's independence: the programme would have to be a good one (\*Notes of Meeting held in the Chairman's Office, 31 Dec. 1971 (C165)).

<sup>40</sup> \*Note of Two Meetings held on 3 Jan. 1972 (C165). The first meeting had been of senior staff. According to Curran, Fuller was 'as solid as a rock on the issue of liberty' (\*Curran interviewed by Miall, Jan. 1978). Plowden did not think that defying the *Daily Telegraph* was in itself a sufficient reason for doing the programme.

going ahead, one (Dunleath) abstained, and two could not be reached.<sup>41</sup> The final BBC public statement was issued one day before the programme was due to be broadcast. It announced firmly that it would be.<sup>42</sup>

Now came the climax of what Dunleath called a 'long haul'.<sup>43</sup> Faulkner issued a statement disowning Maginnis and accusing the BBC of 'plumbing the depths of absurdity', and Maudling sent a letter by hand to Hill reiterating that the programme 'in the form in which it had been devised can do no good and could do serious harm' and stating that the British Government would not take part.<sup>44</sup> At the same time, he released the statement to the Press. Significantly, Heath said nothing, a point emphasized at the time by Hill, who admitted that if Heath had called him in, he might have felt obliged 'to take some action'.<sup>45</sup> As a politician himself, Hill could skilfully read the messages from Whitehall. He also realized the importance of the right kind of publicity. 'If we shared your fear that such a programme would worsen the situation in Ulster,' Hill replied to Maudling, 'we would not dream of proceeding with it. On the contrary, we hope and believe that it will be of value in widening understanding of the issues involved.'<sup>46</sup>

The two letters appeared in the Press on the day of the programme, undoubtedly stimulating interest in it and guaranteeing a bigger audience than would otherwise have been expected.<sup>47</sup> At 9.20 p.m. nearly 7½ million viewers saw the programme start, and no fewer than 4½ million were still watching it at 11 p.m.<sup>48</sup> Nearly two-thirds of the population of Northern Ireland watched it, with the result that Northern Ireland had one of its quietest nights for weeks. RTE relayed it throughout the Irish Republic, where it was well received: 'the British public got their most comprehensive insight yet into the troubles in Northern Ireland', wrote the *Irish Press*.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

<sup>42</sup> \*BBC Press Statement, 4 Jan. 1972 (C165).

<sup>43</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 13 Jan. 1972.

<sup>44</sup> \*Maudling to Hill, 4 Jan. 1972 (C165). He reiterated that he had no wish to control the BBC. Hill replied on the same day that in the BBC's view the programme could be of value in widening understanding of the issues involved. The British Government's position would now have to be explained by the use of old film.

<sup>45</sup> Information in a letter from Colin Shaw to me, 5 June 1992.

<sup>46</sup> Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

<sup>47</sup> The headline in the *Belfast Newsletter*, 5 Jan. 1972, was 'The Full United Kingdom is Now in Peril'.

<sup>48</sup> \*News and Current Affairs Meeting, *Minutes*, 14 Jan. 1972.

<sup>49</sup> *Irish Press*, 6 Jan. 1972.



Half the British viewers who saw the start of *The Question of Ulster* stayed to the end at 12.15. Reactions were favourable. Whereas telephone calls to the BBC beforehand were ten to one against the programme, a point not made at the time, they were five to one in favour afterwards. Some of the earlier protesters admitted that they



21. 'D'ye think it's part of the programme, Pat? Or have we been hit?', Mac in *Daily Mail*, 6 Jan. 1972.

had been wrong. The success of the programme lay in the fact that it was not dramatic. As Lord Caradon said, 'we may have been dull, but not dangerous'.<sup>50</sup> One viewer called it an 'absolute bore', but the well-known novelist Margaret Lane thought that it was both 'interesting and illuminating': 'The so-called Permissive Society does not worry some of us as much as the Repressive Society does.'<sup>51</sup> The programme did worry Mrs Whitehouse: in her view it spread 'propaganda of a subversive kind'.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Undated note by Crawley to Curran, 'The Question of Ulster' (Crawley Papers).

<sup>51</sup> *Radio Times*, 20 Jan. 1972.

<sup>52</sup> *Evening News*, 6 Jan. 1972.

Press comment was as mixed after the programme had been shown as it had been before. The *Daily Express* was hostile to the BBC, the *Daily Telegraph* critical. The *Daily Mirror*, which had paraded untruth before Christmas, now proved itself inconsistent as well. 'Carry on BBC', it said on 5 January; 'Lord Blunder of the BBC' ran a headline of the following day. The *Daily Mirror* was so hostile to Hill, in particular, accusing him of 'dictatorial leadership', that he must have been deeply encouraged to receive a letter from Waldo Maguire in Belfast telling him how grateful the overwhelming majority of the BBC staff there were for 'the courage and wisdom' with which he had 'steered the project through the formidable hazards on to the screens'. Maguire added that in his opinion 'the future of free and independent broadcasting in this country was at stake and [that] any weakening of your resolve would have been a disaster'. 'I hope you will treat with contempt', Maguire added, 'such vicious and myopic attacks as in today's *Mirror*.'<sup>53</sup>

The *Sun*, too, had its own paragraph on Hill: 'BBC Chairman Lord Hill paid a high price for his victory. Now senior Tories are calling for an end to the BBC in its present form when its Charter ends in 1976.'<sup>54</sup> By contrast, in Ulster itself the *Belfast Telegraph* asked what all the fuss had been about;<sup>55</sup> while in London *The Times*, seeking to be above the battle, believed that the programme had lived up neither to the more extravagant hopes nor to the worst fears: 'The most that can be claimed is that it made more apparent the intransigent and incompatible attitudes of different parties, and the substantial obstacles that remain in the way of a solution. But that in itself was a valuable exercise. Those who watched the programme from start to finish must have emerged with a deeper understanding of the complexities of the Northern Irish situation.'<sup>56</sup>

The Governors, led by Dunleath, discussed the programme and the reactions to it at their January meeting. Congratulations were sent to the production staff after Murray had criticized both Kennedy and Caradon for indicating that, despite what had been said, the pro-

<sup>53</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 5, 6 Jan. 1972; *Daily Express*, 6 Jan. 1972; *Daily Telegraph*, 6 Jan. 1972; Maguire to Hill, 6 Jan. 1972 (Hill Papers). At the News and Current Affairs Meeting on 14 Jan. both Taylor and Francis reported that 'they had some evidence of warmer feelings towards the BBC at Stormont since the television programme' had been broadcast (\*Minutes).

<sup>54</sup> *Sun*, 6 Jan. 1972.

<sup>55</sup> *Belfast Telegraph*, 6 Jan. 1972.

<sup>56</sup> *The Times*, 6 Jan. 1972.

gramme would seek solutions.<sup>57</sup> Other critics felt that the programme had been too 'optimistic' in tone and that the views of the protagonists had not been subjected to sufficient probing. For example, they had not been questioned deeply enough about the interrelationship of violence and internment, which had been introduced after Faulkner had become Prime Minister, and it had undoubtedly hardened minority opinion.<sup>58</sup>

At the next meeting of the General Advisory Council, which was presided over by Lord Aldington, who had become Chairman in 1971, more criticism was heard than had been expressed at the Governors' meeting. In particular, some members felt that they should have been consulted directly or indirectly before the programme was shown. No resolution was proposed. Nor was there any public statement. Several members congratulated the BBC on how the programme had been handled. For Roy Shaw, for example, it had been right that the BBC had recognized that its first obligation was to the public and not to the politicians. For another member, Mrs Gwen Dunn, who was to write a book on children's television, the fundamental issue was not Northern Ireland but 'the role that television played in the lives of the people. The BBC, being made up of the staff who composed it, could not be expected to have an infallible *credo* or philosophy of its own, but television as a medium of communication had a presence and an authority in ordinary homes which exceeded the claims made for it by its practitioners.'<sup>59</sup>

In an interesting speech at Edinburgh in March 1971 Curran dealt with the question that Mrs Dunn had raised.<sup>60</sup> A devout Roman Catholic, who for that reason alone might in past times have been disqualified from becoming Director-General of the BBC,<sup>61</sup> Curran

<sup>57</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 13 Jan. 1972.

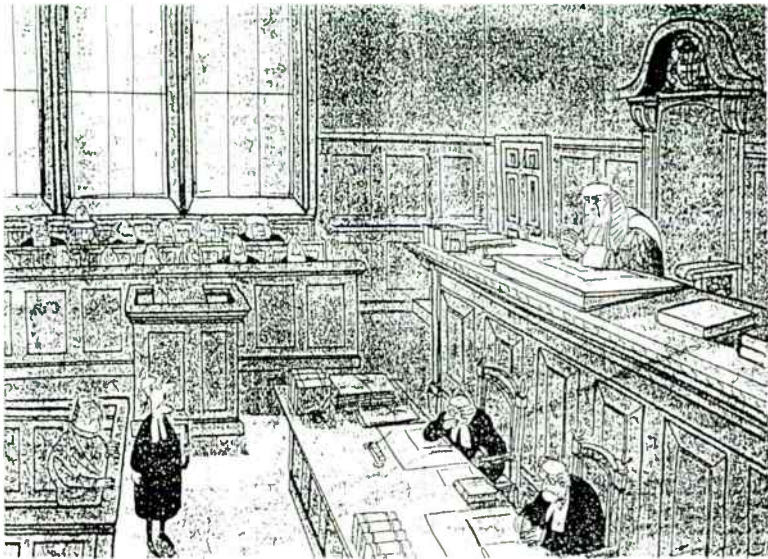
<sup>58</sup> Darby, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>59</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 26 Jan. 1972. For her book, see below, p. 933 n.

<sup>60</sup> C. Curran, *Broadcasting and Society* (1971), speech at the Edinburgh Broadcasting Conference, 23 March 1971.

<sup>61</sup> In 1938, when Reith left the BBC, the fact that Sir Cecil Graves, Deputy Director-General, was not chosen may have been influenced by the fact that he was a Roman Catholic. None the less, in Jan. 1942 he became a Joint Director-General in the 'dyarchy' which managed it until 1943. According to Curran, Normanbrook and Greene had discussed his own religion, asking in an exchange of notes whether he 'would do' (\*Curran interviewed by Miall, Jan. 1978). Greene, who described himself to Curran as a 'respectful agnostic', had been asked whether he was a Roman Catholic, like his brother

shared with others a credo and a philosophy which, while not claiming to be 'infallible', recognized the need for 'responsibility'.<sup>62</sup> The BBC, he considered, was not itself a 'moral weapon'. Its only stated obligation in its Charter was 'to serve the public', but it did not wish to serve it in a 'wholly servile way'. To respond entirely to



22. 'My client pleads not guilty, M'lud, and would prefer that his trial be held at the BBC TV Centre!' Cookson in *Evening News*, 6 Jan. 1972.

the dictation of the public 'would satisfy none of us in the BBC'. It was possible instead to serve it 'intelligently'. A measure of the broadcaster's exercise of his responsibility was 'the extent to which he places the profit which he brings to his audience before the profit which he takes out of them'.<sup>63</sup> 'Conscience' was as important as 'intelligence' in this connection.

Graham, by Sir Arthur Forde. As Michael Tracey notes (*A Variety of Lives* (1983), p. 180), perhaps 'the most remarkable feature of that story, apart from its undiluted bigotry', was that the BBC did not know whether Greene was or was not a Roman Catholic.

<sup>62</sup> See his book *A Seamless Robe* (1979).

<sup>63</sup> Curran, *Broadcasting and Society*.

## 6. Royalty and Jubilee

The Queen was to touch on such fundamental matters in her speech at the BBC's jubilee celebrations, when she noted the challenge to all existing institutions in the difficult conditions of the 1970s. 'All our great institutions such as Parliament, the Church and the Law', she said, faced the same problem of keeping 'a proper balance between new attitudes and lasting standards'. In such circumstances, each institution had to observe the high standards which it had set for itself.<sup>1</sup> A few days before her speech, Philip Purser, who had joined the *Daily Mail* in 1955 as number two television writer to Peter Black, had chosen different institutions, however, when he made comparisons with the BBC. He also carefully chose an alternative word to 'establishment'. 'To a child growing up in the Thirties or Forties the BBC was part of the firmament, one of those institutions like the LMS [London Midland and Scottish Railway] or Wall's ice cream.'<sup>2</sup>

In 1972, as in 1955, the monarchy was still taken for granted, as most institutions, including the BBC, were not, and the special royal link between the monarchy and the BBC was stressed throughout the jubilee in what for the BBC seemed to be almost a royal occasion.<sup>3</sup> There were special postage stamps as well as special programmes.<sup>4</sup> Coincidentally the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh were in the year of their own silver jubilee, and, as the Queen recalled, broadcasting was part of her own family history. Her grandfather, George V, had broadcast from Wembley in 1924, and since 1932 he, her father, and she herself after them had given special Christmas broadcasts. Exactly half-way through the Corporation's life her wedding had been celebrated,<sup>5</sup> and in the week of the celebrations Robert

<sup>1</sup> *BBC Record*, 83 (Dec. 1972); *The Times*, 2 Nov. 1972.

<sup>2</sup> *Sunday Telegraph*, 29 Oct. 1972.

<sup>3</sup> A. Quirke, in his paperback *Tomorrow's Television* (1976), which made one attempt to deal with the complexities of history, claimed (p. 11) that 'the BBC celebrated its fiftieth birthday by unleashing on a tolerant public an orgy of uncritical nostalgia more suitable for the death of a sovereign'.

<sup>4</sup> The designs of the stamps illustrated technical themes. The 3p showed six types of radio and television microphones, the 5p wooden horn loudspeakers of the 1920s, the 7½p colour television cameras, and the 9p an early oscillator of 1897. The first day cover showed a broadcasting transmitter aerial.

<sup>5</sup> This was not strictly true. There was some confusion in 1972 as to what was being celebrated. The first BBC founded in 1922 was a Company not a Corporation, and the real Golden Jubilee of the Corporation would be Jan. 1977. Nicholas Garnham was one of the few observers who commented on the fact that what was being celebrated in 1972 was fifty years of broadcasting, not fifty years of the Corporation.



Hardy had described to viewers for the first time the Queen holding an investiture in Buckingham Palace. In 1969 Richard Cawston had produced his *Royal Family*, with the Duke of Edinburgh as chairman of a small advisory committee, and a film crew of eight had spent seventy-five days making forty-three hours of film, genuine *ciné vérité*.<sup>6</sup> On the day that the Queen opened the Exhibition in the Langham building, it was announced by Buckingham Palace that she and the Duke of Edinburgh would give their £60,000 share of profits from *Royal Family* to the Society of Television and Film Arts.

The Exhibition, which was visited by more than 85,000 people, included among the exhibits a display of five reproductions of 'authentic' British living rooms in each of the five decades of the history of British broadcasting, covering both radio and television. It also included a range of recordings, among them tapes of old *ITMA* and *Goons* show broadcasts, which the Duke of Edinburgh took the opportunity to play over again.<sup>7</sup> After the Exhibition, he and the Queen met a number of prominent broadcasters, among them Godfrey Talbot, Vera (later Dame) Lynn, ex-Goon Harry (later Sir Harry) Secombe, Jimmy Young, and Glenda Jackson, at a special BBC lunch across the way.<sup>8</sup> The Governors were present also—in force—as were the members of the Board of Management; and among the foreign visitors were the Chairmen of the Australian and Canadian Broadcasting Commissions, Sir Robert Madgwick and Laurent Picard, and the President of the European Broadcasting Union, Marcel Bezençon.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See above, pp. 861–2.

<sup>7</sup> As part of the jubilee celebrations a new programme *The Last Goon Show of All* was broadcast on Radio 4 on 8 Oct. 1972. The idea of bringing the Goons together after a twelve-year gap came from Con Mahoney, then Head of Light Entertainment, Radio (information from Mahoney, 18 Jan. 1983). Spike Milligan originally planned to rewrite an old Goon script, *The Illuminated Piano*, but John Browell, who had worked on the old show and was its last producer, persuaded him to choose a BBC theme. Min and Hen were living in a cellar beneath Savoy Hill. The most enthusiastic listeners were members of the royal family. Indeed, a party which included the Duke of Edinburgh, Princess Anne, and Princess Margaret attended the recording of the show at the Camden Theatre. The public was less impressed. One-third were enthusiastic. Many were disappointed, finding it not only too 'nostalgic' but also too 'disjointed' (\*Audience Research Report LR/72/628, 28 Oct. 1972). The cracks involving the royal family were appreciated by the Duke of Edinburgh, who told Milligan, 'The more you knock us the better. It humanises us and makes us ordinary people' (Milligan to Browell and Mahoney, 4 May 1972 (Mahoney Papers)).

<sup>8</sup> *The Times*, 2 Nov. 1972. At the Langham building they had seen examples of BBC Churchilliana, including an annotated script of a wartime broadcast. The guests for lunch also included Sir Adrian Boulton, Aldington, and Cawston, then Head of Documentary Programmes, Television.

<sup>9</sup> The German television network ARD produced a film on the jubilee, *50 Jahre BBC*.



The Press kept its distance. A *Guardian* leader contrasted 'modern electronics' and 'the cloying sense of a great national institution',<sup>10</sup> and Peter Fiddick reflected less on the triumphs of the past than on the fact that, as never before, 'controversy, speculation, debate and rumpus' surrounded the future of British broadcasting and with it that of the BBC.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, Nicholas Garnham, who had strong views about broadcasting policies in relation to both radio and television, complained in the *Observer* about the 'massive scale' of the 'corporate' celebrations: 'At a time when the need is for discussion of the future of broadcasting, the BBC have chosen to use all the media power at their disposal to turn our eyes to the past.'<sup>12</sup> Nicholas de Jongh in the *Spectator*, who was prepared to look backwards, claimed that even that opportunity had been squandered by not opening all the archives: what had been produced was too selective.<sup>13</sup> Rod Allen in *Television Mail* wrote ambivalently of 'the immutability of the Great Mother of Portland Place' and of 'Great Men' arranging BBC affairs.<sup>14</sup>

The *Financial Times* confessed to 'mixed feelings'. 'The best service that . . . those who value the independence of the BBC [can give] is to be candid.' The BBC should instil 'a necessary degree of humility into the hearts of those who are responsible for its news and current affairs programmes'. They should set aside their own views and ensure that all views were aired. The fact that critics 'often conflict with one another does not necessarily invalidate what some of them have to say'.<sup>15</sup>

The main leader in *The Times*, entitled 'The BBC's Crisis of Doubt', appeared on 14 November, the exact jubilee date, for it was on that same day that the first BBC broadcast to be described as such

<sup>10</sup> *Guardian*, 2 Nov. 1972.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 11 Nov. 1972.

<sup>12</sup> *Observer*, 19 Nov. 1972. Sean Day-Lewis complained in an article concentrating on the quality of broadcasting that 'the repeated invoking of the name of Lord Reith' had probably been 'counter-productive'. It had perpetuated 'the myth of a past golden age, followed by a gradual decline' (*Daily Telegraph*, 14 Nov. 1972).

<sup>13</sup> *Spectator*, 14 Oct. 1972, 'No Thanks for the Memory'. 'The golden years of Henry Hall and ancient comedies will doubtless bore us until the millennial edition of *Twenty Questions*.'

<sup>14</sup> *Television Mail*, 3 Nov. 1972. 'The Corporation has far too long believed its own myths . . . Is it too much to ask the BBC to spend the next year looking very closely indeed at itself?' For a similar ambivalence about gender see Virginia Ironside in the *Daily Mail*, 2 Nov. 1972, 'Auntie's an Uncle to Me': 'He's getting a bit muddled now he's fifty.' Aldo Nicolotti in the *Evening News* (14 Nov. 1972) was muddled about more than gender: 'Can Auntie still lay the golden eggs?'

<sup>15</sup> *Financial Times*, 2 Nov. 1972.

had gone out on 2LO in 1922; and the title of *The Times* leaders suggested that it would not be purely celebratory. Nor was it. The leader referred to 'an air of pugnacious insecurity' that had become 'the prevailing wind in the higher reaches of the Corporation'. Looking back unashamedly to Reith and to the philosophy of the BBC's pioneers—and recalling in mid-1950s style 'the Gresham's Law of competition in broadcasting'<sup>16</sup>—it insisted that the challenge for the BBC in 1972 was 'to bring the same sense of purpose to bear as he had done in the very different conditions of today'. There could, of course, be no return to the past. The Corporation no longer enjoyed a monopoly, and Britain was no longer such a 'closely knit society'. 'The social climate' had become much more 'iconoclastic'.

It was 'both possible and advisable', however, the leader went on, 'to apply the traditional philosophy of public service broadcasting'. The BBC should not be 'hooked by the ratings battle'.<sup>17</sup> Deeming itself 'under attack', it should not 'seek protection in the allegiance of at least half of the viewing public'. If it concentrated too much on competition with ITV, all that it would be achieving at best would be to show that it could provide 'the best commercial broadcasting of the lot if only it had the chance'. 'As the BBC sets out on its next half century it should be less preoccupied with the various assaults, real and imagined, from outside and more aware of the dangers from within. Only if it fails to show a sense of purpose will its security really be threatened.'<sup>18</sup>

Twelve days earlier, on 2 November, *The Times* had produced a supplement, 'On the Air', 'a special report to mark 50 years of the BBC', which expressed a somewhat wider range of views about the future than its leader was to do. None the less, on its

<sup>16</sup> For Gresham's law, see Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, p. 296.

<sup>17</sup> In *The Listener*, 3 Dec. 1970, Howard Newby, then Controller, Radio 3, discussing 'the changing stuff of broadcasting', described competition in broadcasting as 'rivalry for large audiences'. In 'that part of the debate [about broadcasting] that has to do with the apportioning of funds, the only hard facts are about the listening and viewing habits of licence payers . . . Unless BBC Radio draws the big crowds as well as the little ones it will always be open to question over its effectiveness.' This article was reprinted in a BBC booklet of Jan. 1971, *In the Public Interest: A Six-Part Explanation of BBC Policy*. In 1973 Newby's successor, Stephen Hearst, was able to announce that the so-called phantom audience of Radio 3 had exceeded the audience of Radio Luxembourg (*Ariel*, 12 Jan. 1973).

<sup>18</sup> *The Times*, 14 Nov. 1972. In what was a very general leader, there were no references to programmes and only two to broadcasters. 'It would be an illusion to suppose that everyone who tunes in to Morecambe and Wise will be rooting for the BBC when the political pressure is on.'

front page there was a picture of Reith in Prospero-like pose, and the first article, 'And Now What?', which was written by Sir William Haley, who had ceased to edit *The Times* in 1966, reflected his long-standing suspicion of television. It reflected too his objections to 'commercial television' in particular. He believed that it had led to a 'distortion of values, profitless [surely the wrong word] duplication and the wrong kind of competition'. He did not find it necessary to ask questions about the likely shape of commercial radio.

In discussing the greater freedom that had recently been achieved in the handling of politics, Haley mentioned the role in securing it of Sidney Bernstein's Granada, but he judged that the freedom that had been secured had had its price—'incensed politicians' subsequent attitudes to and moves against the broadcasters'. Not that Haley retained any faith in politicians. Debates in Parliament on broadcasting were 'invariably depressing', and 'no other subject' was able 'to command such superficiality and emotion. As politicians depend so much on television and radio there is everything to be said for members of the Commons and the Lords having as little as possible to do with [broadcasting] affairs.'

Haley put little faith in public inquiries either. Ten-year Charters granted after committees had made their recommendations had been 'the bane of the BBC'. 'Broadcasting organizations that are continually at the mercy of parliamentary gusts will tack and trim.' Perhaps the IBA needed to be assessed and reported upon, as the Select Committee on Nationalized Industries had recently suggested, but the BBC should be 'freed from the covert fear, however unreal, of emasculation or extinction'. The next inquiry should give it a 'definite mandate' not for ten years but for thirty years. This would guarantee the impregnability that would eliminate the tendency to become 'a cross between a kaleidoscope and a chameleon'. Only after another thirty years might it be possible for it to be 'scrapped'—at the ripe age of 84—in 2006.

There was no reference in Haley's article either to technology or to economics. The licence fee did not figure either. Nor did these matters feature in Curran's article that followed. Politics, however, did; for the article, which mentioned Ulster and the IRA, was called 'A Duty to Democracy'. 'Our duty as broadcasters', the Director-General affirmed definitively, 'is to put the political leaders of the country on view, even though they may use

many of the opportunities we offer for a display of oratorical fisticuffs.<sup>19</sup>

The *Financial Times*, which observed that the new Chairman of the BBC's Board of Governors, not yet appointed, had a great responsibility,<sup>20</sup> did not refer to the Director-General. Meanwhile, the old Chairman made many speeches about the BBC during the course of what for him was an extremely active year. His term of office, which had been due to expire on 1 September 1972, had been extended to cover the jubilee celebrations, and he now figured as prominently at the centre of the stage as he had done when Wilson first appointed him in 1967.<sup>21</sup> During his eventful period of office he had undoubtedly magnified the role of the Chairman of the BBC *vis-à-vis* that of the Director-General, and those opponents of his appointment, who had feared this, particularly Lusty and Greene, had not changed their opinions in 1972.<sup>22</sup>

None the less, Hill had won many friends inside and outside the BBC, and among those who wrote letters to him when his office came to an end were people as different as Attenborough and Richard Marriott. The latter told him that he could now say 'without any possibility of being misunderstood that I was one of those who welcomed the announcement of your appointment as Chairman and

<sup>19</sup> *The Times Supplement*, 2 Nov. 1972. Among other articles in it were Mansell's 'Global Authority', Trethowan's 'Sound as a Bell', and 'The Box and the Ballot Box' by Geoffrey Cox, then Chairman of Tyne Tees Television. There was another article by Michael Type, Assistant to the Secretary-General of the EBU, on 'The European Context'. There was little in the Supplement about the USA, although one well-known American news broadcaster, Fred Friendly, then Professor of Broadcast Journalism at Columbia University, who had always been a friend of the BBC, called the BBC 'a bench-mark for the world'. Peter Laslett, Chairman of the (first) Viewers' and Listeners' Association, contributed a 'Critical View'. While warning how difficult it was to judge institutions like the BBC, which were often casual in dealing with 'everyone but its audience', Laslett was as critical of Mrs Whitehouse as he was of the BBC.

<sup>20</sup> In his speech at the Guildhall banquet (see below, p. 922), the Prime Minister, who was responsible for the appointment, said that he was 'told that a new Chairman of the BBC is to be appointed shortly'. 'Whoever it is', he added, 'will inherit an organisation which can look with pride on its past and with immense confidence to its future.' In the first seating plan a place had been left for the future Chairman Elect.

<sup>21</sup> See above, p. 595; *BBC Record*, 82 (Aug. 1972).

<sup>22</sup> Greene was to write a hostile review of Hill's autobiography. Lusty, in a letter to me of 1 Jan. 1973, stated that he regretted nothing that he (Lusty) had done 'from the moment of registering a formal objection to the appointment'. The Honours List, he noted, 'signally and pointedly' contained no BBC names in the year of the jubilee. 'If this is not a condemnation of Hill's reign—and I am afraid of Curran's inability to cope with him—I do not know how anything could be more so.' In fact, Crawley had received a CBE in the New Year Honours list. In 1974 there were to be six 'staff honours', including a knighthood for Curran and a CBE for Joanna Spicer.

thought its initial reception by the Management as ungenerous as it was imprudent'.<sup>23</sup>

Hill had not forgotten those early times. Nor had Wilson, who was always at the centre of them. At the jubilee banquet, however, in London's Guildhall on 3 November, it was Hill's task to reply to a very different Prime Minister, Heath, the main guest of honour, and he used the occasion to draw fully on his own rich experience. Noting that his position as Chairman had been compared with that of a St Sebastian who had no possible consolation of future sainthood, Hill had nothing to say about his relationship as Chairman with his Director-Generals. Instead, he chose to pick his way through fifty years of history in order to identify what by then had become his favourite theme—'independence'. It was a theme that mattered to him deeply—as, of course, it mattered to the BBC—whoever was Prime Minister and whoever was Director-General.

In his speech, which was broadcast, Heath had looked back to Reith and, in 'a walk down memory lane', to the days of the Radio Doctor, remarking, however, that 'any public figure today who as much as refers to the post-war era, let alone the days before the war, risks political extinction'. 'This', he said, 'is because young people instantly identify them as . . . "golden oldies".' By contrast, in his own speech, Hill chose in the first instance to look back not to Reith but to Suez, and what he said was broadcast too.

There was a phase in 1956 when many people inside and outside the Government condemned the BBC for presenting to the world—at a time of national tension—both sides of the great and bitter debate. Temperatures were high, words were violent. Yet a few months later, the Government of the day, of which you and I were members, Prime Minister, affirmed its adherence to the independence of the BBC. I recall the actual words of the White Paper: 'The BBC enjoys independence of programme content. In the Government's view, the impartiality and objectivity of the BBC is a national asset of great value and the independence which the Corporation now enjoys should be maintained.' I recall those words well. I wrote them.<sup>24</sup>

Hill had more than once called himself 'a lapsed politician',<sup>25</sup> but on this occasion he emphasized, as only a politician could have done, that the BBC's 'independence' sprang 'not from any special virtue of the BBC or of the people who work in it', but from the fact that 'we

<sup>23</sup> Marriott to Hill, 6 Sept. 1970 (Hill Papers).

<sup>24</sup> *Ariel*, 10 Nov. 1972. Highlights of the banquet were televised also. For the post-Suez White Paper, see above, p. 134.

<sup>25</sup> See, e.g., Address to the Assistant Masters' Association, 1 Jan. 1969, reported in *BBC Record*, 64 (Jan. 1969).

live in a country whose method of government assumes alternation of power between those who are the Government of the day and those who are the Opposition'. 'It is the acceptance of this principle of orderly transfer of power between one administration and another', he went on, 'which lies at the heart of all our freedoms in the country and particularly of the freedom of broadcasting.'<sup>26</sup>

Independence had also been Hill's theme in an article that he had written for the BBC's 1972 *Handbook*, which had appeared in January of that year. In it he had promised pugnaciously, still in his best politician's style, that the BBC, which had been forced 'to fight to maintain its independence more than once in its history', would fight again if necessary. 'A few Members of Parliament, on both sides of the House of Commons, would like to see ways of making the BBC toe the line'; but once the independent responsibility of the BBC was weakened in this way, you could 'be sure that at some time in the future, some government would . . . step in and make sure that all our broadcasts conformed to their ideas of what the people should be told'.<sup>27</sup>

The same point had been made earlier in a *Guardian* leader, as unnostalgic in mood as it was in its other comments on the jubilee. It affirmed that 'the rock on which the BBC has been built [the old image] is its autonomy'. That was what had to be protected. 'The tentative pioneering of the early days was perhaps forgivable because of the way it helped the BBC establish its political independence. But timidity now might only encourage the politicians and pressure groups in their attempts to seek more control over the organisation and its output . . . That the lobby for tighter controls includes politicians on both the Left and Right, is a testimony to the BBC's performance.'<sup>28</sup>

In the BBC's 1973 *Handbook*, which appeared on 11 November 1972, two months earlier than usual (bound in gold and in a year of inflation costing half as much again), the Director-General chose rather different language from that of Hill, language that recalled Reith's *Broadcast Over Britain*. 'An independent broadcasting organisation like ours must not expect its course to be all plain sailing. It never has been.' 'To read some commentators you would think that the BBC in some indeterminate period of its existence was beloved

<sup>26</sup> *Ariel*, 10 Nov. 1972.

<sup>27</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1972, pp. 10–11.

<sup>28</sup> *Guardian*, 14 Nov. 1972: 'A Question of Integrity'. It called the BBC a 'beleaguered but robust body'.



by all and never criticised. Not so. The BBC has always provided its audiences with opportunities to disagree among themselves.'

Curran switched attention from the politicians to 'audiences', in the plural again and no longer conceived of as 'the great audience', when he argued, as Greene might have done, that the BBC did not exist 'to shape society to some pre-determined pattern'. It was not 'setting itself up as an arbiter of taste or a manipulator of society', but if it was 'doing its job responsibly and well', it would give its audiences 'a clear picture of the prevailing scale of values within society'. It would 'reflect the order in which society as a whole (often described as "the consensus") classifies those values. By being truthful and responsible it achieves more than it could ever achieve by setting itself up as the nation's guide in matters of taste or morals.'<sup>29</sup>

Fiddick had probed somewhat more deeply in his article in the *Guardian*: 'Not only is society changing, but many people's understanding of society is changing.' For this reason it seemed likely to Fiddick that 'the hallmark of a good broadcasting service in this era' was 'that it satisfies no one, just as society satisfies no one'.<sup>30</sup> Director-Generals, preoccupied with licence fees, necessarily saw things differently. Yet more than finance was involved. By the end of the 1970s the very notion of 'consensus', already challenged in 1972, was to be openly disparaged by some leading politicians, and along with it the sense of 'society' itself.<sup>31</sup>

It should be added that what the challengers were primarily disparaging during the 1970s when they talked of consensus was political consensus. As far as values were concerned, they expected everyone to uphold 'Victorian values'. Indeed, the confrontation of values that had been a feature of the 1960s was to be treated in the 1980s as a matter of shame, not of freedom. In this longer-term perspective, the style and content of Curran's statement made in 1972 was soon to date. He was wise to conclude, therefore, by noting on a narrower front that it had 'never been possible for technical, economic and political reasons in broadcasting to see more than ten years ahead'.

It is interesting that in framing this judgement Curran put the adjective 'technical' first, for he showed consistent and refreshing

<sup>29</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1973, pp. 9–12.

<sup>30</sup> Fiddick, loc. cit.

<sup>31</sup> For attitudes to consensus in the period 1970–4, see D. Butler and D. Kavanagh, *The British General Election of October 1974* (1975), pp. 3, 5, and R. Rose, *The Problem of Party Government* (1974).

interest in the relationship between technical and social and cultural development.<sup>32</sup> Hill was also prepared to crystal-gaze, as he had been in 1969,<sup>33</sup> and although he said little about technology in his Guildhall speech, on 2 November he had opened the BBC's parallel exhibition, 'The Technical Story', at Mullard House, an exhibition organized jointly by the BBC and Mullard.<sup>34</sup> Significantly, however, it was past technology rather than future technology that figured most prominently there. There was a similar emphasis, not inappropriately, in the October 1972 number of *BBC Engineering*, bound in golden paper and beginning with an article by P. E. F. A. West, who had retired from the BBC in 1970 as Head of Engineering, South and West, called 'The First Five Years'.<sup>35</sup>

The oldest display in the Mullard House exhibition was a mock-up of the Savoy Hill studio. There was also a sound effects console, along with a colour synthesizer and material relating to the Radiophonic Workshop, including material from *Dr. Who*.<sup>36</sup> Only on a lower floor could visitors 'take a look into the future', through the work of the BBC's Engineering Research Department. As far as the future was concerned, Hill, in his Guildhall speech, was content to say: 'We do know something of the possibilities, but we do not know yet how the country will decide to exploit and to control them.'<sup>37</sup>

In his article on the jubilee Sean Day-Lewis, free from institutional restraints, had been prepared to look far ahead, beyond the immediate questions of exploitation and control—the launching of commercial radio and the allocation of a fourth television channel—to the prospects of a fifth channel that would soon be technically possible, to be followed by a sixth channel, more limited in character. Cable, already in use in local experiments, would offer more choice. So, too, would foreign programmes beamed from space satellites. Cassettes

<sup>32</sup> See above, pp. 827–30.

<sup>33</sup> See above, p. 809.

<sup>34</sup> Mullard commissioned a film from Worldwide Films, directed by Michael Curren-Briggs, about engineering achievements in broadcasting (*Ariel*, 26 May 1972).

<sup>35</sup> *BBC Engineering*, Oct. 1972. The editorial on 'Broadcasting, Communication and Mobility' was concerned with the fate of the motor car. It did not deal with car radio, the radio of the future, but with possible reduction in the number of cars on the road. 'If reduced personal mobility is to be imposed on us in the name of conservation, the broadcaster will come into his own as he never has before.'

<sup>36</sup> The Institution of Electrical Engineers arranged an exhibition of photographs and archival papers on BBC history at its Savoy Embankment headquarters.

<sup>37</sup> *BBC Record*, 83 (Dec. 1972).

and video-cassettes would have the same effect. 'In time' each viewer would become 'his own programme controller.'<sup>38</sup>

The programmes broadcast on 14 November 1972, the anniversary day of the first 2LO programmes broadcast by the BBC, had been anticipated in a number of programmes broadcast between the BBC anniversary banquet on 3 November and the 5 a.m. start on the day itself. Some of these programmes were repeats, like Douglas Cleverdon's production of *Under Milk Wood* and Cawston's *This Is the BBC*. Others were newly made commemorative programmes, like *Fifty Years of Music*, starring Henry Hall, Vera Lynn, and Lulu, and a visit to Broadcasting House in *Down Your Way*. On Sunday 12 November members of the European Broadcasting Union presented on BBC-1 *Thank You BBC*, described as a birthday television tribute, with Peter Ustinov as presenter and with other contributions from the King of Norway, Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, and Maurice Schumann, the French Foreign Minister, who had broadcast regularly during the War on behalf of General de Gaulle. A host of European entertainers included Françoise Rosay and Jean Sablon.

On the day itself, Radio 1 and Radio 2, each unthought of in 1962, let alone in 1945 or in 1922, put on what was for much of the day a combined programme, in which the old pirates were extremely active.<sup>39</sup> In 1972 they were attracting 80 per cent of the audience for BBC radio.<sup>40</sup> *The Early Show* between 5 a.m. and 7 a.m., transmitted jointly for financial not for birthday reasons, was the first combined show, and from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. in the evening the two channels shared *After Seven*, presented by David Jacobs; *Pop Score*, with Pete Murray as questionmaster;<sup>41</sup> *Sport on 2*; Humphrey Lyttelton; and *Alan Dell's Big Sound*. From 12 a.m. to 2 a.m. *Midnight Newsroom* was followed by *Night Ride*, a news summary, and a weather forecast.

<sup>38</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 14 Nov. 1972.

<sup>39</sup> There were more than fifty producers working for Radios 1 and 2. From 10 p.m. onwards the Radio 2 VHF channel had been switched to Radio 1.

<sup>40</sup> The then Controller, Radios 1 and 2, Douglas Muggerridge, 'It's a Serious Approach to Pop Music', *Ariel*, anniversary special, Oct. 1972. The disc jockeys were then receiving an average of more than 20,000 letters a week. For changes in pop music in the 1970s see *Melody Maker Special*, Spring 1976, pp. 51–4, and *Melody Maker*, 3 Nov. 1979, for the first of four articles on *The Seventies: Ten Makers of the Decade*, which gives a useful chronology.

<sup>41</sup> On Radio 2 Murray also presented *Pete Murray's Open House*, in response to listeners' requests, from 9.02 a.m. to 12. Like Murray, Terry Wogan was involved in two programmes. On Radio 1 the most distinctive programmes were the *Radio 1 Club*, with Noel Edmonds, and *Sounds of the 70s*, with John Peel. Jimmy Young was in charge of the early morning Radio 1 disc programme from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

One long-established radio programme, *Woman's Hour*, now broadcast from time to time from Regional centres around Britain, was introduced in the afternoon by Sue MacGregor at 2.02 p.m., and one new serial based on an old Light Programme favourite of the post-war years, *Dick Barton, Special Agent*, was broadcast then and subsequently twice a day, with Noel Johnson returning to the title-role after a twenty-five year gap.<sup>42</sup> *Waggoner's Walk*, launched in 1969 to replace *The Dales*, now carried with it a sense of continuity. *The Dales* were beyond revival.

Radio 3, which began broadcasting at 7 a.m., had music as its staple, as Day-Lewis had noted, but it also included five five-minute news bulletins, an unthinkable element in the old Third Programme, and a new and specially commissioned play by Tom Stoppard, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, which featured three old artists played by three old-time broadcasters, Stephen Murray, Carleton Hobbs, and Rolf Lefebvre. In 1972 at least two plays were being broadcast each week. There was an overture programme at 7.05 a.m., a morning concert at 8.05 a.m., a *This Week's Composer* programme, introduced by Richard Baker, at 9.05 a.m., and a 'mid-day prom' from Cardiff at 12.15 p.m. One of the most interesting music programmes was *Cross-Section 1922*. It figured music written in the BBC's foundation year.

The musical highlight of the great day, however, was an anniversary concert from the Albert Hall, where an invited audience saw and heard the BBC Symphony Orchestra (with the BBC Chorus and BBC Choral Society) play music by Vaughan Williams, Elgar, Ravel, and Berlioz. The conductor before the interval was Boult, and after the interval Pierre Boulez took over: he had been appointed Chief Conductor in September 1971.<sup>43</sup> During the interval the Earl of Harewood traced the special role that broadcasting had played in fifty years of music by creating a far bigger audience for music and providing far more substantial patronage for it than there had ever been before.<sup>44</sup> The concert was broadcast in stereo, like many other programmes on the day, including pop music programmes on Radios 1 and 2, and it was also televised on BBC-2.

The Controllers of Radio 3 and BBC-2, Stephen Hearst and Robin Scott, each familiar with the 'other medium', co-operated closely.

<sup>42</sup> For the original programme see Briggs, *Sound and Vision*, pp. 52–6.

<sup>43</sup> For the lead-up to the appointment and Boulez's conception of his task, see N. Kenyon, *The BBC Symphony Orchestra* (1981), ch. 8: 'A French Revolution'.

<sup>44</sup> *Ariel*, Oct. 1972, pointed out that one-third of all orchestral players in Britain were in full employment with the BBC at a cost of nearly £1½ m. a year.

Hearst, who had worked in Television Talks, Music, and Arts programmes from 1952, had moved to the Controllershship of Radio 3 at the beginning of 1972, taking over from Newby.<sup>45</sup> Scott, who had been the first Controller of Radios 1 and 2 in 1967, had been appointed Controller of BBC-2 as long ago as February 1969.<sup>46</sup> By temperament and upbringing they were quite different, but they easily crossed borderlines.

The main radio channel—a term now beginning to be used frequently—was still Radio 4, which in a real sense remained the successor to the old Home Service. Its Controller since 1970, Whitby, who had once been Editor of Television's *24 Hours*, believed that 'in the realm of ideas, radio operates with uncluttered lucidity: in the realm of the imagination, it soars where other media limp'. Radio 4 for him intended 'to continue to be indispensable'.<sup>47</sup>

One morning programme on Radio 4 went back to the early years of the Reithian BBC, the Daily Service at 10.15. So, too, did school broadcasts for two and a quarter hours in the morning and one hour in the afternoon. Three programmes were very different from the news bulletins on the old Home Service. Two of them had been launched before the start of Radio 4: *Today*, the new programme of 1957, now introduced by John Timpson, and *The World at One*, the new programme of 1965, now fully established and still presented by William Hardcastle. *PM Reports*, at 5 p.m., which was also presented by Hardcastle, had started in 1970.<sup>48</sup>

The BBC of Haley was perpetuated on Radio 4 in the current affairs programme *From Our Own Correspondent*, which fulfilled his purpose of informing listeners of what was happening outside Britain and making them think about it on more than a day-to-day basis;<sup>49</sup> while the Reith Lecturer of the year, Andrew Shonfield, former member of the Duncan Committee and now Director of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, had chosen foreign affairs as his subject also.

<sup>45</sup> Nicholas de Jongh, *Spectator*, 14 Oct. 1972, praised him for two new programmes which represented 'a modest but marked resurgence' since his arrival—the weekly *The Arts Worldwide* 'with its capsule of arts events' that had been missed by newspapers and radio, and the second programme *Men of Action* on Saturday afternoons, which had featured Ken Russell on 6 Oct.

<sup>46</sup> See above, p. 587.

<sup>47</sup> Whitby, 'Pitfalls of the Middle Lane', *Ariel*, Oct. 1972.

<sup>48</sup> Another late evening news programme, *Newsdesk*, had been launched in 1970 with Gerald Priestland and Meryl O'Keefe as co-presenters. It followed the withdrawal of a television spot for Priestland in which he analysed the day's news (G. Priestland, *Something Understood* (1986), pp. 233 ff.).

<sup>49</sup> Correspondents had first broadcast one by one on the Third Programme.

On 14 November he gave the second of his six lectures on 'Europe: Journey to an Unknown Destination', which examined the Common Market, and assessed the effect of Britain's entry into it.<sup>50</sup>

*Today in Parliament*, the only programme specifically mentioned in the BBC's Licence, was followed by *A Book at Bedtime*. *Yesterday in Parliament* had followed *Today* in the early morning. *Listen with Mother*, first broadcast in 1950, was broadcast before the afternoon schools programmes, and *You and Yours*, first broadcast in 1970, which dealt with 'Home and Family', followed the morning schools broadcasts: it was presented by Derek Cooper. *Gardeners' Question Time*, a repeat of a Sunday broadcast, was broadcast at 4 p.m.<sup>51</sup> There had been protests in 1970 when an old Radio 4 programme *In Your Garden* had disappeared as part of the new schedules.<sup>52</sup>

There was one new kind of evening radio programme in 1972, the phone-in programme that was always broadcast on Tuesdays, *It's Your Line*, and at 7.30 p.m. on 14 November Robin Day presided over an answer session by a well-known broadcaster and member of the General Advisory Council, Dame Margaret Miles, Headmistress of Mayfield Comprehensive School. She was dealing with telephone questions on secondary education from listeners on sixteen telephone lines. As many as 8,000 phone calls had been received in the first year of *It's Your Line*, when the guests had included the trade-unionist Hugh Scanlon, the first to take part, Enoch Powell, Victor Feather, William Whitelaw, and Germaine Greer.<sup>53</sup>

Apart from *The Archers* in the early evening at 6.45 p.m. (there had been a repeat earlier in the day of the programme of the day before), only two programmes on Radio 4 on 14 November 1972 could be classified as 'light entertainment'. One of them, *Just a Minute*, with Kenneth Williams, Clement Freud, Peter Jones, and Aimi MacDonald, and with Nicholas Parsons in the chair, was a panel game with a long future: each of the participants—and they were to prove a brilliant combination—tried to talk for just a minute on this or that set topic 'without deviation, hesitation or repetition'. The other was

<sup>50</sup> The lecture, called 'The French Spirit and the British Intruder', was repeated on Radio 3 on the following Sunday. It also appeared in *The Listener* on 16 Nov. 1970.

<sup>51</sup> This still popular programme with its origins in the North of England had first been broadcast as *How Does Your Garden Grow?* in 1947. See also above, p. 224.

<sup>52</sup> *The Times*, 29 Jan. 1970. Mansell replied reassuringly that the complainant might like to know that most local radio stations would run regular gardening programmes which would be able 'to focus more sharply on local soil and climatic conditions'. Television was to transform broadcasting on gardens and gardening.

<sup>53</sup> Cmnd. 4824 (1971), p. 40. The *Radio Times*, 8 Oct. 1970, had referred back to successful foreign phone-in programmes in the USA and France.



*The Ken Dodd Show*, 'Doddy's Daft Half-hour', at 6.15 p.m.<sup>54</sup> Dodd, who put Liverpool's 'Knotty Ash' on the map, was to enter the Guinness Book of Records in 1974 when he told jokes non-stop not for one minute but for three hours six minutes.

Other items on 14 November 1972 included an hour-long episode of Somerset Maugham's serialized novel, *Of Human Bondage*, in which Carleton Hobbs featured for the second time in the day,<sup>55</sup> and *Poetry Prom*, the highlight of the day on Radio 4, which featured poetry that had been 'in the air', although not on the air, in November 1922. Sir John Betjeman, the Poet Laureate, introduced the selection, and read, along with Jill Balcon and Gary Watson, poems by Edward Thomas, W. B. Yeats, Thomas Hardy, D. H. Lawrence, Wilfred Owen, and T. S. Eliot. It was a recorded programme of a 'poetry prom' held in the concert-hall of Broadcasting House.<sup>56</sup> George MacBeth produced it. He also produced Shonfield's Reith Lectures.

On BBC-1, which began at 9.38 a.m. with educational programmes for schools and colleges—one programme was called *The Computer and the Individual*—there was a short BBC-1 news bulletin at 12.55, followed by *Pebble Mill at One*. Most of the day's programmes were in colour, but an old Norman Wisdom film, *One Good Tune*, broadcast from 7 to 8.30 p.m., was in black and white, as was *Nationwide*, the early evening magazine programme at 6 p.m. drawn from the Regions and presented by Michael Barratt. It had occupied the old *Tonight* slot since September 1969, and was in black and white because some of the smaller Regional studios did not yet have colour cameras.<sup>57</sup> There were also national news bulletins at 5.45 p.m. and 9 p.m. The 9 p.m. bulletin, renamed 'The Nine o'Clock News' in September 1970, had Robert Dougall as its newsreader; he had started his BBC career as an announcer on the old Empire Service on his twenty-first birthday in 1934.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Other radio entertainment programmes of this period were *All Gas and Gaiters* with Derek Nimmo, adapted from a television series, and *The Men from the Ministry*. In radio drama, directed by Martin Esslin, Peggy Ashcroft had recently appeared in a much praised performance of *The Duchess of Malfi*.

<sup>55</sup> The serial in five parts was adapted by Howard Agg, and produced by Archie Campbell.

<sup>56</sup> Radio 3 broadcast many poetry programmes in 1972. 'Poetry', Stephen Hearst wrote in *Ariel*, Oct. 1972, 'is ideally suited to radio. It is the network's duty to broadcast one of the greatest of arts, and more, to encourage its practitioners.'

<sup>57</sup> For the spread of colour round the Regions see *Ariel*, 12 May 1972, 'Big strides towards colour in the Regions'.

<sup>58</sup> Dougall, op. cit., p. 289. The name was venerable, but the style was not. Dougall gives an excellent account of 'brand image' type news, then beginning to be fashionable. The Design Department had devised a new set. Dougall was unhappy about wearing a

The *Nine o'Clock News* was followed by Tuesday's documentary, *The Price of Violence*. On this historic occasion it turned to Northern Ireland, where 'violence affects everybody'.<sup>59</sup> Later in the evening, in *Midweek*, Ludovic Kennedy recalled earlier violence when he visited the battlefield at Mons, the first major engagement of the Great War; he had six First World War survivors with him. There was even a hint of violence in *The Open Persuaders* at 11.35 p.m., when Moelwyn Merchant, Professor of English at Exeter University, told Joan Bake-well that 'harmony had better be broken by some dissonance in order to keep life'.<sup>60</sup>

*Play School*, decidedly non-violent, was broadcast for children of pre-school age in the afternoon, followed later in the day by *Jackanory*, *Animal Magic*, introduced by Johnny Morris, *John Craven's Newsround*, a new special children's news bulletin, and *Tom and Jerry*. In the afternoon at 2.50 p.m. one of the country's best-known voices, that of Arthur Negus, introduced *Going for a Song*, an increasingly popular programme about antiques,<sup>61</sup> while in the evening *Film 72* introduced Frederick Raphael assessing the glittering prizes for films entered for the London Film Festival. At 8.30 p.m. John Alderton, who had established his television reputation in 1968 as a master in a tough secondary school in LWT's *Please Sir*, figured in a new comedy series *My Wife Next Door*.

On BBC-2, which began at 11 a.m. with *Play School* and which was silent between then and 6.35 p.m., there was another well-known voice in the late evening, that of Eddie Waring, commenting on floodlit Rugby League football, Wakefield Trinity versus Keighley, at 11.05 p.m. There was also, in addition to the Albert Hall concert shared with Radio 3, a ninety-minute play by Christopher Fry, *A Phoenix Too Frequent*, produced by the Stockton and District YMCA. Clearly there was no bias on BBC-2 in favour of metropolitan culture, and the day ended at 12 p.m. with a forty-minute 'rock programme', *The Old Grey Whistle Test*, first broadcast on 21 September 1971, giving the 'news, views and sounds of today's music'. The title of the

specially made logo tie. The Press did not like the new set—the *Guardian* (18 Sept. 1970) called it 'a sort of polystyrene padded cell'—but the *Evening Standard* (25 Sept. 1970) reported that the BBC's re-styled nine o'clock news had 'got into the Top Ten chart in its first week'. See also *Radio Times*, 10 Sept. 1970. In the same week *Panorama* was extended to one hour in length.

<sup>59</sup> *Radio Times* announcement, issue dated 9 Nov. 1972.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> This series was produced in Bristol, and had first been broadcast as a West Region opt-out in 1964. It was networked from Oct. 1965.

programme was based on an old music-hall myth: 'if the grey-haired doorman is whistling your tune it's a hit.'<sup>62</sup> All the artists featured in the programme were required to have produced a record album.<sup>63</sup>

Meanwhile, perhaps appropriately, BBC-1 had already brought its jubilee evening to a close with a programme at three minutes to midnight on disorders of the liver for those doctors who were prepared to sit up and watch *Medicine Today*.

## 7. Education

A very different anniversary, 'fifty years of BBC education', was celebrated in the autumn of 1974 when it was proudly announced that 132 series for schools were in production, and that no fewer than 1,500 hours of Open University programmes were being transmitted; and at a BBC dinner, held at Stationers' Hall, the Chairman (by then Sir Michael Swann) told his audience, which included the Secretary of State for Education, a transient Secretary, Reginald (later Lord) Prentice, who was to cross the floor of the House of Commons, that the BBC intended to remain in the forefront of educational broadcasting.<sup>1</sup> There had been one change in school education which had altered the pattern: the long-postponed raising of the school leaving age from 15 to 16 which had taken place in September 1972. In the formulation of policy and the planning of resources school broadcasting was still guided by an autonomous body, the School Broadcasting Council.

Curran also reaffirmed the BBC's commitment to education during the jubilee, while raising issues of air-time and finance. 'Everything hangs', he said, 'upon the value which we, as a nation, set by our educational broadcasting system.'<sup>2</sup> There had, in fact, been something of a question mark in relation to governmental policy since under a Labour Government the BBC had failed to secure separate

<sup>62</sup> Its audience consisted largely of 14- to 30-year-olds. Its producer was Michael Appleton, who had worked on *Late Night Line-Up*, and its presenter was 'Whispering' Bob Harris (*Radio Times*, 25 Sept.–1 Oct. 1976).

<sup>63</sup> The first programme had featured Americans, and included film references to Bob Dylan and Bill Haley.

<sup>1</sup> *BBC Record*, 91 (Oct. 1974); *Ariel*, 27 Nov. 1974.

<sup>2</sup> Curran, 'The BBC and its Educational Commitment', speech delivered at Olympia, London, at an exhibition of audio-visual equipment for education, 26 July 1972.

funding for school broadcasting,<sup>3</sup> and under a Conservative Government, the new Secretary of State, Margaret Thatcher, had complained that in her view—which was certainly not that of the BBC—the School Broadcasting Council was ‘an administrative machine’ and did not ‘adequately supervise the content of programmes’.<sup>4</sup>

More emphasis was now placed on consolidation than expansion;<sup>5</sup> and when in September 1973 school broadcasting moved over to VHF only, BBC statements concerning the change referred more to the extra hours of programming that would now be available to listeners on medium wave than to the likely effects on educational broadcasting as such. ‘Boost for Radio 4 as schools go VHF only’ was a heading in *Ariel*.<sup>6</sup> By 1974, about one-third of schools television output was in colour, and all production was ‘colourized’ in the following year.

New schools programmes for 1974 included *Playtime*, a series of movement games, action songs, nursery rhymes, poems, and stories for children from 4 to 5 years,<sup>7</sup> and *History Not So Long Ago*, a new series for older primary school children; while secondary school pupils ‘of average ability’ were studying on radio ‘problems of the individual and society and of the environment’. On television a BBC programme, *Heil Caesar*, written by John Bowen but inspired by

<sup>3</sup> \*John Stonehouse to Hill, 3 March 1970 (R78/5). The Secretary of State for Education, Edward Short, believed that the pattern of school broadcasting should be retained as it was rather than reshaped. Hill expressed deep disappointment (\*Hill to Stonehouse, 19 March 1970). There was some opposition inside the BBC and from the ABS.

<sup>4</sup> \*‘Notes of Meeting of the Chairman [Dr. Lincoln Ralphs], Vice-Chairman [Dr. Thomas] and Secretary [John Robson] of the School Broadcasting Council with the Secretary of State for Education and Science and Sir William Pile [Permanent Secretary], Friday, 11th February 1972’, 14 Feb. 1972 (SBC file N2-5). Mrs (later Lady) Thatcher explained that in her view ‘broadcasts were sometimes allowed to challenge fundamental bases of society that should not be challenged and to present highly undesirable activities in a favourable way or in an open-ended way that might well not be guided in the right direction by individual teachers’.

<sup>5</sup> Richmond Postgate, then Controller, Educational Broadcasting, prepared a series of reflections for the Board of Governors (\*Minutes, 2 Dec. 1971) before he left the BBC. He continued to favour a grant-in-aid for educational broadcasting, and pressed for a bigger role for the BBC in widening educational opportunities. Hill stated that ‘his opinions were not universally shared within the BBC’. After leaving the BBC, Postgate circulated a paper to old friends and colleagues, including myself, setting out his considered views on open learning (15 Sept. 1974 (Briggs Papers)).

<sup>6</sup> *Ariel*, 23 Feb. 1973. The then Head of School Broadcasting, Radio, Charles Armour, said that the change had caused minimum upset for schools (ibid., 23 March 1974). He reported that more schools were tape-recording for themselves. Radiovision, which was to decline in importance with the rise of video, was still in widespread use.

<sup>7</sup> For the educational needs of the group, see the excellent study by IBA Fellow Gwen Dunn, *Television and the Pre-School Child* (1974).

Shakespeare, won the Flame of Knowledge prize given by the Society of Film and Television Arts for the best educational programme of the year.<sup>8</sup> In his personal view of BBC school broadcasting, *Everything but Alf Garnett*, published in 1974, Kenneth Fawdry was to regret a certain narrowing of range in broadcast drama for schools: 'We still have the drama series, but without any conscious decision to exclude the timeless dramas of the past, we have let it become a series of contemporary drama.'<sup>9</sup>

One of the most striking BBC educational ventures of the whole period covered in this volume was concerned not with literature but with literacy, and not with schools but with further education. During the summer of 1973, in response to a National Adult Literacy Campaign, John Cain, who had become Head of Further Education, Television in 1972, proposed a BBC project to tackle adult illiteracy. There were said then to be 2 million adult illiterates in Britain who had a reading age of 7 or less, and the task was daunting, not least because a stigma was attached to adult illiteracy. Voluntary organizations and local authorities were kept fully informed, and for the 'students' there were local recruitment and referral systems and a telephone answering service were necessary parts of the machinery. So, too, was radio.<sup>10</sup>

David Hargreaves, Project Leader and executive producer of the television team, who had already carried out rigorous research, was hard at work in 1974 with his Education Officer colleagues trying, with little existing material to guide them, to make the project work.<sup>11</sup> Donald Grattan, Postgate's successor as Controller, Educational Broadcasting, saw the project as a follow-up to the Russell Report, *Adult Education: A Plan for Development*, published in 1973, which drew attention to the needs of people overlooked by the British educational system; while the BBC's Vice-Chairman, Lady Plowden, with her own strong interests in education, was chairman of a Right to Read Committee.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1975, p. 47.

<sup>9</sup> K. Fawdry, *Everything but Alf Garnett* (1974), p. 140. He also briefly traces the development of school broadcasting for a multiracial society (p. 146).

<sup>10</sup> The Answering Service, funded initially by the Ford Foundation, became Broadcasting Support Services in 1981. It now functions across the board, providing back-up to all kinds of programmes.

<sup>11</sup> *Ariel*, 12 June 1974. See D. Hargreaves, *On the Move* (1977); *idem*, *Adult Literacy and Broadcasting* (1980); and H. A. Jones, *Adult Literacy: A Study of its Impact* (1978).

<sup>12</sup> For other aspects of further education following the Report, see B. Groombridge, 'Adult Education in Britain', *Education Broadcasting International*, June 1974, and J.

The opening of the Open University, which had started teaching in January 1971, provided a different kind of challenge for the BBC. It also brought together in a new kind of partnership academics and broadcasters.<sup>13</sup> With different perspectives, each 'side' learned how to work with the other, making no fewer than 300 television programmes in the first teaching year. Four courses only were offered that year, all of them 'foundation year' courses, but twenty-six courses were broadcast in 1972, including one new foundation year course and twenty-one second-year courses.<sup>14</sup>

The 'course team', which prepared the mixed materials for each course and which included both academics and broadcasters, has rightly been described as the greatest single contribution of the Open University to educational methodology.<sup>15</sup> It had its origins, however, in the BBC's own practice in further education broadcasting. Peter Montagnon, who became the first Head of the BBC Open University Production Centre, fittingly, if not entirely conveniently, installed in Alexandra Palace, had used what amounted to a small course team in *Parliamo Italiano* in 1963, and, anticipating the Open University, he had associated television programmes with other teaching and learning materials.<sup>16</sup> So, too, had Cain and Peter Weiss in their *Maths Today*, a two-year course in the 'new mathematics' for secondary schools, launched in 1967, which incorporated film loops, work cards, and supporting teachers' programmes. Grattan, then Head of Further Education, Television, was himself a former mathematics teacher, and had produced the first mathematics programme for

Robinson, *Learning Over the Air* (1982), pp. 180 ff. The key recommendation in the Russell Report, a National Development Council for Adult Education, was never implemented.

<sup>13</sup> The *Radio Times*, 7 Jan. 1971, began its introductory article with questions: 'New hope for education-hungry adults, or just a new hobby for middle-class housewives? A radical new learning process or an ill-considered muddle of television, radio and correspondence course? An important educational breakthrough or a jaded, semi-political gimmick? The university of the second chance or institute of misplaced idealism?' It also quoted Jennie Lee: 'It is really going to be one of the really great universities of the future. We must be pioneers and pace-setters.' In *Ariel*, 23 Feb. 1973, Grattan described the Open University as 'by far and away the biggest educational institution in Britain'. It genuinely pioneered rather than copied.

<sup>14</sup> See A. Marwick, 'The Open University, Two Years On', *Author*, Autumn 1972. There had been a remarkably high pass rate of 80% at the end of the first year.

<sup>15</sup> Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 177. For early descriptions of course teams at work see J. Tunstall, *The Open University Opens* (1974), and J. Ferguson, *The Open University from Within* (1975).

<sup>16</sup> For *Parliamo Italiano*, see above, p. 479 n. Montagnon had written to Peter Shore of the Research Department of the Labour Party expressing great interest in the idea of a University of the Air as early as 21 Dec. 1963 (Note of interview between John Cain and Montagnon, 26 Feb. 1986).



schools television in 1958.<sup>17</sup> The first Open University television broadcast was a thirty-five-minute introduction to its mathematics course, showing 'how it was devised and tested by "guinea pig" students'.<sup>18</sup>

Mathematics teaching was to be one of the many successes of the Open University, and the problems that it posed were mainly, if not entirely, pedagogical: was the 'new mathematics' the right way to teach the subject? Economics, history, and philosophy could pose other problems, and during the early years of Open University broadcasting occasional charges of 'bias' were made, not usually by students, but by eavesdropping listeners who were given the opportunity of making such charges precisely through the University's distinctive 'open-ness'.<sup>19</sup>

Schools broadcasting itself was not immune from such complaints. In November 1971 no less important a viewer than Mrs Thatcher complained specifically of a passage in a pamphlet accompanying a television programme in a series *History, 1917–1971*, a period of history which was to be frowned upon *tout court* in later discussions of a national history curriculum. The offending passage related to the Suez crisis. Hill replied cautiously, promising nothing except that what Mrs Thatcher had said would be borne in mind if the pamphlet were to be reprinted. For a professional historian, there seems to be nothing wrong with the passage at all.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Appropriately, several BBC staff collected Open University degrees in May 1974, among them Colin McIntyre, Ceefax Project Editor, and Archie McPherson, Assistant Editor, Sports and Events, Scotland (*Ariel*, 12 June 1974).

<sup>18</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 4 Jan. 1971.

<sup>19</sup> An early letter, 17 Aug. 1971, which was addressed to the *Financial Times*, objected to the course *Industrialisation and Culture*, which had received praise, though critical praise, in the *Guardian*, 31 Dec. 1970, the *Times Educational Supplement*, 22 Jan. 1971, and *The Technical Journal*, April 1971. 'Some may find it strange', the writer remarked, 'that a Conservative Government should be backing with taxpayers' money a course which exhibits such a lack of sympathy with the [private enterprise] industrial system.' He brought in the BBC too. 'It should concern us all that the monopolisation of publicly subsidised radio and television waves is being used to communicate a controversial set of values to students.'

<sup>20</sup> \*William van Straubenzee, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Education and Science, to Hill, 1 Dec. 1971; Hill to van Straubenzee, 13 Dec. 1971 (Man. Reg. file N630). For another protest from a familiar source, see the *BBC Record*, 75 (Aug. 1971), which describes a report published in May 1971 by Mrs Whitehouse's National Viewers' and Listeners' Association. Written on the basis of evidence collected by a Schools Broadcasting Monitoring Project, carried out by members of the Association, it criticized particular programmes for schools. See also \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 7 June 1971, where Curran is reported as saying that, having read the NVLA report, he would write to Mrs Whitehouse.

## 8. More on History

History is by its nature a controversial subject, and in a decade when its broadcasting appeal increased, it was treated by the BBC in different ways in a wide range of programmes, few of them specifically educational. One highly popular television series, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, opened the decade. The first episode was broadcast on New Year's Day 1970. 'It was very good entertainment', wrote one sixth-form student; 'it captured my imagination, and the age and sense of the period.'<sup>1</sup> As the series progressed, many other viewers affirmed their 'strong liking for historical plays'. The second programme was said to have 'brought home what life must have been like', while at the end there were many requests for a repeat. Not only were the plays 'a stunning and easiest ever recap of the large slice of history', one viewer stated, 'but their writing, though by different hands, beautifully dovetailed the themes of Henry's wives'.<sup>2</sup>

Keith Michell, a former Australian art teacher, 'discovered' in Adelaide by Sir Laurence Olivier, played Henry VIII from the age of 18 to 57, and the wives included Annette Crosbie, who won the best Actress of the Year award for her Catherine of Aragon; Dorothy Tutin; Anne Stallybrass, who was to play the first of James Onedin's wives in a very different historical series, *The Onedin Line*; Elvi Hale; Angela Pleasance; and Rosalie Crutchley.<sup>3</sup> There were other interesting castings. A former Dr. Who, Patrick Troughton, played the Duke of Norfolk. Bernard Hepton, who played Cranmer, had appeared in *The Troubleshooters*.

Scott, then Controller, BBC-2, regarded the whole series as a strong inducement for viewers to acquire BBC-2,<sup>4</sup> and it was so successful on BBC-2, where it was said to have 'Galsworthy beat',<sup>5</sup> that it was soon repeated on BBC-1. Other media were involved. An illustrated brochure by G. W. O. Woodward dealt with the detailed history of the period, and there was a film spin-off, *Henry VIII and his Six Wives*.

<sup>1</sup> \*Audience Research Report VR/69/702, 12 Feb. 1970.

<sup>2</sup> \*VR/70/15, 26 Feb. 1970; VR/70/66, 26 March 1970.

<sup>3</sup> In a sequel, *Elizabeth R*, which followed in Feb. 1971, Glenda Jackson played Elizabeth I.

<sup>4</sup> \*Scott to Attenborough, 'The Six Wives of Henry VIII', 16 Feb. 1970 (TV Drama: Six Wives of Henry VIII).

<sup>5</sup> \*VR/70/66.

There had been more problems regarding the costumes than there had been concerning acting or production.<sup>6</sup>

Historical programmes, 'educational' or 'educative', provide a new range of materials for historians to examine and assess, and for some historians as well as for viewers there was ample controversy at the time—some of it with international ramifications. In particular, a co-production series on the British Empire, produced over a long period after the BBC had started negotiations with Time-Life in 1968, generated heated argument.<sup>7</sup> The co-production deal was itself part of the argument, irrespective of the title and content of the series.<sup>8</sup>

Criticism of content was raised at the General Advisory Council in January 1972, when Philip Mason, who had been Director of the Institute of Race Relations from 1958 to 1969,<sup>9</sup> asked whether the series was devoted to 'revealing historical truth', while C. P. Hill, a former civil servant and Chief Charity Commissioner from 1960 to 1965, objected to the fact that the publicity material advertising the series had headed its list of historical advisers with the names of A. J. P. Taylor and Arnold Toynbee, 'both of whom had been associated with the anti-imperial idea'.<sup>10</sup> It surely did not help when Wheldon replied—what would Taylor, at least, have said?—that they had been placed at the head of the list 'solely out of deference to their age and seniority'.<sup>11</sup>

*The British Empire*, which was not intended to 'form a definitive history', had been originally conceived in terms of thirteen fifty-minute programmes. The length was increased to fifty-five minutes,

<sup>6</sup> \*Ronald Travers, Joint Producer with Mark Shivas, to Gerald Savory, Head of Plays Department, Television, 'The Six Wives of Henry VIII', 3 June 1969 (TV Drama: Six Wives of Henry VIII); *Ariel*, 27 Nov. 1974. Henry's fur coat was rabbit dressed up to look like mink, and the jewellery was made from brass chains and glass. All ready-made Tudor costumes had been taken up for other plays and films so that costumes for the series had to be improvised by the BBC Costume Department. They were much praised, and subsequently went on tour, in 1974 as far as New Zealand.

<sup>7</sup> The deal with Time-Life was not signed until Nov. 1970.

<sup>8</sup> *The Listener*, 20 Jan. 1972. The writer and later well-known broadcaster Clive James set the stage in a review of the first programme. For him, the very idea of Time-Life participation was wrong. He was not alone in his criticism. For the defence, see Attenborough's letter to *The Listener*, 27 Jan. 1972. There were different Australian protests about the content of the programme on Australia when it was broadcast in the series in *The Bulletin* (Sydney), 7 Oct. 1972.

<sup>9</sup> For Mason's role in relation to programmes for immigrants, see above, p. 591.

<sup>10</sup> Hill was a member of the Council *ex officio*: he was Chairman of the Central Appeals Advisory Committee for both the BBC and the ITA.

<sup>11</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 26 Jan. 1972. The first programme in the series was broadcast on 11 Jan.

however, with each programme 'filled with anecdote and personal accounts'. The main script-writer was John Terraine, who had previously worked on *The Great War*, and the 'overall view' presented in the programmes was not that of 'academics or historians', but of James (later Jan) Morris, whose *Pax Britannica* was the book behind the series.<sup>12</sup> The BBC had editorial responsibility for the thirteen programmes—all in colour—and Time-Life bore editorial responsibility for the publications, which included a part-work weekly magazine series.<sup>13</sup> The subtitle, closer to the actual programmes, was *Echoes of Britannia's Rule*.

Whatever 'imperialists' might think of the series—and they were unimpressed—there were complaints, even before the series was shown, from anti-imperialists also, complaints which had repercussions for the BBC's external as well as for its domestic service. In India, in particular, while *The British Empire* series was being prepared, there were strong objections to a series of programmes on India made by the French film-maker Louis Malle, even though Indians did not see them.<sup>14</sup> Following the showing in June 1970 of another BBC-1 film on India, *The Bewildered Giant*, more than 1,000 students shouting slogans condemning the BBC in Akola, in Maharashtra, observed a 'hartal', a stoppage of work, to protest against the BBC's alleged description of Chatrapathi Shivaji, a character in the film, as 'a looter'. Frightened shopkeepers put up their shutters.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> \*Max Morgan-Witts, to Humphrey Fisher, Head of Science and Features, Television, 'The British Empire', 21 June 1968 (TV General Features: British Empire General, 1968). Morgan-Witts, Editor of the project, had previously edited *Towards Tomorrow* and *Tomorrow's World*. He gave an interesting account of the genesis of the series in *Ariel*, 17 March 1972.

<sup>13</sup> An advertisement in *Ariel*, 7 Jan. 1972, described *The British Empire* magazine as 'the first-ever partwork linked to a BBC television series'. The link, like the link with Time-Life, produced opposition inside and outside the BBC. The Free Communications Group was highly critical. See *Open Secret*, no. 7, which described 'the deal' as setting 'dangerous precedents for a Corporation that has publicly and repeatedly set its face against the acceptance of advertising. Moreover, it is a form of advertising, sponsorship, specifically banned on ITV because of the inherent dangers to editorial freedom.'

<sup>14</sup> On 3 Aug. 1970 the Indian High Commissioner in London, Apa Pant, wrote to Curran asking him to discontinue the series on the grounds that the films were 'repugnant to good taste', 'a distortion of a great country, her history, tradition and present achievements'. Whitley, then Managing Director, External Broadcasting, saw Pant on 17 Aug. and, along with Attenborough, on 25 Aug., but they refused to terminate the series. Curran had written to Pant on 5 Aug. about the Malle films, expressing 'considerable personal sympathy for the point of view' which had led him 'to protest', but defending the decision to show them on the grounds that the BBC did not deal entirely in 'the good plain fare of the conventional and unquestionably impartial' (\*Pant to Curran, 3 Aug. 1970; Curran to Pant, 5 Aug. 1970 (Man. Reg. file C160) ).

<sup>15</sup> \*Ronald Robson, South-East Asia Correspondent, to Donald Stephenson, Controller, Overseas and Foreign Relations, 4 Aug. 1970 (TV Central C47 History of the British

In such circumstances, 'Indian officialdom' was 'unlikely to fall over itself to be cooperative with the BBC over the shooting of "Fifty Years of Change"', wrote Geoffrey Woodland, Administrative Officer in Overseas and Foreign Relations.<sup>16</sup>

There were protests from other sources too. Thus, the Port of London Authority refused permission for a crew to visit, let alone film, the West India Docks for a programme in the British Empire series on the Caribbean after another BBC documentary programme had very pertinently compared the Port of London Authority with Rotterdam. 'The very word "India"', wrote the Assistant Head of Features, 'now seems to put up all the shutters.'<sup>17</sup> 'Please do not leap to the conclusion that we have suddenly decided to attack India,' Wheldon had felt it necessary to tell the Indian High Commission in July 1970 following protests about *The Bewildered Giant*; 'there is no new policy of any kind at work.'<sup>18</sup>

In 'real history' it was Pakistan that was to attack India—and very quickly to be defeated—in a full-scale war in December 1971, a war that followed the successful achievement in March 1971 of the independence of Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan).<sup>19</sup> These events transformed the situation, for during the Bangladeshi crisis the BBC won praise not only in Bangladesh, where one listener suggested that the name BBC had become 'a household word', but also in India.<sup>20</sup> 'Right from the taxi and rickshaw driver to the provincial Ministers,' reported one member of the BBC's Hindi Service, 'it is nothing but endless praise and admiration for our broadcasts.'<sup>21</sup> In Pakistan,

Empire). Robson had a difficult time between then and the end of 1971. He was not reaccredited to his post after taking a diplomatic holiday in Sept. 1971, and after the Indian Government had threatened to close the office, the BBC itself closed it later in the year. (\*News and Current Affairs Committee, *Minutes*, 4 Sept. 1970; Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 10, 26 Sept., 22 Oct., 3, 17 Dec. 1970; Cmnd. 4824 (1971), p. 76).

<sup>16</sup> \*Woodland to S. G. Williams, Controller, Television Administration, 'Delhi Office: The Empire Series', 10 Aug. 1970 (TV Central C47).

<sup>17</sup> \*Noble Wilson, Assistant Head of Features Group, to Attenborough, 'Port of London Authority: British Empire', 18 Feb. 1971 (TV Central C47).

<sup>18</sup> \*M. A. Sivaramakrishnan to Wheldon, 1 July 1970; Wheldon to Sivaramakrishnan, 7 July 1970 (C160). The commentary for *The Bewildered Giant* was written by Indian-born Dom Moraes.

<sup>19</sup> Already before the war began, the situation had improved, although there was still a ban on BBC documentary programmes (\*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 9 Sept. 18 Nov. 1971).

<sup>20</sup> Mansell visited Bangladesh shortly after independence, and was received by the Head of State and the Prime Minister.

<sup>21</sup> Cmnd. 5111 (1972), *Annual Report and Accounts of the British Broadcasting Corporation, 1971-72*, pp. 65-6. The BBC's Delhi Office was reopened early in 1972, when Mark Tully, Programme Organizer and Talks Writer for the BBC's Eastern Service, was appointed Chief of Bureau. He had already served in India from 1965 to 1969.

however, the reaction was bound to be the opposite. The fact that the British Commonwealth was changing more rapidly than even the makers of the BBC programmes on the *British Empire* had suggested was demonstrated dramatically in January 1972, when Pakistan left the Commonwealth.

This was history in the making, not the making of a television historical series, yet before new history had begun to unfold Curran had told the Governors in October 1970, when BBC relations with India had deteriorated, that 'in dealings with the Indian Government his main purpose was to make possible the filming of the Indian sequences of the British Empire series'.<sup>22</sup> Curran also hit out at 'reckless critics' who had used the British Empire series to launch a full-blooded assault on the BBC, questioning its honesty and even accusing it of subversion.<sup>23</sup>

One of the most ambitious radio series on history, *The Long March of Everyman*, the first programme of which was broadcast on 21 November 1971, avoided some of the problems that *The British Empire* television series faced. Indeed, it won the co-operation of a large number of historians, and remains a striking and original landmark contribution to an understanding of history arrived at through broadcasting.<sup>24</sup> 'Green Land, Red Bricks', the first programme in the Radio 4 series *The Long March of Everyman*, was transmitted on 21 November 1971. The subsequent series of twenty-six forty-five minute programmes lasted six months.

Whitby as Controller, Radio 4, took a continuing personal interest in the series from the time that a meeting was held in his office on 18 February 1971 to discuss its scope and methodology;<sup>25</sup> while as Managing Director, Radio, Trethowan, who in 1970 had defended BBC radio in terms of its quality, described *The Long March* as 'probably the most ambitious historical project which radio has ever conceived . . . a demonstration of faith that radio continues to be as

<sup>22</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 22 Oct. 1970.

<sup>23</sup> *Ariel*, 14 April 1972. Curran was speaking at a dinner at the Savoy given in his honour by the Foreign Press Association.

<sup>24</sup> As a different version of history *The Complete and Utter History of Britain*, with Terry Jones and Michael Palin, had been broadcast in 1969. In audience terms it was not a success (see R. Wilmot, *From Fringe to Flying Circus* (1980) pp. 188-94).

<sup>25</sup> \*Joy Matthews, Secretary to Whitby, to Secretaries to Dennis Scuse, Enterprises, *et al.*, 'The Long March of Everyman', 12 Feb. 1971 (Radio Enterprises file: The Long March of Everyman). When there was news that a book based on it was soon to appear, Whitby wrote that he was glad that 'full credit was being given to the radio production' (\*Whitby to Mason, 'The Long March of Everyman: Publication', 2 July 1974 (same file)).



effective in imaginative broadcasting as it is on all sides acknowledged to be in the fields of music and of news'.<sup>26</sup>

*The Long March*, only roughly chronological in treatment and focusing on 'themes' as well as on 'periods', had taken eighteen months to prepare, and from the start Michael Mason, the producer, and Daniel Snowman, who worked as associate producer, had been in close touch not only with academic historians but with amateur historical societies, which were increasing in numbers and seeking to tap their own local roots.<sup>27</sup> A newsletter kept them all together.<sup>28</sup> There were many contributors to the series, who were 'instructed' through a circulated 'progress sheet' that raised questions as well as provided answers.

The series was described as an 'evocation of the life of the ordinary people of Britain from prehistoric times to the present day', and they were all based largely on the words of 'the man in the street' wherever these could be recovered.<sup>29</sup> There was music too, provided both by the Radiophonic Workshop and by David Cain and the English Music Consort. Mason went so far as to describe the series as 'sound symphonies': 'we intend to use audio as a "great music" for the mind and imagination'.<sup>30</sup> He also called the project 'an impres-

<sup>26</sup> Foreword to the BBC booklet *The Long March of Everyman* (n.d.). In emphasizing both the quality and the range of BBC radio in 1972, Trethowan noted the 'curious paradox' that while there were seventy radio stations in New York alone, superficially a sign of the amplitude of listener choice, five British BBC services (Radios 1, 2, 3, and 4 and the local system) offered a far wider spectrum of programming on this side of the Atlantic. There was virtually 'no serious drama in American radio, no extended current affairs, such as *Analysis*, and no light entertainment' (*The Times*, 2 Nov. 1972). There was certainly no *Long March of Everyman*.

<sup>27</sup> The unsystematic list of themes began with 'ethnic mix', 'dirt and cleanliness', and 'children'. Reference was made in it to the differences between 'myth' and 'fact' and 'radical' and 'conservative' historiography ('Themes and Structural Principles' (Briggs Papers)). Mason wrote an account of the project in which he stressed that 'such an undertaking raises many issues of value judgement, particularly of the relation between the high standards of special expertise and the nature of the successful appeal to the popular imagination'. He also produced 'Kick Off charts for all individual programmes' (Briggs Papers). Charles Parker was producer for the 'voices of the people', and Raymond Williams was a literary adviser. Jacquetta Hawkes was 'Ecological Commentator'.

<sup>28</sup> Number Six, like the rest unfortunately undated, told contributors what had been happening 'now that the postal strike is over'. 'The days are ticking remorselessly on,' Mason wrote, 'and it is as vital as it always was to keep the pressure up if we are to meet our deadline. PLEASE, if we haven't received your documents, send them to us with the utmost speed possible!' (Briggs Papers).

<sup>29</sup> 'Trails for Programme One, 21 Nov. 1971 (Long March of Everyman, Programme I Production file). 'The material continues to be fascinating, and shape up well; but there is a constant pressure on Programme Directors to substitute . . . documentation other than the primary voices of the people, which has always been conceived of as the basis and body of the whole project.'

<sup>30</sup> 'A History of the British People: Project for a Major Venture in Audio', n.d. (Radio Enterprises file: *The Long March of Everyman*).

sionist sound-painting'. Yet there was another consideration that always seemed important to both Mason and Snowman. They were anxious to link past and present. 'Just as British society seems to be going through a period of self-analysis and introspection . . . it is also experiencing a process of (apparent) democratisation and a corresponding search for identity by its individual members.'<sup>31</sup>

For whatever reason—and sociologists would doubtless suggest several reasons—historical themes, including themes of recent history, interested a large section of the population during the late 1960s and early 1970s, as *Dad's Army*, first broadcast on 31 July 1968, had demonstrated. 'What was the Dunkirk spirit so often invoked since by politicians with bad news [to announce]?', Sean Day-Lewis had asked in his review of the first programme, answering himself, 'Partly, no doubt, the nervous sense of humour of *Dad's Army*.'<sup>32</sup>

One of the two script-writers, Jimmy Perry, described years later—after over seventy episodes had been broadcast—how he had been drawn to the subject-matter of *Dad's Army* when he watched the changing of the guard and compared the red tunics of the soldiers with the drab khaki of the Home Guard. He found no books on the subject in the library, and after he had joined in an effective script-writing partnership with David Croft, they had brought the idea to life. 'The rest', he wrote succinctly, 'is history.'<sup>33</sup>

It was history, however, which was made or remade through a superb comedy team, with Arthur Lowe, whose first big role in television had been in Granada's *Coronation Street*, as Captain Mainwaring, with John Le Mesurier as Sergeant Wilson, and with highly talented actors as the members of a very varied platoon, who included Clive Dunn as Lance Corporal Jones and Ian Lavender as Private Pike. It was a brilliant idea to make the sergeant, not the captain, an ex-public school boy, and at the same time to link him romantically with Mrs Pike.<sup>34</sup> From the start, the plot worked. Nor

<sup>31</sup> 'The Long March of Everyman', *The Listener*, 18 Nov. 1971. Snowman quoted an introductory note that I wrote as one of the two General Consultants for the series: 'The time is right in our own shifting present to explore our past afresh.' A book based on the programme scripts, *The Long March of Everyman*, was published in 1974, but plans to produce and sell a series of tapes and records did not succeed.

<sup>32</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 1 Aug. 1968. 'This is summer 1940, when the heart of England beat with a single pulse,' wrote Peter Black in the *Daily Mail* on the same day, for once misjudging its appeal, which he described too simply as that of 'gag comedy'.

<sup>33</sup> Jimmy Perry, 'How Dad's Army Began', in J. Perry and D. Croft, *Dad's Army* (1975), p. 8.

<sup>34</sup> *Dad's Army* ran with breaks to 13 Nov. 1977, and episodes have often been repeated. There are no surviving early BBC files. See A. Davis, *Laughtermakers* (1989), pp. 125–6.

were there problems with dialogue. However controversial other television series might be, Perry and Croft were 'never hampered by the danger of falling victim to bad taste'.<sup>35</sup>

Another, very different programme dealing with the War years, the prisoners of war programme *Colditz*, quickly attracted an exceptionally large audience. Produced by Gerald Glaister, 'a stickler for realism', and first broadcast on 19 October 1972, it was an immediate success; and by the time that 'Court Martial', its eleventh episode out of twenty-six, was broadcast in December 1972, it was said to be 'getting better each week'.<sup>36</sup> The stars were Jack Hedley, Bernard Hepton, Robert Wagner, and David McCallum, the last two of them booked through MCA International, which put money into the series and distributed it in America.

Raymond Williams, who did not like *Colditz*, thought—and it was a minority view—that it had 'that unmistakable middle-aged spread' about it which can be called 'our heritage'.<sup>37</sup> None the less, as many as 18½ million viewers, the peak figure for any episode in such a programme, including *The Forsyte Saga*, obviously appreciated what Sylvia Clayton in the *Daily Telegraph* called the 'escapism of escapes'. There was a current theory, she added, that 'television's preferred period [of history] lies always about thirty years behind the present, the time when most senior executives were young'.<sup>38</sup>

It was not necessarily the preferred period for viewers, however, as *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* had proved. *The Onedin Line*, produced by Peter Graham Scott, also attracted viewers from its very first broadcast on 15 October 1971. The tale of gruff Captain James Onedin's overpowering ambition to run a shipping line in days of sail and of his family relationships—with his wives, his more prosperous brother and his beautiful sister—had both historical and 'human' interest. Viewers found it 'a refreshing change of period and scene, most persuasively reproduced, and quite an insight into life in the 1860s'.

<sup>35</sup> B. Crowther and M. Pinfold, *Bring Me Laughter* (1987), p. 112. It was a challenge when *Dad's Army* was also switched to radio in 1974 (*Ariel*, 8 Feb. 1974).

<sup>36</sup> \*Audience Research Report VR/72/759, 19 Jan. 1973.

<sup>37</sup> *New Statesman*, 14 Dec. 1972.

<sup>38</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 8 Jan. 1974. 'Real history' was involved. Sixty-eight veterans of the real *Colditz* held a reunion party, attended by actors in the series, at the Imperial War Museum in Jan. 1974. An exhibition in the museum included home-made compasses and tools, forged work permits, and a Union Jack made from dyed blankets that the prisoners hoisted over *Colditz* on the day when they were liberated.

The sailing ships, filmed off the coast of Devon and Cornwall, were described by one viewer as 'out of this world'.<sup>39</sup>

After the sixth programme, which was seen by approximately 9 million people, 17.9 per cent of the population of the United Kingdom aged 5 and over, viewers were asked specifically whether they felt that the 'commercial struggles' of James Onedin, played by Peter Gilmore, had 'any relevance to the industrial problems of today'. The responses suggested that few people would have thought in those terms had the question not been put to them: 'I enjoy the drama and don't look for hidden meanings', said one. Another question of a more practical kind—had the series affected the viewer's attitude towards a colour set?—also produced a not dissimilar response. Indeed, half the sample refused to answer it.<sup>40</sup> For many viewers, one memory lingered, besides the stories themselves: the theme music taken from *Spartacus* by Khachaturyan.

Another programme, *The Pallisers*, based on Anthony Trollope's novels, looked back in time to years of mid-Victorian peace.<sup>41</sup> Dramatized by a very different kind of twentieth-century novelist, Simon Raven, the Pallisers were introduced in a *Radio Times Special*, a 'full guide' that included a glossary, a genealogy, and a somewhat irrelevant couple of pages on two late nineteenth-century inventions, the telephone and the phonograph. Their presence, of course, would have changed the Pallisers' lives. A brief outline of the plot described how 'the serial was set in the lively, glittering atmosphere of the second half of the nineteenth century, when the political affairs of the nation were frequently conducted in the luxurious, and sometimes frivolous drawing-rooms of London Society'.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> \*Audience Research Report VR/71/439, 12 Nov. 1971. It is interesting that in two audience research reports (\*VR/71/439 and VR/71/489, 10 Dec. 1971) a majority of viewers found it 'very easy to understand', as well as 'thoroughly entertaining'.

<sup>40</sup> \*VR/71/489. Pressed, at least some viewers were aware of 'the absence of the trades unions and social services' and that there was 'a possible analogy between the sail-to-steam changeover and automation in modern industries'. Most viewers decided there was no relationship. James Onedin operated in an 'entirely different world' that was historically interesting.

<sup>41</sup> In Hilary Kingsley and Geoff Tibball's useful book *Box of Delights* (1989), which surveys television programmes, *The Pallisers* is described, with little attention to historical chronology, as 'a sort of Son of the Forsyte Saga' (p. 150).

<sup>42</sup> \*M. Lisemore, producer, 'Drama Early Warning Synopsis', 30 Nov. 1972 (TV file: *The Pallisers*: General, 1974). The story editor was Lennox Phillips.

The producer of the series was Martin Lisemore, and the shooting of the twenty-six episodes took thirteen months. Panther Books published the six Palliser novels on which they were based with full colour illustrations from the television series. As Lisemore wrote in the 'full guide', Trollope maintained that if he were to be remembered in the next century, it would be as a result of the Palliser novels. 'We hope', Lisemore added, 'that this serialisation on television will add weight to his belief.'<sup>43</sup>

If *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, *The British Empire*, *The Long March of Everyman*, *Dad's Army*, *Colditz*, *The Onedin Line*, and *The Pallisers* in their very different ways represented one aspect of BBC programming during the 1970s—the appeal to history—there were other programmes that looked to the future. For example, *Doomwatch*, a dramatic series, first broadcast in February 1970, was concerned with the danger to mankind associated with 'scientific progress' and with scientific 'watchdogs' seeking to avert them.<sup>44</sup> The programme had its origins in *Dr. Who*,<sup>45</sup> and it depended for its success not only on its choice of themes but on the special effects that could be produced. Gerry Davis, *Dr. Who's* first script editor, worked on the series in partnership with Dr Kit Pedler, a university lecturer in anatomy;<sup>46</sup> and other writers included Harry Green, who had worked on *Dr. Finlay's Casebook*, and Elwyn Jones, former head of the Television Drama Series Department, who had inaugurated *Z Cars*.<sup>47</sup> The star of the first series was Toby Wren, played by Robert Powell, and the last series of thirteen episodes, which began with 'Fire and Brimstone', was broadcast from 5 June to 14 August 1972.

<sup>43</sup> *Radio Times Special, The Pallisers* (1974). Some memories were shorter. A donation of £5 to Malvern Bowling Club, which had been used as a setting, was sent late 'with profuse apologies' ('Jennie Betts, Assistant, Facilities, Television Administration, to Malvern Hills District Council, 24 May 1974 (The Pallisers: General)).

<sup>44</sup> The first numbers of *Kaleidoscope*, which was launched on 2 April 1973, included a science as well as an arts component, a mix that led one member of an Audience Research panel to claim that 'grouping football results with opera would be about as successful' ('Audience Research Report LR/73/556). The science element was dropped in 1974 when Rosemary Hart became Editor.

<sup>45</sup> *Radio Times*, 5 Feb. 1970: undated *Doomwatch* publicity pamphlet (TV Drama: *Doomwatch*, General). The first programme was called *The Plastic Eaters*, and it was very well received (\*VR/70/76, 5 March 1970).

<sup>46</sup> 'I started picking Kit's brain for scientific advice during *Dr. Who*,' Davis wrote, 'and gradually we began to find that we thought alike about what was happening in the world' (*Radio Times*, 5 Feb. 1970).

<sup>47</sup> See above, p. 427.

## 9. Other Programmes

Broadcasting history only springs fully to life when the programmes themselves are seen and heard as well as written about, and not all of them have survived to tell their own story. It is still possible, however, to follow the history in sound and vision as well as in words.

Some of the programmes were familiar when the decade began, and celebrated their own, often highly publicized, anniversaries between 1970 and 1974. For example, *Panorama* celebrated its twenty-first birthday in 1974 and in the same year, which was also the tenth anniversary year of BBC-2,<sup>1</sup> the 500th episode of *Z Cars* was broadcast, with only Bert Lynch, now an Inspector, as a survivor from the original cast. 'May the next 500 episodes be as good', Richard Last observed in the *Daily Telegraph*. The series 'remains seemingly fresh and indestructible'.<sup>2</sup> *Panorama* was deliberately changed under the direction of what Robin Day called 'Young Turks'. Age gaps had widened behind the screens as well as in front of them.<sup>3</sup> 'There are now different windows and a different world', Frank Smith, 35-year-old editor of *Panorama* in 1974, explained at the time of its twenty-first birthday celebrations.<sup>4</sup> Its new anchorman, David Dimbleby, who took over from Alastair Burnet on an appropriately timed day, 'Remembrance Day', 11 November 1974, had a formidable family reputation to maintain. The programme's floor manager, who had worked both with Richard Dimbleby and with David, observed that while the two men were alike in their courtesy, to compare them was impossible—the styles of broadcasting had changed so much.<sup>5</sup>

*Till Death Us Do Part*, which from the start had reflected changes both in society and in style, had had its continuing problems, if only

<sup>1</sup> A party was held to celebrate the event. Among those attending were Michael Peacock and David Attenborough. 'I see BBC-2 as a companion walking slightly behind BBC-1, rather like the Duke of Edinburgh following just behind the Queen', Scott is reported as having said in 1972. 'But both are personalities in their own right' (quoted in T. Green, *The Universal Eye* (1972), pp. 97–8).

<sup>2</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 21 May 1974.

<sup>3</sup> For Day's interesting account of his differences with the new management, which drove him out of regular television appearances, see *Grand Inquisitor*, pp. 152 ff. A section of his account is called 'Old Sweats and Young Whippersnappers'.

<sup>4</sup> Two *Panorama* reporters were given specialist roles: Julian Pettifer, who had joined the programme in 1969 to deal with all subjects involving young people, and Robert MacNeil, to follow 'racial affairs as they affect Britain'.

<sup>5</sup> *Ariel*, 27 Nov. 1974. In an interesting article on television programmes in the *Spectator*, 26 Jan. 1974, Clive Gammon referred to the 'doom-merchants of *Panorama*'.



for this reason, and it was perhaps significant that on the eve of the 1972 jubilee it had given way on 1 November to a special edition of *Talkback*, in which Johnny Speight, instead of presenting his view of life had to defend it. Speight still topped the ratings, but in October Hill had made a rare apology to Mrs Whitehouse about a *Till Death Us Do Part* programme on 20 September in which there had been references to the birth of Christ and the status of the Virgin Mary. Speight was angry enough to state that he would not write any more scripts for the series if it meant that Mrs Whitehouse was looking over his shoulder. 'You might just as well let her write the series—then see how the viewers like that.'<sup>6</sup>

Wheldon, who had defended Speight against charges of using too much bad language, was as proud of BBC light entertainment—and sport—as he was of features. Again there was a blend of old and new. Morecambe and Wise, whose first double-act television series, made before they were 30 years old, had been a humiliating failure, had waited several years before appearing on ATV in *The Morecambe and Wise Show* in 1962. Now during the early 1970s they developed to perfection their particular duo brand of cross-talk, complete with a wide range of costumes and an equally wide range of facial expressions.

In the clowning, brilliantly timed, Ernie Wise, the butt of quick-fire cracks from Eric Morecambe, 'the one with the glasses', was granted his own distinctive role. He was not merely a 'feed man' or stooge. Instead, he had serious dramatic pretensions, more than usually pompous, which Morecambe unflinchingly dismissed as 'rubbish'. The lustre of their joint performance owed much to their script-writer, Eddie Braben, whom they acquired after Morecambe had had a serious heart attack in 1968 and they had moved over to the BBC.

By the 1970s, Morecambe and Wise had greatly widened their range to tempt other stage personalities, like Dame Flora Robson and Glenda Jackson and even the conductor André Previn, to participate in their fun. They also won the applause of Ken Tynan.<sup>7</sup> Yet there was always a domestic 'sitcom' element in each programme, as well as music and dance, and there were often bizarre costumes. 'Bring me sunshine . . . bring me laughter . . . Bring me love' were among the best known and most frequently repeated action words that ever

<sup>6</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 7 Oct. 1972. In the *Guardian*, 7 Oct. 1972, Mrs Whitehouse was reported as saying that if Speight was incapable of writing without giving calculated offence, then he had better stop writing.

<sup>7</sup> 'The Top Joker', *Observer Magazine*, 9 Sept. 1973.

introduced a television sequence. The Christmas shows of Morecambe and Wise became particularly famous, and audiences, 'family audiences', were to reach a peak in 1977 when 28 million viewers saw the Christmas show of that year, the biggest audience for a comedy in Britain.<sup>8</sup> Morecambe had told readers of *The Listener* in 1972 how their television success had enabled the two of them to stay out of work at Christmas. They had been able to escape from a long season of stage pantomime.<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile, another, very different pair of comedians, Ronnie Corbett and Ronnie Barker, had made their début together in 1971, each again with his own distinctive identity.<sup>10</sup> On 10 April *The Two Ronnies* programme was first shown. The two men had appeared together in one of the seminal shows of the 1960s, *The Frost Report*, which in its twenty-six editions links the entertainment history of the early 1960s and the 1970s, not only because Corbett and Barker appeared in it, but because of Frost's own development as a broadcaster and the rise of the Monty Python team.<sup>11</sup> First broadcast on 10 March 1966, each *Frost Report* had a 'central theme' script, written by Antony Jay, but each theme (like 'Youth' or 'Crime') was treated loosely. The many other writers who contributed to Frost's own 'Continuous Developing Monologue' included John Cleese, Graham Chapman, Michael Palin, and Terry Jones, comedians who were to blossom not through monologue but through partnership.

*Monty Python's Flying Circus*, which first went on the air on 5 October 1969, was a new kind of comedy show that did not obey

<sup>8</sup> K. Passingham, *The Guinness Book of TV Facts and Feats* (1984), p. 246. Morecambe and Wise devoured material in their effort to make people happy, their avowed aim, and, worn out in the process, they had to take a rest in 1974. In 1978 they returned to ITV. Wise produced an autobiography, *Eric and Ernie*, in 1973. Morecambe died in 1984. Cf. the obituaries of him in the *Daily Mirror* and *The Times*, 29 May 1984.

<sup>9</sup> *The Listener*, 21 Dec. 1972.

<sup>10</sup> Ronnie Barker was to have great success in one of the last programmes introduced in the period covered in this volume, *Porridge*, set in a prison, which was broadcast for the first time on 5 Sept. 1974. Barker played Fletcher, an inmate. The cast included Richard Beckinsale as his cell mate and Fulton Mackay as one of the prison officers.

<sup>11</sup> David Frost, who took an interest in his successors in the Cambridge Footlights Club, among them John Cleese, first saw Corbett in Danny La Rue's night-club. He also drew on contributions from Marty Feldman, who had turned from music-hall to writing; Barry Cryer, who was to write scripts for Morecambe and Wise; Keith Waterhouse, author of *Billy Liar*; Frank Muir and Denis Norden, co-authors of *Take it from Here* and stars of *My Word*; and Barry Took, author of *Beyond Our Ken*. Took and Feldman worked together in a number of radio writing projects, including *Round the Home*, before Feldman moved to acting in ITV's *At Last the 1948 Show* (B. Took, introduction to *The Best of Round the Home* (1989)). Before *The Frost Report* Terry Jones and Michael Palin had appeared together in filmed items in *The Late Show*.

the rules of any other television form. 'And now for something completely different' was one of its catch-phrases.<sup>12</sup> Throughout the series it interposed absurdity and reality, sensitivity and savagery. Indeed, at its best it fused them. It had few punchlines, but it was never without catchwords.<sup>13</sup> It took basic premises and reversed them. Its humour, which was visual as much as verbal, again often succeeded in fusing both. There were real-life characters in the Circus, who became familiar to the audience, but there were also cartoons that were full of surprises.

The animations, an essential ingredient in each programme, were provided by Terry Gilliam, an American who had worked with Palin, Jones, and Eric Idle before the Circus arrived at Television Centre. Not the least of the attractions of the Circus was that it made fun of the medium of television itself and of all the conventions that had been associated with professionalism. BBC announcements and announcers were themselves part of the act. Television was pushed to its limits, and sometimes beyond them. Raymond Williams found the strained nerves symbolic. 'Why is the BBC like *Monty Python's Flying Circus?*,' he asked in December 1972. There was 'an ungovernable weariness at the problems of the world . . . Television is now so pervasive that we project onto it many of our feelings about quite other things.'<sup>14</sup>

The five main young performers in the Circus—Palin, Jones, Cleese, Chapman, and Idle—had all undergone (the right verb) experience of television, ITV more than BBC, before they joined *Monty Python*. In consequence, despite Cleese's radio role in *I'm Sorry I'll Read That Again*, this made them quite different from *The Goons* 'who came from radio and tried to adapt their stuff to television'.<sup>15</sup> Three of them had appeared in the ITV children's show *Do Not Adjust Your Set*.

<sup>12</sup> See S. Neale and F. Krutnik, *Popular Film and Television Comedy* (1990), pp. 196 ff., which examines in detail a programme broadcast in the autumn of 1970. See also Wilmut, *op. cit.*

<sup>13</sup> The Circus had found difficulty in choosing a title for the programme. On 29 July 1969 Michael Mills, Head of Comedy, wrote to the producer, Ian Macnaughton, with a hint of desperation, 'Please will you have a word with the writers. I haven't reacted to the funny titles that have appeared on the scripts so far. I hoped that they would cease of their own accord. However, the time has come when we must stop having peculiar titles and settle for one overall title for the series' (TV file: *Monty Python*). A script could have been written on this theme. *Monty Python's Flying Circus* was settled on as a title in Sept. John Cleese had first made his London mark with the review *Cambridge Circus*, which was also performed in New York.

<sup>14</sup> *The Listener*, 14 Dec. 1972.

<sup>15</sup> For Cleese and radio and television links, see above, p. 805.

'We were the first people really, after *TW3*, to play with the toys,' one of them rightly claimed.<sup>16</sup>

Three series of *Monty Python's Flying Circus* were broadcast, with the second (1970) more successful than the first, although it was scheduled at 10.10 p.m. on Tuesdays, a time when some Regions opted out. The scheduling so irked the *Circus* that it showed in animation the head of Paul Fox, then Controller of BBC-1, until Duncan Wood, who had succeeded Mills as Head of Comedy, asked them to stop doing so.<sup>17</sup> The absence of Cleese in the fourth series, broadcast in 1974 with the simple title *Monty Python*, was largely responsible for its being the last.<sup>18</sup> Long before that, however, the appeal of *Monty Python's Flying Circus* had crossed cultural frontiers, as did so many other television programmes of this period. It sold well in the United States—and in Japan.

Another brilliant venture in television light entertainment, *The Goodies*, of which Tim Brooke-Taylor was one of the initiators, was quintessentially English. First broadcast on 8 November 1970 with a projected title 'Narrow Your Mind', *The Goodies* was as anarchic as *Monty Python*; and, as one of its founders, Bill Oddie, put it, it made no pretensions to be satire. 'Stunts' were an essential ingredient. The team, which included Graeme Garden, 'old Greybags', made almost as much of music, composed by Oddie, as of words. Visual techniques were highly sophisticated. As Oddie put it—doubtless with *Monty Python* in mind—'we think in terms of a human animated cartoon'.<sup>19</sup> The first programme, 'The Tower of London', set up the characters, 'three blokes, who do anything, any time'. They had sold the basic idea to Michael Mills, then Head of Television Comedy, whom they treated as a patron and benefactor.

While quality counted—and was achieved, as Wheldon recognized—in BBC productions as different as *Dad's Army*, the *Circus*, and *The Goodies*, other considerations undoubtedly influenced the patterning of programmes inside the BBC, particularly competition, which entailed measurement and analysis of audience shares, with BBC and ITV continuing to make their own calculations.<sup>20</sup> There was also a

<sup>16</sup> G. Perry, *Life of Python* (1983), p. 123.

<sup>17</sup> \*Wood to Macnaughton, 18 Sept. 1972 (TV Light Entertainment: *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, series 3).

<sup>18</sup> Cleese was to reach a new peak of popularity in *Fawlty Towers*, which was first broadcast on 19 Sept. 1975.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in A. Davis, *TV Laughtermakers* (1989).

<sup>20</sup> See above, p. 21. Television viewing per head remained stable during the period from 1969 to 1972. From time to time the BBC's Audience Research Department, housed

growing fascination with scale, almost for its own sake. In consequence there could be many 'strained nerves' in Television Centre.

What was hailed as a major change in 1972, the lifting by Chataway of all restrictions on programme hours, was greeted with acclaim on both sides of the House of Commons,<sup>21</sup> but the BBC was rightly somewhat 'cautious' in its welcome, on the grounds that it had only just enough money to do properly the programmes it was already doing.<sup>22</sup> It did not want to spread the butter any more thinly on the bread. Nor had it any ambitions to introduce 'breakfast TV' in 'the immediate future'. 'If we had more money, our first priority', Milne, then Director of Programmes, Television, stated in 1973, 'would be to strengthen the evening output across the board, and then to enrich the afternoon where we are suffering competitively.'<sup>23</sup>

None the less, in 1972 the Television Service 'welcomed the opportunity to be more imaginative in the scheduling of programmes, to extend sports coverage, to put on more open-ended programmes and [striking a note which did not win universal acclaim] to make more use of its programmes through additional repeats'.<sup>24</sup>

Sports coverage did increase. So, too, did ratings, and in February 1973 *Ariel* noted with pride that BBC television programmes had attracted the eleven biggest audiences in the month of January when the television audience had divided its viewing time in the ratio of 53 BBC, to 47 ITV. Among the biggest audiences were those for *The Morecambe and Wise Show*, which reached 19½ million; but no fewer than 12 million viewers had watched *Match of the Day* and 17 million viewers a boxing match between Frazier and Foreman.<sup>25</sup>

in the old Langham Hotel building, made detailed studies not only of comparative shares, reactions to individual programmes, and of viewers' habits. Silvey, retired as Head of Audience Research in 1968, succeeded by Brian Emmett.

<sup>21</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 829, col. 478, 19 Jan. 1972. At the same time, Chataway said that the time had not yet come for him to announce to whom the ownership and management of ITV-2 would be given. In the course of the debate, he was pressed hard by Whitehead, who welcomed the increase in hours, to launch a public inquiry as soon as possible. There was a 'ferment in the media and broadcasting generally' (col. 484).

<sup>22</sup> For BBC reactions, see *Ariel*, 4 Feb. 1972. The increase in BBC television programme hours between 1953-4 and 1973-4 was 316%. These included, of course, BBC-2 programme hours. In retrospect, it was noted that it had only been possible to make a small provision for extra hours when the restrictions were lifted in 1972 (*BBC Handbook*, 1975, p. 13).

<sup>23</sup> *Ariel*, 1 June 1973.

<sup>24</sup> Cmnd. 5111 (1972), pp. 13-14. In Parliament the Conservative MP Wilfred Proudfoot described the previous restriction on hours as 'a stupid piece of nonsense designed to protect the BBC monopoly' (*Hansard*, vol. 829, col. 482, 19 Jan. 1972).

<sup>25</sup> *Ariel*, 9 Feb. 1973.

Scale was emphasized as strongly as quality when as much attention was paid to the total size of the world audiences for a sporting event as to the size of the BBC's share of the domestic audience with ITV. In May 1973, for example, it was estimated that 400 million people would see the BBC's coverage of the Cup Final between Leeds and Sunderland. No fewer than twenty overseas television organizations were showing the game live.<sup>26</sup> And the side features of the event were now being exploited as energetically as they were at general election times.<sup>27</sup> For example, BBC cameras were placed aboard a British Rail train bringing the Sunderland supporters south on the morning of the game, and the match was set within the frame of a six-hour sports programme which also included a gymnastic display by a Russian team and 'cup final athletics', with David Bedford and Ian Stewart competing in a 3,000-metres event. Nearly 200 production and engineering staff were deployed.<sup>28</sup> There were increasing worries, however, in 1973 about the rising costs of sport, particularly international sport. Curran himself complained later in the year that competition between American television companies was forcing up the costs of televising the Olympic Games to such a point that other countries could be priced out of the market.<sup>29</sup>

It was not sports coverage, however, but foreign, mainly American, entertainment films and repeats which had increased most as a proportion of total output across the whole period from the mid-1950s to the early 1970s. There had also been a striking increase in the number of British films after the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association had changed its policy in 1964 and three years later had passed a resolution stating that English-language films more than five years old and foreign-language films more than three years old could be sold to television.<sup>30</sup> In 1968 the BBC had bought 137 films from British Lion for £1,750,000, with rights to show each at least three times,<sup>31</sup> and in 1972 Paul Hughes, Director of Finance, reported

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 May 1973.

<sup>27</sup> A 'new look' radio sport had been introduced in Jan. 1973 when Cliff Morgan, a former Welsh rugby international with 29 caps, was appointed to head a central sports unit combining Radio Outside Broadcasts and Radio Sports News (*Ariel*, 27 Jan. 1973). Sadly, when *Sports Report*, described as 'the world's longest running sports programme', celebrated its twenty-fifth birthday in Jan. 1973 with a programme designed to recreate the atmosphere of the first edition, it was discovered that there were no recordings or scripts left from the opening programme (*ibid.*, 12 Jan. 1973).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 May 1973.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 30 Nov. 1973.

<sup>30</sup> *CEA Annual Reports* for 1964, 1967, and 1974.

<sup>31</sup> See \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 18 March 1968.



to Curran that the Television Services' 'requirement' was for upwards of 200 first showings of feature films each year.<sup>32</sup>

As for repeats, Attenborough, then Director of Programmes, Television, explained that 'if there were no repeats on British television, the majority of programmes would not be seen by even the most assiduous viewer'.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the most successful programmes tended to get bigger audiences on their second showings, even if they were again placed on the same network and at the same approximate time. This was true, for example, of *Dad's Army*. Inevitably, as they switched networks, BBC-2 became less distinctive, although given that its potential audience was rather smaller than that for BBC-1, it would 'tend to produce rather more "serious" programmes'.<sup>34</sup>

When the General Advisory Council discussed repeats in 1972—after T. C. Worsley had advised them to work like a consumer council—one critic of BBC scheduling policy reverted to an old issue, the timing of similar programmes on both BBC and ITV television. Why was *Panorama* placed opposite *World in Action*? Curran replied simply that since the BBC had been the first to show its programmes at these times, he saw no reason why it should now be expected to change. Attenborough explained more fully, however, that 'with the federal structure of ITV it was not possible to plan the BBC networks with the deliberate object of attracting audiences to BBC programmes'. As far as *Panorama* was concerned, the BBC had settled on Monday evenings before ITV placed *World in Action* opposite it to secure a large counter-audience.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>32</sup> \*Hughes to Curran, 'Feature Film Stock Policy', 20 July 1972 (TV Co-Productions and Film Deals). With the run-up to BBC-2, Gordon Smith, then Purchasing Manager, Television Enterprises, had written with relation to feature films that 'everyone is expecting the dam to burst at any minute' (\*Smith, 'Aide-mémoire for D. Tel.', 26 April 1963 (T46/2707/2)). Smith retired in 1969, and was succeeded by Gunnar Rugheimer, under whom the five-year reservation period was reduced to three. In 1972 Hughes, who had taken up his post as Director of Finance in Sept. of the previous year, decided to commission an in-depth report on the BBC's holdings of feature films and their use. Hughes had been Assistant Chief Accountant from 1961 to 1969 and, following McKinsey, Chief Accountant from 1969. In 1974 Rugheimer, Head of Purchased Programmes, complained that new feature films were not being shown early enough on television (*Ariel*, 12 June 1974).

<sup>33</sup> \*Attenborough to Tom Morgan, Controller, Information Services, 'Brief for G. A. C. on Repeats', 12 July 1972 (T47/B 100-1). A fuller paper was prepared for the General Advisory Council by Colin Shaw. For a critique of the repeats policy and, in particular, of timing, see T. C. Worsley, 'Dear Lord Aldington', *Financial Times*, 21 June 1972. See also \*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 19 Oct. 1966, 19 July 1972.

<sup>34</sup> \*'Television Programme Planning', a paper for the General Advisory Council, 13 Dec. 1971, which dealt with timing as well as with scheduling and which stressed that BBC-1 was 'planned with an eye to competition from ITV'.

<sup>35</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 19 July 1972.

There was, in fact, careful planning ahead inside the BBC, with separate production and transmissions schedules and with Programme Offers Meetings taking place at Television Centre in the early autumn. Offers were dealt with separately by the Controllers of BBC-1 and BBC-2, each working within his own budget, and the talks involved all the various production departments.<sup>36</sup> Long before the meetings, ideas for programmes were initiated and thrashed out, and producers were drawn in. Some large-scale programmes had to be relatively low-budget, like *The Search for the Nile*, broadcast on BBC-2 in the autumn of 1971. Some were long-planned and prepared expensive 'block-busters', like *War and Peace*, the twenty-part dramatization of Tolstoy's novel which had involved the most expensive set ever, at £30,000, and which included 200 characters with speaking parts.<sup>37</sup>

Some BBC programmes secured exceptionally high ratings during the late 1960s and early 1970s, among them *The Val Doonican Show*, with an audience of 14 million in 1970, and *The Liver Birds*, with an audience of over 10 million in 1971. The latter, which was set in contemporary Liverpool and featured two working-class girls who shared a flat, encouraged comparison with *The Likely Lads*, set in the North-East. This series had been broadcast between 1965 and 1969, and returned triumphantly in 1973 (still with James Bolam and Rodney Bewes) with the new title *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?*

One of the most successful BBC programmes of all in terms of ratings, *The Generation Game*, first went on the air on 2 October 1971, the same month as the first episode of *The Onedin Line*. Introduced and hosted by Bruce Forsyth, it was based on a Dutch programme devised by a housewife, *One Out of Eight*, which Bill Cotton, then Head of Light Entertainment Group, Television, had seen on a trip to Holland in 1971, following the Montreux Light Entertainment Festival. Unlike many other light entertainment programmes, how-

<sup>36</sup> There is a brief description of the system, although no full account how and when it developed, in A. Milne, *DG: The Memoirs of a British Broadcaster* (1988), p. 61. In radio planning smaller sums of money were involved and, given four channels, the choice pattern was different. An interesting paper on the subject, based on thirty-five years of experience, was written by Clare Lawson Dick, who had joined the BBC in 1935 and was involved with Radio 4 planning between 1968 and 1975, first as Acting Controller (until 1970, while Mansell was heading the Policy Study Group) and later as Chief Assistant, Radio 4. In 1975 she was to become Controller, Radio 4, the BBC's first woman Controller.

<sup>37</sup> *Ariel*, 29 Sept. 1972. See also above, p. 717.

ever, it reveals less of the life of the times than of one aspect of human nature in any period.

Forsyth needed to be persuaded by Cotton and his agent to take the role, but once established in it, he made it very much his own show.<sup>38</sup> The family element in the programme was stressed, but so, too, for the first time in BBC history were the prizes distributed to the winners. Hitherto, only nominal prizes had been given. Now, while the prizes were still far smaller than they were—or had been—in the United States, they usually glittered more than the contestants.<sup>39</sup> Forsyth's patter followed a regular pattern—'Nice to see you, to see you nice', 'Good game, good game', 'Take a look at the old scoreboard'—but he always kept an eye on the audience as well as on the participants. He made much too of his partner, Anthea Redfern, a girl he had met at a Miss Longest Legs contest and who became his second wife. The first joint producers of *The Generation Game* were Colin Charman, who soon moved over to another popular programme, *The Dick Emery Show*, and Jim Moir, who was to produce many shows and was to guide the future fortunes of BBC light entertainment. A graduate of Nottingham University, Moir had joined the BBC Television's Light Entertainment Group in 1963.<sup>40</sup>

Many critics made as much fun of *The Generation Game* off the screen as fun was made of the family participants in it on the screen. There was no doubt, however, about its popularity. It was at one end of a very wide BBC spectrum of television programming, which included in 1971 at the opposite end the opera *Owen Wingrave*, specially written for television by Benjamin Britten and broadcast on 16 May.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Bruce Forsyth[Johnson] had made his first appearance on television in 1956. From 1958 to 1960 he was resident compère in ITV's *Sunday Night at the London Palladium*. He compèred the Royal Variety Show in 1971. When Cotton became Controller, BBC-1, in 1977 he was the first person in BBC history to reach such a position via light entertainment.

<sup>39</sup> In a letter to the *Radio Times* (14 May 1971) Colin Charman and Jim Moir, the prospective joint producers, told readers that they were 'looking for couples from a family, at least one generation apart', and would be prepared to take 'any permutation' of the family relationship. One member of the winning family team would have 'the opportunity to win as many prizes as he or she can remember'.

<sup>40</sup> From 1982 to 1987 Moir was to be Head of Variety, Light Entertainment Group, and then Head of the whole Group. Dick Emery had figured in Michael Bentine's *It's a Square World* (see above, p. 436). *The Dick Emery Show* was first broadcast in 1963.

<sup>41</sup> The commission dated back to 1966, but Britten's work on it did not start until the autumn of 1969.

Like many other programmes of the year, *Owen Wingrave*, too, dealt with the past, and with the pull of a family. Like Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*, it was based on a Henry James story, but this time a ghost story, albeit a ghost story with a difference.<sup>42</sup> Was it possible, Britten asked, for a nonconformist young man, representative of a new generation, to liberate himself from past and from family? With complex music, some of the most interesting that Britten produced, it won over many of the leading critics at the time.<sup>43</sup> Britten himself saw it as a challenge. He wanted to write an opera which would make use of the 'intimate subtleties' of television as a medium, including, of course, 'close-up shots which bring one closer to the singers than one can possibly be in the theatre'. He also wanted to use 'camera abstractions', to switch scenes quickly, and, above all, to compose for an audience watching quietly at home.<sup>44</sup>

Peter Black, who observed correctly that as popular entertainment opera would never go down as well as free beer, believed that *Owen Wingrave* could be absorbed as directly and as unquestioningly as an episode of *Softly, Softly*.<sup>45</sup> Yet not all televised plays could, for the spectrum was almost as wide as the whole BBC spectrum of programmes. The plays of 1971–2 that were singled out by the critics included Tennessee Williams's *Summer and Smoke*; *Cider with Rosie*, Laurie Lee's novel about Gloucestershire village life, adapted by Hugh Whitmore; and Jeremy Sandford's *Edna the Inebriate Woman*, the most talked-of BBC play of the year. Its title-role was played by Patricia Hayes, until then best known as a comedy supporting actress to comedians like Arthur Haynes and Tony Hancock. Now she won a best actress of the year award.

<sup>42</sup> *Radio Times*, 15 May 1971.

<sup>43</sup> One critic who approved, Desmond Shawe-Taylor (*Sunday Times*, 16 May 1971), observed that no one quite knew what 'opera for television' stood for. T. C. Worsley, who did not know, called it an 'all-round triumph' as a 'television experience', and congratulated the BBC (*Financial Times*, 19 May 1971). John Warrack in the *Sunday Telegraph* (16 May 1971) called it 'a work of high mastery'. Martin Cooper in the *Daily Telegraph* (17 May 1971) spoke of its 'powerful utterance'. If it had been concerned merely with a young man's revolt against his family's military traditions, it would be of 'hardly more than historical interest', but it was far more than this. Myfanwy Piper was the librettist, and the remarkable cast included Janet (later Dame Janet) Baker, Heather Harper, Benjamin Luxon, and John Shirley-Quirke.

<sup>44</sup> *Radio Times*, 15 May 1971.

<sup>45</sup> *Daily Mail*, 17 May 1971. Unfortunately (why?) there was no Audience Research panel report. See, however, *Ariel*, 4 April 1971, for a preview by Brian Large, the television director. The opera, which was broadcast simultaneously on both sides of the Atlantic and was screened within days on twelve European networks from Norway to Yugoslavia, was said by Large to be likely to secure 'the widest audience' that any opera could possibly secure on its première.

Many television critics approved of much of what they saw on the screens during the early 1970s and of the 'astonishing leap forward in technical quality and presentation' in the five years after the advent of colour,<sup>46</sup> although Sean Day-Lewis thought that on BBC radio the news had become more 'breathless', that comedy was 'almost extinct' (it was not), and that the 'old peaks of creative writing' were not being reached.<sup>47</sup> Even then, in his opinion, the analysis of current affairs (Radio 4), the scope of music programmes (Radio 3), and the pop service (Radio 1) had all improved. As for television, colour or black and white, Day-Lewis quoted Groucho Marx: 'Television is called medium because it is not good, not bad, just medium.'<sup>48</sup>

Milton Shulman was less impressed, even after reading American comment in *Newsweek* at the time of the Jubilee stating that British television was 'the best in the world'. While strongly preferring BBC to ITV, he concluded that if the purpose of a television service was to recognize that 'there are moral and cultural goals towards which every society must, no matter how gropingly and how imprecisely, strive', BBC television, 'the least worst television in the world', was 'on the sidelines in that struggle... rarely at the heart of the mêlée'.<sup>49</sup> From the Left the film-maker Lindsay Anderson complained also. He refused to attend a 1973 BBC Arts Symposium organized by Norman Swallow, then Head of Arts Programmes, Television, on the grounds that BBC policy was 'so inevitably geared' to 'a conception of class and culture' that he found 'pernicious', that he believed that the effect of anything he could possibly say would be 'minimal'.<sup>50</sup>

From the Right, Marsland Gander, writing like Day-Lewis in the *Daily Telegraph*, where he had begun commenting on broadcasting as

<sup>46</sup> Shaun Sutton, who had succeeded Sydney Newman as Head of the Drama Group, BBC Television, noted this in *The Times Supplement*, 2 Nov. 1972. He said that his first dates with television as a viewer were Francis Durbridge's thriller *The Broken Horseshoe* in 1952 and the first *Quatermass* in 1953. His article was illustrated by photographs of Tony Hancock and of Nyree Dawn Porter, Irene, in *The Forsyte Saga*.

<sup>47</sup> An interesting paper, *The Task of Broadcasting News*, was prepared for the General Advisory Council in May 1976. By then there had been increasing criticism of BBC and ITN news policy from the Left. See the Glasgow University Media Group, *Bad News* (1976), which analysed samples of news, mainly economic news, broadcast in 1974.

<sup>48</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 14 Nov. 1972.

<sup>49</sup> M. Shulman, *The Ravenous Eye* (1973), p. 302, and *idem*, *The Least Worst Television in the World* (1973).

<sup>50</sup> \*Anderson to Swallow, 11 July 1973 (Kensington House file B577-4). The co-ordinator of the symposium at the Selsdon Park Hotel was Alan Sleath, and invitations went out from Swallow and Singer. There were sessions on the visual arts, the written word, and the performing arts. Hearst and John Drummond were among the speakers.

early as 1926, was even more out of sympathy with much of the current BBC output of the early 1970s, if doubtless in tune with many *Daily Telegraph* readers. 'While classics such as *Civilisation*, *The Forsyte Saga* and the Tudor plays are rightly acclaimed by the world,' he wrote in November 1972, 'while the output of educational and informative material is admirable, there is also much that is ugly and objectionable. Television inquisitors and producers rule the roost; the screen is a nightly torment of contention and violence, nudity, bed-hopping and coarse language.'<sup>51</sup>

In the *Sunday Telegraph* Philip Purser, representing a different generation, was less critical, but he also had his own leading questions to ask. 'In a way', the BBC, he observed, was 'a model of our country as a whole'. Perhaps it was for this reason that it had 'a soft touch for the glib, the modish or the astutely publicised'. Purser went on to make one point relevant to any critique. The BBC, he rightly pointed out, was 'no longer a monastic order apart'. This point, totally ignored by Haley in his article in *The Times* supplement and bypassed by Marsland Gander, was made in many other places.<sup>52</sup> Programme makers as well as performers were now interchangeable between BBC and ITV. As an example Purser cited the fact that at a party given for Gerald Savory to mark his retirement as Head of Plays, Drama Group, everyone present had at one time been in ITV, and some producers had 'crossed to and fro' more than once.<sup>53</sup>

At the receiving end Shulman was right to note that 'for most people the act of watching the box' had now 'become a habit rather than a conscious discriminatory act'.<sup>54</sup> The amount of viewing at the end of the period covered in this volume averaged 17 hours 40 minutes each week, and the habit of viewing was beginning early. 12- to 14-year-olds were viewing twenty-four hours a week. There was a dip in the late teens followed by a slow rise with increasing

<sup>51</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 1 Nov. 1972.

<sup>52</sup> 'Crossfertilization' was the title of an article on the subject in the *Television Mail*, 9 Feb. 1973, which described the BBC's purchase of Film-Fair's children's series of five-minute programmes, *The Wombles*. Mike Batt, who wrote the music, had worked in music for advertising, and Liz Channon, who produced the tracks, specialized in it. The narrator was Bernard Cribbins.

<sup>53</sup> *Sunday Telegraph*, 29 Oct. 1972. Purser paid a tribute to Greene's role in introducing a 'new order' in which there were many separate forces at work. 'Since those days,' he added, 'much has changed again. Though her reputation as a home-breaker lingers on, Aunt Jane is no longer the dazzler she was.' This highly readable article, acute in its judgements, made more of the contrasts than of the continuities in the BBC's history.

<sup>54</sup> Shulman, *The Ravenous Eye*, p. 299.



age.<sup>55</sup> As always, there was argument both about the figures and how to interpret them. 'Whether today's children are more or less "hooked on" television than were their predecessors ten or twenty years ago cannot be decided with certainty', a BBC annual review, which covered the previous year, stated in March 1975. 'Such evidence as there is seems to suggest that little change has taken place.'<sup>56</sup>

The differences in viewing habits between different economic and social groups were greater than those between age-groups, with the top 6 per cent of the population in terms of income viewing for only fourteen hours a week and the bottom 70 per cent viewing for more than twenty hours. ITV was then attracting most viewing—48 per cent—with BBC-1 attracting 44 per cent, and BBC-2 8 per cent. In 1973–4 BBC-1's share had fallen to 43 per cent, and ITV's had risen to 49 per cent. Yet, as the researchers noted, on 'the comparatively few occasions' when BBC-2 carried 'popular alternatives', its audiences could be as substantial as any of those for the other two channels. When, for example, it showed a western film on Monday evenings, it was seen by more people than were watching either of the alternatives.

## 10. Back to the Family

Interest in 'ordinary viewers'—and what in a 'television age' motivated them as people as well as viewers—was not confined to researchers or statisticians.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, persistent efforts were now being made to increase the number of 'access programmes' which followed in the wake of *Late Night Line-Up* and which ushered in a new range of community action programmes. Several of the Governors were sceptical, and one of them, Lady Avonside, the National Governor

<sup>55</sup> See also A. Clayre, *The Impact of Broadcasting* (1973), p. 14. 'I don't watch much telly,' a 15-year-old Leicestershire girl wrote, 'cause I'm hardly ever in the house.' He also quotes a 14-year-old Oxfordshire boy who had few friends and in his own words was 'practically a telly addict'.

<sup>56</sup> *Annual Review of BBC Audience Research, 1974–5*, p. 6.

<sup>1</sup> See Clayre, *op. cit.*, pp. 19 ff., for the child psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner's conclusion that television reduced 'interaction between adults and children'. American reports by the Roper Organization, first published in *Changing Public Attitudes to Television and Other Mass Media, 1959–76* (1977), are useful for comparison. The British survey *Social Trends* in 1976 included television statistics under 'leisure activities', and had a table on 'leisure activities by social class' (p. 107).

for Scotland, bluntly asked why the BBC wanted to show such programmes at all,<sup>2</sup> but Attenborough strongly supported them in his last year in the BBC, and on 2 April 1973 the first of a new series of 'experimental' *Open Door* programmes was broadcast under the auspices of a new Community Programmes Unit, headed by Rowan Ayers.

The first programme was planned and presented by the St Mungo Community Trust, which cared for homeless men and which brought some of them to the screen. Other programmes presented in 1973 and 1974 included 'Black Teachers'; 'Trees for People'; 'Birmingham Poets', which was highly critical of the way poetry was presented on the BBC; 'Cleaners' Action', in which a group of night cleaners put their case for better pay and conditions; and 'Gingerbread', a self-help association of one-parent families, whose members talked about their organization, their problems, and their hopes for the future. The second programme, too, had been a programme about the family, 'The Responsible Society', in which various people discussed the pressures on family life in a 'permissive society'.

A BBC programme produced under quite different auspices is interesting both in this context and in retrospect. *The Family*, a series that dealt with the way people 'actually lived' a hundred years after Trollope's *The Way We Live Now*, introduced on the screen a 'real life' family, the Wilkinsons of Reading, whose home was situated above a greengrocer's shop. They appeared for the first time on 3 April 1974. So much had been said and written since the 1950s about the impact of television on the family—and there had been so many programmes and serials centring on family sagas—that the prospect of bringing a 'real family' into public view seemed a proper climax. The idea behind *The Family*, put forward in 1973 by a BBC producer, Paul Watson, was not the BBC's however, for Watson knew of the American Public Broadcasting System's programme *An American Family*, which had been broadcast amid great controversy by WNET in New York.<sup>3</sup> Access programmes, too, were American in origin.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 30 Nov. 1972. See also *ibid.*, 16 Nov. 1972.

<sup>3</sup> \*Telex dated 18 Oct. 1973 from Watson to David Wheeler in the BBC's New York Office (TV Central: Documentaries: The Family: General). See also D. Sloan *et al.*, *The Media in America: A History* (2nd edn., 1993), p. 443. Watson had won the British Academy of Film and Television Arts Award for Documentary in 1969 with his *A Year in the Life*.

<sup>4</sup> Gillard wrote an article on public access television in *The Listener*, 6 July 1972. He referred, in particular, to *Catch 44*, broadcast on the Boston PBS station WGBH.

It was apposite, although not deliberate, that Reading (and Slough) should be chosen for the location of the real-life family, for the BBC's Monitoring Service operated from Caversham only a few miles away. The members of the family were in effect to be monitored in their home for three months. Yet far more than monitoring was to be involved. The impact of television on the Wilkins family proved as complex and controversial as the impact of television on society as a whole. The camera was not neutral. Its presence in the small, overcrowded Wilkins household entailed not simply observation, but interaction, and the carefully chosen cameraman, Philip Bonham-Carter, inevitably became almost a part of the family.<sup>5</sup>

The producer's selection—after careful editing—of what to show of the life of the family, particularly in the first of the twelve documentary programmes, generated as much family dissatisfaction as the selection of extracts had generated politicians' dissatisfaction in *Yesterday's Men*. The members of the family knew that not all the film that had been shot would be used; but they felt that what had been used had been contrived to achieve dramatic effect. Unlike politicians, however, they did not know what they looked like on a screen until they saw themselves in *The Family*. They even thought of trying to call the series off.

Not surprisingly, the way of life and the language of the family incurred the disapproval of a substantial section of British opinion, including Mrs Whitehouse, but some of the characters as they emerged as figures in a serial, particularly Mrs Wilkins, won acclaim from other viewers for 'common sense' and 'honesty'.<sup>6</sup> The Press itself was divided as the family was 'catapulted' from obscurity into publicity, with the Reading Press complaining that the Wilkinsons had given the town of Reading 'a dirty name'.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The *Sunday Telegraph*, 19 May 1974, which called the series 'Whopping Fiction', appreciated this fully. 'Simply to be aware that someone is observing you changes the circumstances of waking and living and getting on with others.' For the cameraman's view, see *Ariel*, 12 June 1974. The producer was a part of the interaction also. After the series ended, he told the *Sunday Mirror* (23 June 1974) that he had been 'living, breathing and dreaming with the Wilkins family. I would love to take a holiday just sitting in the middle of a field. But I think it's going to take around seven weeks to help the Wilkins re-enter the world they knew before I arrived on the scene.'

<sup>6</sup> The journalist Sue Freeman produced an excellent ghosted autobiography of Mrs Wilkins called *A Family Affair* (1975). She had been sent to Reading by the *Evening News* in London to write a weekly column for the newspaper. The story, as Sue Freeman told it, introduced 'swinging London' into the background and Elvis Presley (p. 77) along with *Family Favourites* (p. 79).

<sup>7</sup> *Reading Mercury*, 4 April 1974. Nancy Banks-Smith in the *Guardian* (30 May 1974) compared the Reading reaction to that in Clapham after she had praised *Up the Junction*

There was a touch of irony, too, which went with so much television. When during the twelve programmes, shown on what for Mrs Whitehouse had long been 'infamous' nights, the marriage of the Wilkins's younger daughter took place, the local Registry Office was unwilling to have it televised, on the grounds that it was 'sacrilegious', while the local vicar approved.<sup>8</sup>

Watson had been looking for a family that would consist of a 'working father; working in industry and subject to collective bargaining for his pay . . . possibly involved in union activities and aged in his late forties', and a 'wife involved with her children, possibly working part-time, involved with friends, neighbours or activities in the community'. There would ideally be four children, aged 17, 15, 13, and 10. They would constitute a 'happy, outspoken family, living in a well integrated street, cul de sac'. Advertisements were placed in the local Press, asking for suitably qualified families to apply.<sup>9</sup>

The Wilkins family seemed to fit the bill. It consisted of Terry, husband, aged 39, a bus driver; Margaret, his wife, also aged 39 (they had been married for twenty years); and four children: Marion, a girl, aged 19 (whose fiancé, Tom, lived with the Wilkins—they were to be the bridal pair); Gary, a boy aged 18, already married with a baby son; Heather, a girl aged 15, and Christopher, a boy aged 9. There were inevitable surprises, however. During the course of the series it was revealed to viewers that Terry was not Christopher's father,<sup>10</sup> while Mrs Wilkins herself revealed in the Press that she had replied to the local advertisement on her own, without consulting the rest of family.<sup>11</sup>

If some of the eight million viewers of *The Family* were shocked by and others were sympathetic to what they saw and heard—and they also saw two other 'members of the family', a dog and a cat—many viewers were 'bored', a term used by several of the panel members questioned by BBC Audience Research.<sup>12</sup> After the 24 April edition,

in 1965, and later in the *Guardian*, 25 July 1988, called Mrs Wilkins 'a mother goddess with muscles'.

<sup>8</sup> M. Wilkins, op. cit., p. 151.

<sup>9</sup> "BBC Families Project", undated note (TV Central: Documentaries: The Family: General File).

<sup>10</sup> The story, as she saw it, was told in Mrs Wilkins's autobiography, op. cit., which stated that when the filming started, she knew that the family would have to talk about 'past infidelities' (p. 142).

<sup>11</sup> *Observer*, 16 June 1974. Twenty-seven sets of correspondence from other families survive in the BBC's files.

<sup>12</sup> So, too, were some critics. 'Probably the most interesting thing about Tom', Stanley Reynolds wrote in *The Times*, 11 April 1974, 'is the way he keeps saying "no". Is he

the fourth episode in the series, the reaction index was as low as 41.<sup>13</sup> 'The plain truth', the *Daily Telegraph* wrote after the ninth episode, 'is that most families spend much of their time doing and talking about things which have no interest at all to any outsider.'<sup>14</sup>

However much the life of the Wilkins family diverged from the life of an ideal family as supporters of family values conceived of it, there was little doubt that it was a genuine late twentieth-century family, rooted in its time and place; and when the series was repeated on television in 1983, it was described by one critic of a new generation, Christopher Tookey, in the *Sunday Telegraph*, as 'the ultimate celluloid monument to 70s pessimism, permissiveness and apathy'.<sup>15</sup> For the *Daily Mirror* of 1983 there had never been a soap opera 'to match the true-life, kitchen-sink drama of the Wilkins family'.<sup>16</sup> By then the kitchen-sink drama had gone through new unpublicized episodes. The Wilkins family—or families, as they had become—had all split up, and Mrs Wilkins was the only member still living at no. 71. She had remarried, as had Terry. Yet, she insisted that what had happened had had 'nothing to do with the television thing at all'.<sup>17</sup> She added to one reporter that 'it needn't be doom and gloom if you let TV cameras into your life'.<sup>18</sup>

## 11. Broadcasting Personalities

Cameras entered 'real life' in a different guise in *That's Life*, a popular programme hosted by a new television personality, Esther Rantzen, first broadcast on 26 May 1973. She had worked as a researcher/presenter with Bernard Braden on his consumer advice programme *Braden's Week*,<sup>1</sup> and when Braden parted company with the BBC in 1972, she acquired a programme of her own which quickly attracted

keeping his patience because the camera crew are there? Is he sly or stupid, strong or shiftless . . . I don't give a damn.' The review was called 'A game of patience for viewers too'.

<sup>13</sup> \*VR/74/269, 17 June 1974.

<sup>14</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 4 June 1974.

<sup>15</sup> *Sunday Telegraph*, 17 July 1983. 'Next to any of the characters,' he added, 'the most downtrodden character in *East Enders* looks like a yuppie.'

<sup>16</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 14 July 1983.

<sup>17</sup> *Radio Times*, 17–23 Sept. 1983.

<sup>18</sup> *Daily Mirror*, 14 July 1983.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 877. Rantzen acknowledged her debt to Braden (*Radio Times*, 24 May 1973). One of the spots in early programmes was called 'Heap of the Week'.

the attention not only of BBC Audience Research but of the Governors.<sup>2</sup> The first audiences were not huge and the critics were not all enthusiastic, but the programme, which from 1974 onwards she produced as well as presented, was to build up a large audience, and some of the critics were to be won over.<sup>3</sup> Interest in Rantzen herself and her own life was to grow in the Press and elsewhere—for reasons which had little to do with the programme itself—or its changing team—but which, through Desmond Wilcox, her 'boss' in BBC Television General Features, whom she was to marry in 1977, had much to do with the history of the BBC. The revelation of Rantzen's affair with Desmond Wilcox, Head of the General Features Unit, which was located in Kensington House, near Shepherd's Bush Green, caused Alasdair Milne, then Director of Programmes, Television, to move editorial control of the programme from General Features to Current Affairs. Later it moved back again.<sup>4</sup>

Wilcox, once a reporter on the staff of the *Daily Mirror* from which he had joined ITV's *This Week* in 1960, set out to exercise programme leadership 'from a programme making position'.<sup>5</sup> He had been recruited to the BBC in 1965 to edit *Man Alive*, a weekly series of factual programmes with 'human interest', and in 1972 he was given overall control not only of *Man Alive* programmes, in which he continued as link man, but of quizzes, travel and holiday programmes, and consumer programmes, including *That's Life*. Five executive producers worked to Wilcox as editors. They were chosen not solely to discharge 'administrative or progress-chasing functions' but as creative directors. However much Wheldon talked about programmes, it was at this level of BBC activity that programmes were actually brought into being.

<sup>2</sup> 'Board of Governors, *Papers*, 'Summary of Public Reaction to the BBC June 1973', 29 June 1973.

<sup>3</sup> Leonard Buckley in *The Times*, 16 July 1973, believed that the programme was unsure about whether to play the comic or the ombudsman. Nor did the technique hold him. Cf. Richard Last in the *Daily Telegraph*, 14 Feb. 1977, 'As It Really Happens'.

<sup>4</sup> For one account of the significance of the story in the history of the BBC, see M. Leapman, *The Last Days of the Beeb* (1986), pp. 99–104. *The New Statesman*, 4 Feb. 1972, wrote of 'fending fiefs', 'competing duchies', and 'warring baronies'. There were interesting broadcasting links in the story of *That's Life*: e.g., Peter Chafer, the programme's first editor, had worked previously in religious broadcasting. Institutional issues were undoubtedly raised when Curran did not allow Rantzen to use concealed cameras for a planned item in her programme, an instruction from above which had to be passed on to her by Wilcox ('Wilcox to Rantzen, 'Application for Concealed Recording Equipment', 28 Jan. 1975 (Gen. Features file: *That's Life*, 1974–78)). Wilcox said he would try to reverse the decision, which would be the 'death of investigative journalism'.

<sup>5</sup> *Ariel*, 14 April 1972.



There was nothing unique about the publicity generated by Rantzen and Wilcox, for while during the early 1970s programmes, BBC or ITV, were what always interested the Press and the public most, there was seldom any shortage of interest also in broadcasting personalities, managers as well as performers. For the performers, publicity was indispensable. For the managers, however, it could be irksome, and there were certainly sufficiently big changes in BBC management during the early 1970s to figure 'in the news'. Not everyone in BBC management had begun to think of himself (or herself) as a manager despite McKinsey and Company;<sup>6</sup> yet there was a growing divergence between the language of management, becoming more standardized and stilted, and the language of publicity, with its own vocabulary, syntax, and style. Neither was attractive.

One of the biggest managerial changes of the early 1970s was the return to London from Scotland of Milne, who became Director of Programmes on 1 January 1973. Not yet 43 and ambitious and determined, he had doubts about the scope of his new job, given the presence in Television Centre not only of Wheldon, who had invited him to return to London, but of Fox, Controller, BBC-1, and Scott, Controller, BBC-2. Not surprisingly, therefore, he did not greatly enjoy himself during his first year.<sup>7</sup> In returning to Television Centre, a very different place from the Television Centre that he had left, he was moving into a world of change, not of consolidation. It was a world where new relationships were being forged and where he himself would be quickly pitched into high-level broadcasting politics.

The first change after Milne's return came quickly, when Fox, who had not wished to take up the post of Director of Programmes at Television Centre, left the BBC in July 1973—like so many others crossing old divides—to become Director of Programmes for Yorkshire Television. Ironically, he succeeded Donald Baverstock, Milne's old friend, who had held the post since 1967. The new Controller, BBC-1, was Cowgill, who, like Fox, had risen in the BBC via sport; and in May 1974, when Scott became Controller, Developments, Television, BBC-2 also acquired a new Controller, Singer, who had been Head of Features Group.

Personality differences—and loyalties—certainly counted prominently now. So, too, did structures. Cowgill and Singer, ex-grammar

<sup>6</sup> The language of management was no more popular in Kensington House than it had been in Radio Features during the 1960s. See above, p. 348. Curran referred to the Unit and its place in the structural scheme in *Granada Guildhall Lectures, 1977 'Television Today and Tomorrow'*, p. 28.

<sup>7</sup> See Milne, *op. cit.*, ch. 5.

school boys, were both born in the same year, 1927, and were three years older than Milne, who was educated at Winchester and New College. Both of them were to have a later career outside the BBC. None of the three, however, were members of the BBC's Board of Management. In that Board, which was described critically in the *New Statesman* in 1972 as 'a curious kind of quartermaster's body, heavily weighted in favour of the Corporation's technical arms (engineering, finance, administration)',<sup>8</sup> the key figures in December 1974 were still Wheldon, Trethowan, and Mansell.<sup>9</sup>

There had been a tacit understanding between Wheldon and Curran at the 'very top' when Curran was appointed Director-General in 1969 that BBC Television would be left largely to Wheldon, who had been a candidate for the post and had been interviewed at length by the Governors. It was Kenneth Adam, Wheldon's predecessor who had first brought this out when he introduced Curran as the new Director-General to fifty senior people at Television Centre, many of whom were meeting him for the first time. Curran admitted then, as he had done to the Governors, that his 'ignorance of television' was a handicap to him as Director-General. He was to work closely with Wheldon, but he was to explain later just how difficult it was 'to exercise any kind of control [over specific programmes] because you are dependent on the skill and the integrity of the producer or director'.<sup>10</sup>

Wheldon, who was closer at hand to those involved in the production process and who had the immense advantage of having been a producer himself, laid all his emphasis in his many speeches, formal and informal, on programmes, well earning on account both of his experience and of his eloquence the title of 'the BBC's Horatio'.<sup>11</sup> When once asked whether Reith's vision of broadcasting had been lost, he replied at length, using throughout the pronoun 'I' not 'we':

<sup>8</sup> *New Statesman*, 4 Feb. 1972. It added that it was 'well removed from the concerns of the front-line troops, the programme makers'.

<sup>9</sup> Curran set out his views on the Board of Management, which were to be challenged by the Annan Committee, in 'Television Today and Tomorrow'. It was, in his view, 'an assembly of the Managing Directors and Directors of the BBC which can give advice to the Director-General which, *theoretically* [but not in practice], he may take or reject' (p. 32). Annan's own view is set out in a later lecture, printed in *ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>10</sup> *Talkback*, 26 April 1972. Anthony Smith, who quoted this passage in an interesting article 'The Embattled DG' in the *New Statesman*, 26 May 1972, queried the use of the term 'control'. 'Mr. Curran's crisis is a double one, with creativity and with authority, and it would be catastrophic to deal militantly with the latter by sacrificing the former.' See also Curran's replies in *It's Your Line*, chaired by Robin Day, 7 Nov. 1972.

<sup>11</sup> *New Statesman*, 10 Dec. 1971.

I live at a different time. I live in divided days, where there are many discordant voices in the country, when one of the jobs of the BBC is to allow these voices to speak their part, in order that between us we can grope our way, which is a painful way, to new forms of belief and behaviour, and that, in a way, is a kind of vision of broadcasting. Our job is to make good programmes, which themselves speak for different voices.<sup>12</sup>

Few people could have used the pronoun 'I' so unselfconsciously. Believing that he was living in a world that was 'dedicated to the second-rate', Wheldon also believed that BBC television set programming standards for all countries in all continents. He regarded it as his mission to proclaim it.

Wheldon's stories about particular programmes were countless, and he told them at home and abroad, not least in the United States, where he became almost as well known as he was in Britain. And on both sides of the Atlantic the phrases that he used, like 'modalities and habits of mind', 'marvellous tension between form and content', 'specific British traditions', and 'in the final analysis, truth', could be heard in the corridors as well as read on the printed page.<sup>13</sup> None the less, this was not mere talk. Wheldon never hesitated to use the power that in his view went with leadership. He liked to talk about power as well as about television.

In practice, Wheldon, like Curran, whose speeches read very differently, had to depend on lieutenants who faced many of the strains of daily management. Moreover, it was they who through their own relationships had to reconcile two tasks, neither of them easy: handling 'creative people' with sensitivity and ensuring that resources were efficiently used. One of Wheldon's most active lieutenants was Singer, in Wheldon's phrase, 'a man of parts', who 'liked to kick things into being'.<sup>14</sup> There was reciprocity in such phrase making. It was Singer in return who described Wheldon revealingly as 'the

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in P. Ferris, *Sir Hugu: A Life of Huw Wheldon* (1990), p. 241.

<sup>13</sup> Wheldon, 'The British Experience in Television', *Richard Dimbleby Lecture*, Feb. 1976. In that second-rate world 'form', he argued, had yielded to 'format', and 'content' had dwindled into 'calculations about contentment'. This Lecture gives an excellent account not only of Wheldon's philosophy, but of the differences between British and American traditions in television. It is cogent and to the point.

<sup>14</sup> \*Wheldon interviewed by Gillard for the Oral History Project, 26 April 1979. Singer was responsible for a wide range of programmes, some of them co-productions, ventures which he stoutly defended (*Ariel*, 15 Sept. 1972). For Singer co-productions helped to contain costs and to 'broaden our horizons' and 'those of our audiences'. They did much 'to make our prestige high in other countries'. Wheldon, however, was unhappy about increasing dependence on them; he thought them 'a potentially dangerous area' (Ferris, *op. cit.*, p. 242) and tried to insist that the agreements made were purely economic. 'We make them, you help pay for them, we share the glory.'

greatest of men, I suppose in the way that Lloyd George was'.<sup>15</sup> Milne, brought up in the days of Grace Wyndham Goldie, now joined the Wheldon circle. Cowgill, aggressive by temperament, had a very different television pedigree, and he figures neither in Ferris's biography of Wheldon nor in Trethowan's autobiography. Yet Milne in his autobiography gives two examples of Cowgill consulting him about particular programmes.<sup>16</sup> It was a level outside Curran's ken.

Curran had other advantages, of course, other than his title. He knew more than Wheldon about external broadcasting, completely outside Wheldon's own ken, and more too about news and current affairs, which, like Greene before him, he treated as his own preserve. In his regime, as in Greene's, news and current affairs could still provide a tempting route to the top, as another young rising BBC administrator, Brian Wenham, fully realized.<sup>17</sup> He was 34 years old when he became Head of the Current Affairs Group, Television, in November 1971, and he already had the confidence of both Curran and Trethowan.<sup>18</sup> Sadly, one man with a future, Whitby, close to Curran but independent in purpose, was to disappear from the scene in February 1975, when he died of cancer at the early age of 45.<sup>19</sup>

All in all, the tacit understanding between Curran and Wheldon, who did not seek to compete with each other, was sensible, as well as understandable, and, meanwhile, Mansell was able to pursue his own policies in Bush House, reversing some of the managerial changes that Curran had made there and inaugurating what in retrospect was a 'sunny' period in the history of the external services,<sup>20</sup> when there was no real threat for two years to the External

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Ferris, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

<sup>16</sup> Milne, *op. cit.*, pp. 65, 67.

<sup>17</sup> Wenham had joined ITN in 1962, and had left it to become editor of *Panorama* in 1969. He was to become Controller, BBC-2, in 1978, and Director of Programmes, Television, from 1983 to 1986.

<sup>18</sup> For Trethowan's tribute to Wenham as a man who had the 'rare facility of being able to sense what is happening on the other side of the hill', see *Split Screen*, p. 87.

<sup>19</sup> His successor, Clare Lawson Dick (\*Reminiscences for the Oral History Project, 30 March 1979), learned of his inoperable illness in 1974, but he told no one, neither management nor herself. 'The Management of the day, who saw him frequently, were quite unaware that anything serious was amiss. When his death came, it was an immense shock to them.' For a tribute, see *BBC Handbook*, 1976, pp. 30-1.

<sup>20</sup> \*Mansell interviewed by Frank Gillard for the Oral History Project, 18 June 1981. He abolished the post of Director of Programmes created by Curran, and restored the World Service's own Talks and Currents Affairs Department. He took with him as Chief Assistant, a new post, Lance Thirkell, to whom some of the negotiations relating to the Government's Grant-in-Aid were delegated. From 1961 to 1964 Thirkell had been Head of Secretariat, and from 1964 to 1972 Controller, Staff Training and Appointments. Mansell also promoted Alexander Lieven (see above, p. 686) who became Controller of the European Services on 14 Oct. 1972.

Services budget and Bush House was reaping the benefits of the substantial modernization of transmitters and the building of new relay stations.

The BBC was a huge institution which employed nearly 25,000 people,<sup>21</sup> and no single person could 'command' it. By leaving Mansell responsible and secure, and by encouraging Wheldon not only to manage television but to act more broadly as a BBC spokesman, Curran handled the controversial question of BBC size as effectively as any Director-General could have done.<sup>22</sup>

When Wheldon, still not yet 60, retired in December 1975,<sup>23</sup> completely changing the BBC's internal balance, Curran wrote one of the farewell messages about him in *Ariel*; and when Curran himself retired in 1977, Wheldon was to write him a personal letter reminding him of their partnership. 'One can usefully say', he told him, 'that what you wrote [in *Ariel*] was no less kind and generous than your behaviour and attitude over the years. Your actions were like your words, and I am truly grateful.' The BBC, he went on, had had a Director-General who was 'very intelligent, very principled and very brave; and such a combination does not grow on trees. It is a pleasure to tell you to your face, so to speak, what I have often said behind your back.'<sup>24</sup>

No one was to write a farewell poem for Curran—or for Wheldon. The retiring Chairman, Hill, however, had inspired the poet-Governor Roy Fuller to write light-hearted but highly perceptive verses which were read at a farewell dinner given at Broadcasting House on 13 December 1972. Fuller looked forward to the year 1976 when

The crises of the times were such  
That Ted and Harold got in touch;  
And even Thorpe and Enoch Powell  
Sat sunken cheek by lantern jowl.

<sup>21</sup> For the size of the organization see Appendix B.

<sup>22</sup> 'Size' was the first item raised in Curran's *Talkback* programme. For Whitehead, one of the participants, this was the main problem: 'The BBC is too big and therefore unmanageable.' Curran boldly pointed out that the Army was a bigger institution—150,000 people. He added that the Department of Trade and Industry employed 80,000.

<sup>23</sup> Curran had confirmed to him in Dec. 1974 that this would be the retirement date, five months before his sixtieth birthday.

<sup>24</sup> Wheldon to Curran, 7 Jan. 1977 (Curran Papers). On Curran's death Newby wrote that the BBC 'had never had a Director-General with more intellectual force than Charles had. Had it not been for this force [and] for his integrity . . . the Corporation would be less strong than it is today, in spite of everything' (Newby to Lady Curran, 9 Jan. 1980 (Curran Papers)).

In unprecedented consensus two ministers concerned with broadcasting, Eden and Phillip Whitehead, decided that in future there was going to be one broadcasting authority, the Cash Culture Corporation. Who was to be Head?

At once Charles Curran had to go.  
Nor would it do, 'twas clearly seen,  
Even to bring back Carleton Greene.

Eventually it was decided to invite Hill himself. After all,

He in the past ('twas very odd)  
Had served first Mammon and then God.

Hill, tracked down to a 'pub in Harpenden', immediately refused, bringing the whole venture to a halt.

In consequence, the IBA  
Was left to go its curious way  
And the Beeb's charter was renewed;  
Alf Garnett continued to be rude.<sup>25</sup>

Hill loved the poem. He was deeply touched too by the letters that he received on his retirement. The ITA regime by then was very different too from that over which he had presided. Brian (later Sir Brian) Young, a former public school headmaster and himself an able composer of light verses, had succeeded Fraser as Director-General in 1970. Thereafter, in changing times he always emphasized the public service role of broadcasting, whether BBC or ITV. With Aylestone, the former Labour Chief Whip as his Chairman, it was inevitable that in future there would be as much talk of a broadcasting 'duopoly' in Britain as there would be of competition.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> The verses, which were privately printed in 100 numbered copies with the title *The CCC*, also included the lines:

'Go back into the world of telly?'  
[Hill told the ministers] . . .  
'Not on your nellie.'  
Compared with smoothing over, say  
The ruffled Men of Yesterday  
It was a life of perfect heaven  
Trying to smooth Aneurin Bevan.

<sup>26</sup> See Potter, *op. cit.*, pp. 84 ff., for a brief account of some of the changes, and for Young's considered views, 'Freedom and Control in Independent Broadcasting', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, Oct. 1980.



## 12. The Entry of Swann

The change of Chairmanship in the BBC was a huge change, which radically shifted the internal balance of power in Broadcasting House. The appointment of Sir Michael Swann, distinguished biologist and Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Edinburgh, as Hill's successor was a great surprise, not least to Swann himself. When Heath invited him to 10 Downing Street in the middle of November 1972, he thought that they would be discussing education. Instead, he was invited to become Chairman of the BBC. Swann was given no brief, but was told that further changes would be expected at the top—and Curran's name was mentioned in this connection.<sup>1</sup>

Heath found a link between Swann's old job and his new one, jobs which Swann held briefly in parallel until the summer of 1973. He had come to the conclusion, Heath explained, that the BBC as an institution was most like a university. (Feudal metaphors did not cross his mind.) It depended on 'a large number of creative people, mostly young, who had to be given their head and allowed to do their own thing: while at the same time there had to be a loose measure of overall control'.<sup>2</sup> Wilson would not have used the same analogy when he appointed Hill. Nor would Hill have ever chosen to employ it himself. Fulton might have, and, as Swann learned later, it had been used years before by a former BBC Chairman, Lord Simon of Wythenshawe, businessman and Labour peer, during the early 1950s.<sup>3</sup>

Swann, who was already an experienced broadcaster in 1973, saw its point soon after he arrived in Broadcasting House—'the tendency for much talk and discussion, and not very many clear-cut decisions'. He also appreciated that in both institutions 'professionals' were somewhat disdainful of 'amateurs'.<sup>4</sup> He himself had spent many

<sup>1</sup> \*Swann interviewed by Gillard for the Oral History Project, 23 March 1981.

<sup>2</sup> Swann, 'A Year at the BBC', paper read to the Royal Society of Arts, 9 Jan. 1974. I took the chair for this lecture. The paper is printed in *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, April 1974.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Simon, *The BBC from Within* (1953), p. 139. 'There are only three other fields of any importance [other than broadcasting] where men learn administering in the world of ideas; the first is the universities.' Simon was writing about the search for a new Head of Television, a field of broadcasting where Swann himself had acquired experience.

<sup>4</sup> The most was to be made of the difference between 'amateurs' and 'professionals' in remarks made by Tom Jackson after Curran's Granada Guildhall Lecture on the Annan Report in 1977 ('Television Today and Tomorrow', p. 35).

years in universities, ensuring that the decisions that mattered were made by academics and not by the lay members of the university court. Inside the BBC, therefore, 'the control of the creative people' could 'only be on a loose rein'. There is no evidence as to whether Swann had talked to his Edinburgh colleague, Professor Tom Burns, about the BBC, although Burns's book, *The BBC: Public Institution and Private World*, published in 1977, was strictly relevant.<sup>5</sup>

Not surprisingly, Swann did not always find it easy to translate his own precept into practice, either in Edinburgh or in the BBC. Yet it was the fact that he tried and so often succeeded that made him the most successful of the BBC's Chairmen in its history. There was another element too in his achievement. He was deeply interested in what the role of the BBC's Governors should be, and he always handled his relations with the Governors with great skill. They were, he insisted in 1974, 'the BBC's *only* guarantee of autonomy... If they were not seen to be influential', they would inevitably be only a poor safeguard 'when the chips are down'.<sup>6</sup> He himself was a strong and effective Chairman, but he never tried to dominate his Board—nor his Director-General—or to exercise authority over the Board of Management. He always used his intelligence rather than his formal status.

For this reason, it was Curran who was most affected by the new balance of power. Before he had been appointed Director-General, he had been asked by the Governors what would be the biggest difficulty that he would face, and had replied that it would be the fact that his Chairman, Hill, was a 'public figure' and that he was not.<sup>7</sup> He did not add that his predecessor, Greene, had become very much of a public figure also, as Hill and the Governors—and also McKinsey and Company—fully appreciated. Hill saw Curran often—as Curran's engagement diaries show—and he expected to be informed in detail about what was happening in Broadcasting House

<sup>5</sup> Some of Burns's evidence related, of course, to an earlier period (see above, p. 380). Burns himself refers to Swann's statement about professionals (op. cit., p. 124), but there is only one other reference to Swann, whom Burns judged as an academic administrator. 'In one of his earlier public statements [Swann] broke the news that "nobody loves the BBC"; what was remarkable was the implication that anybody (outside the BBC) could, or should, imaginably "love" the BBC—any more than they "love" Parliament, or the British Council, the Post Office or the Transport and General Workers' Union' (p. 33).

<sup>6</sup> Swann, who talked to me frequently about this set of relationships, subsequently side-tracked me from writing the history of the BBC to produce my separate monograph *Governing the BBC* (1979).

<sup>7</sup> 'Whatever I did that was right would be attributed to him, and whatever I did that was wrong would be attributed to me.'

and elsewhere in the BBC in a way that Greene had never informed Normanbrook. Swann did not expect the Hill pattern to be followed, and, more important still, he talked to Curran privately in a quite different way from Hill. In consequence, Curran 'took to him straight away'. Their personal relationship was based on trust.<sup>8</sup>

Just before Curran completed 25 years of service with the BBC in 1973, a personal jubilee, Swann wrote to him thanking and congratulating him 'most warmly' on behalf of the Board. He was speaking personally, he said, only of the last half-year when he had come to admire his 'vast grip on the Corporation' and his 'calm in the face of fire'. He added that he also wanted to say that he had approached 'our new, and potentially difficult relationship with a good deal of apprehension, on January 1st', and thanked him for making it so easy and 'I hope fruitful'.<sup>9</sup> This letter should be compared in tone and content with a farewell letter that had been sent to Hill by the then Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, Sir John Eden, in December 1972. 'You have shown yourself on many occasions to be the possessor of broad shoulders and blessed with a wise philosophical approach to the burdens—many of them unjustified—which have to be carried by men in public life.'<sup>10</sup>

There had been three occasions during Curran's tenure of office under Hill when, concerned about mutual trust, he had considered resigning from the BBC. The first was when Hill had asked him to prepare a paper in 1969 setting out details of 'the least harmful ways in which the BBC could accept advertising revenue' without telling him that he (Hill) would be strongly opposed to any possible way that Curran might identify. The second was in late 1969 and early 1970 when he wished to move Kenneth Lamb, then Director of Public Affairs, a post-McKinsey title,<sup>11</sup> to a quite different, untitled post, that of supervising Regional policy. Curran considered this an

<sup>8</sup> \*Curran, interviewed by Leonard Miall for the Oral History Project, Jan. 1978. Swann 'was a human being to work with and we could talk absolutely openly to each other'. There was, however, one reservation which Curran noted: the date of his own retirement, not relevant to this volume. Curran, who was 47 when he took up the post, had been appointed by mutual agreement not to the age of 60. 'Eight or nine years' had been talked about. Kenneth Lamb, then Secretary, who was himself interviewed for the Director-General's post, advised him not to accept it on these terms (\*Lamb, interviewed by John Cain for the Oral History Project, 6 Feb. 1986). Curran did not want to retire from the BBC in 1977, when he was succeeded by Trethowan. See *BBC Record*, 101 (Nov. 1976), for Curran's impending retirement and a statement that he made to the staff.

<sup>9</sup> Swann to Curran, 4 July 1973 (Curran Papers).

<sup>10</sup> Eden to Hill, 22 Dec. 1972 (Hill Papers).

<sup>11</sup> His responsibilities were similar to those which had been discharged by Oliver Whitley, who moved to Bush House. (See above, p. 727.)

'executive matter', but Lamb did not and appealed to the Governors. The third, and most important, was when there were proposals, not for the first time, in the summer of 1972 that a new post should be created, that of Deputy Director-General.<sup>12</sup>

On the first of these occasions Curran might have talked more fully to Hill to learn just what was in his mind. There was clearly a failure to communicate. On the second occasion, it was Curran's relationship with the Governors, rather than his relationship with Hill, which was at stake. Both he and Hill agreed on the need for a change in Lamb's responsibilities, but the Governors were divided, and Greene threatened to resign if Lamb was displaced.<sup>13</sup> This was a time when Hill, worried about Curran's 'indecision', doubted whether he was 'really in charge'.<sup>14</sup> Lamb, who was not moved from his post, talked of 'a rather messy set of discussions'.<sup>15</sup>

On the third occasion Curran faced opposition both from Hill and from the Governors. His active role as President of the European Broadcasting Union made them feel that he needed more backing in Broadcasting House. Curran was suspicious, however, that this was not the only reason, particularly since this was not the first time that Hill had raised the subject. Above all, Curran now feared that he might be presented with a Deputy Director-General not of his own choice—Trethowan or, indeed, Wheldon, who already acted as his deputy in his absence—and he even went so far as to tell Trethowan that he would resign if he took over the post, leading Trethowan to say that he would not stand. He also lobbied several members of the divided Board.

The Board, however, did not desist, and interviewed three candidates on 2 November 1972, during the very last months of the Hill regime.<sup>16</sup> Their cautious Minute recording their initial decision reads: 'The Board discussed possible candidates for a very senior management post. It was agreed to see two candidates on 2nd November 1972.'<sup>17</sup> After the Minute had been drafted, the two became three,

<sup>12</sup> \*Interview with Miall, Jan. 1978.

<sup>13</sup> Hill, Diary, 13 Nov. 1969.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 Dec. 1969.

<sup>15</sup> \*Lamb interviewed by Cain, 6 Feb. 1986.

<sup>16</sup> Curran's chief ally in this was Tom Jackson, who at the Board 'did not give him away'. The Governor who did was new—George Howard, appointed in Feb. 1972. He subsequently became Chairman of the Board in 1980. After careful thought, Curran did not oppose the appointment of a Deputy Director-General as such. Indeed, he suggested the name of Mansell.

<sup>17</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 19 Oct. 1972.

and there was a private session of the Board the day after the three interviews.<sup>18</sup> On this critical occasion Curran won. No appointment was made. Instead, Colin Shaw's title was changed from that of Secretary to Chief Secretary, and he now found himself dealing with some of the business that a Deputy Director-General would have handled.<sup>19</sup> In the background, doubtless, was the fact that Curran had himself served as Secretary.<sup>20</sup> So, of course, had Lamb.

There was no thought of Curran resigning under the Swann regime. Nor was his office moved to Television Centre as the Governors had wished before Swann arrived.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, by the end of 1974, when he recalled his beginnings as Director-General, Curran could feel that he had now successfully become a public figure in his own right. It was Swann who was to write his valedictory notice in *Ariel*. It was headed 'How history will see Charles Curran. His triumph: preserving the BBC intact'.<sup>22</sup>

One leading political figure who wrote to Swann congratulating him when he became Chairman—and telling him that he was delighted to get the news—was Harold Wilson. While the Chief Whip of each party was 'traditionally' the contact with the BBC on procedural matters, Wilson explained, he had always had close relations with 'your predecessor', and he now looked forward to meeting Swann, 'possibly with one or two of my colleagues'.<sup>23</sup> It was something of a landmark occasion, none the less, when at a lunch at the Athenaeum on 20 March 1973 Wilson told Swann that 'he had no serious causes for complaint in the last eighteen months and that he felt that the BBC had been making strenuous efforts to be fair'.<sup>24</sup>

At that meeting there was no intimation of the sharp changes that would take place in Britain and in the world later in 1973. Produc-

<sup>18</sup> \*Ibid., 2 Nov. 1972.

<sup>19</sup> \*Shaw interviewed by Gillard for the Oral History Project, 8 March 1989. 'You're bloody lucky,' Tom Jackson told him. Shaw recalls that changing the title did not make 'all that much difference . . . It looked as though it symbolised a change but I don't think it did.'

<sup>20</sup> Shaw acknowledged the Board's thanks for a copy of the 'unexpurgated copy of the text' of Hill's *Behind the Screen* (Shaw to Hill, 1 Nov. 1974 (Hill Papers)). There was only one condition. Access to it in his lifetime should only be on his express authority.

<sup>21</sup> \*Swann interviewed by Gillard, 23 March 1981.

<sup>22</sup> *Ariel*, 5 Oct. 1977.

<sup>23</sup> \*Wilson to Swann, 26 Jan. 1973 (Man. Reg. file N449, Pt. 2). He added that he was about to appoint 'a spokesman for general media questions' to replace Gregor Mackenzie, 'our point of contact on future policy'.

<sup>24</sup> \*Note by the Chairman on a meeting with Wilson and John Grant, Shadow Minister for Broadcasting, 21 March 1973 (N449, Pt. 2). In his interview for the Oral History Project, Swann said of Wilson that he never tried either to complain or to lean on him (\*Swann interviewed by Gillard, 23 March 1981).

tion was 7 per cent higher than in 1972, and most forms of consumption were soaring too, along with house prices and many other prices. Moreover, television was sharing in the boom. The number of colour television sets leapt from 20,000 in 1970 to over 4 million in 1974; the number of cars on the road rose from 11½ million to 13½ million. Yet one of the few items that did not rise in price was a BBC licence. It was cheaper in 1973 to pay for colour television for one day than to send one letter through the post.<sup>25</sup> This was not a topic raised by Swann when he met Wilson. Towards the end of 1974 it was to preoccupy him.

### 13. Crisis Year

By then, there had been major political changes also, even if at the time of the party conferences held in the autumn of 1973, none of the party leaders envisaged an early general election.<sup>1</sup> The earliest likely date seemed to be October 1974. Everything changed, however, as a result of a new international crisis that began in the Middle East, as the crisis in 1956 had begun. Nasser, at the centre of the 1956 crisis, had died in 1970, but neither before nor after his death was there any resolution of the Arab/Israeli conflict. And there was still a key economic factor in the equations which had nothing to do with relations between Arabs and Israelis. Large parts of the world had become increasingly dependent on Arab oil supplies.

As a direct consequence of the crisis there really was to be an election in October 1974, but it was not to be the next election, as observers had anticipated, but the next but one. And this itself was quite exceptional. The last time that there had been two elections in the same year was 1910. Members of Parliament elected in February 1974, in the unforeseen general election that came first, were to sit in the shortest Parliament in Britain since 1681.

<sup>25</sup> *BBC Handbook, 1975*, p. 9.

<sup>1</sup> There were signs of political disturbance in the middle of 1973, however. A BBC programme transmitted on 15 July, *The People Talking: A Question of Confidence*, according to Swann did the BBC 'harm' in political circles. Six MPs of different shades were subjected to noisy barracking by a studio audience which turned the discussion into 'a shouting match' ('Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 19 July 1973). Glyn Tegai Hughes said that the programme and others like it 'contributed to the erosion of civilised, rational debate'. Lady Plowden said that the programme 'had exemplified an all too common attitude of bias against the "establishment" '.



The crisis began by surprise on the holiest day in the Israeli calendar, Yom Kippur, 6 October 1973, when Egypt and Syria attacked Israel.<sup>2</sup> The United States backed Israel, and the Soviet Union the Arabs, and although the Israeli victory in battle was followed on 11 November by the first (frequently to be broken)



23. 'Hate doing this to you, but we'll need a film documentary for Jan. 22 showing all the dreary stages leading up to the EEC Treaty of Accession', David Langdon in *Punch*, 12 Jan. 1972.

cease-fire agreement between Israel and Egypt, the cease-fire brought no respite from crisis. Even before the war had ended, an Arab economic assault on an already unbalanced world economy had begun. Supplies of oil were cut, and prices escalated. At the end of 1974 they were four times as high as in mid-1973.<sup>3</sup>

Britain was looking inwards rather than outwards in 1973, despite the fact that it had joined the European Economic Community on 1

<sup>2</sup> Maurice Latey, then the BBC's Chief Commentator, External Affairs, was in Cairo, ablaze with rumours, when the attack started (see *Ariel*, 2 Nov. 1973). He concluded that the BBC seemed to be the only foreign radio station that the Egyptians cared about. It was 'the radio they love to hate'.

<sup>3</sup> See *Foreign Affairs*, Jan. 1975, and J. Tumlrir, 'Oil Payments and Oil Debt in the World Economy', *Lloyds Bank Review*, July 1974. A by-product of the new Arab wealth was that some of the increased revenues were channelled into Arab television and radio.

January 1973, and it did not help that in face of the oil crisis there was no common European response.<sup>4</sup> The rate of inflation was already a matter of concern before the war had begun, and the balance of payments position now looked alarming.<sup>5</sup> The situation was further aggravated, however, when on 12 November 1973, the day after the cease-fire, the National Union of Miners, then the most powerful trade union in Britain, and even more powerful than before in the light of the oil crisis, imposed (without a ballot) an overtime ban on the production of coal. And this was merely the prelude to a new and intense domestic crisis, for on 5 February 1974 the Union decided on an all-out strike to begin the next weekend. International and domestic events converged.

When the NUM had struck previously—for six weeks in 1972, the first time officially since 1926—it had won a striking victory, and in a pay settlement that was worked out by Lord Wilberforce, miners had been given a substantial increase in wages at a time when the Heath Government had been seeking not only to curb trade-union power by legislation but to impose a statutory prices and incomes policy. Now, only two years later, the Union was in a powerful position once more to mount a determined assault on the Government. It was attacking both its industrial relations policy and its prices and incomes policy, the latter now about to enter its third phase.<sup>6</sup> Sure of the support that it would receive, the NUM now carried out a ballot, and no fewer than 81 per cent of the miners voted for a strike.

<sup>4</sup> In the words of the *Annual Register*, 1973, p. 9, it 'was seeking a new destiny no longer as an island power but as part of the Common Market'. As the *Annual Register* continued, 'unfortunately its first year in Europe ended on a note of widespread tension and disagreement', with Britain 'of all countries' threatening to use its veto on plans for a united energy programme. See also *ibid.*, pp. 24–8.

<sup>5</sup> An edition of *The Money Programme*, 'Britain in Balance', broadcast in early Dec. 1973, was commended by Curran as 'a very good exposition of a difficult topic... politically straight down the middle' (\*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 10 Dec. 1973).

<sup>6</sup> The Industrial Relations Act was not, in fact, used. It had been introduced to Parliament in Dec. 1970, and had received the royal assent in Aug. 1971. In Sept. 1972 the TUC confirmed that it was suspending all trade unions that registered under the Act, and in the same month the Government failed to win the support of the unions for the prices and incomes policy it was proposing. Phase 1, a ninety-day wages and prices freeze, began in Nov. 1972. Phase 2 began on 1 April 1973. The NUM was not the only union to be in the limelight in 1973 and 1974. Press and television rightly focused also on the railway union, ASLEF, which operated its own overtime ban from 12 Dec. 1973 and a work-to-rule which cut out Sunday trains. A one-day strike was called for 15 Jan. 1974. In 1974 the face of the ASLEF leader, Ray Buckton, became as familiar to television viewers as that of the NUM Chairman, Joe (later Lord) Gormley.

Miners' strike and general election were directly connected.<sup>7</sup> At a Press Gallery lunch on 6 February 1974 one Conservative MP was quoted as saying: 'the miners have had their ballot, perhaps we ought to have ours.'<sup>8</sup> In the first instance, however, the Government's reaction to the miners' assault had been defensive, if dramatic, for on 13 December 1973 it announced the introduction of a three-day working week in order to save electricity, and four days later it imposed huge public expenditure cuts. Petrol ration books were issued (though they were never used), a compulsory speed limit of 50 miles per hour was imposed, street lighting was curtailed, and television was required to black out at 10.30 p.m.<sup>9</sup> There were echoes of September 1939 in all this—for those able to remember.

For news of what was happening then and later and for different interpretations of its significance the public relied heavily on television—and to a lesser extent on radio—as it had done during the Arab/Israeli War.<sup>10</sup> Was the BBC, along with other media, exaggerating the 'current crisis'? Trethowan asked the Board of Management two days before the working week was cut. Wheldon thought that it was: Crawley did not. Curran stressed that 'the BBC's proper role in the present situation was one of amplifying facts first and reflecting opinions second, since the facts were likely to be more sober than the opinions'.<sup>11</sup>

Very soon afterwards, when 'the present situation' had changed radically but before a general election was announced, Swann and other members of the Board of Governors approved of the way that

<sup>7</sup> A crucial date had been 28 Nov., when the NUM Executive, against the advice of its Chairman, Gormley, refused to put to a pit-head ballot a wages and benefits package offered by the Government. This made a head-on clash almost inevitable.

<sup>8</sup> The episode is referred to in D. Butler and D. Kavanagh, *The British General Election of February 1974* (1974), p. 43.

<sup>9</sup> Formal direction to the BBC from the Minister of Posts and Telecommunications was received forthwith. The restriction, which did not apply to Christmas Day, Boxing Day, or New Year's Eve, was 'until further notice' (\*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 17 Dec. 1973). The BBC had already set up a Fuel Economy Committee (\**ibid.*, 26 Nov. 1973). Chaired by Colin East, Assistant Controller, Staff Administration, it met six times between 29 Nov. 1973 and 10 Jan. 1974. There were setbacks: e.g., there was a walk-out of office staff at Maida Vale in Dec. 1973 after complaints of unacceptably low temperatures.

<sup>10</sup> The war was reported by Martin Bell. See *The Listener*, 8 Nov. 1973, for one of his accounts. Before the general election the principal theme of critical comments received by the BBC was what was called 'bias' to the Left in the coverage of the economic situation (\*General Advisory Council, *Papers*, 'Summary of Public Reactions to the BBC', 23 Jan. 1974).

<sup>11</sup> \*Board of Management, *Minutes*, 10 Dec. 1973.

the BBC had reported 'the economic crisis'. 'The BBC had steered a fair course', Swann said, 'though on occasion the distinction between news and comment had been slightly blurred.' Lady Plowden, his Vice-Chairman, with whom Swann got on well, added that she hoped that News and Current Affairs staff would continue to look out for stories which showed 'how splendidly people on the shop floor had been rising to the challenge of the three-day week'.<sup>12</sup>

The situation inevitably became more difficult, however, when on 7 February 1974 Heath announced a general election, to be held three weeks later on 28 February, with the key issue, as far as the Government was concerned, 'Who governs Britain?'. This was also the theme focused on by the Press, which was almost unanimous in its criticism of Wilson's Labour Party. Public opinion was sharply divided, and the BBC was now inevitably placed in a difficult position, once more 'on the rack'.

The manifesto of the Labour Party, *Let Us Work Together*, denied flatly that the general election was 'about the miners . . . about the militants . . . [or] about the power of the unions'. It was rather, the Party claimed, 'about the disastrous failure of three-and-a-half years of Conservative Government, which has turned Britain from the path of prosperity to the road to ruin'. The Liberal Party, led by Jeremy Thorpe, urged an end to 'confrontation', although it seized on other issues too in its own manifesto, *You Can Change the Face of Britain*. The Party had enjoyed an unprecedented revival since the autumn of 1972, when it won remarkable by-election victories, and in the summer of 1973 polls suggested that Liberal support in the country as a whole had reached what then seemed to be the high figure of 20 per cent.

There were to be significant changes in emphasis, however, during the later stages of the general election campaign, brought about once again by the intervention of Enoch Powell, as dramatic as it had been in 1970. He was to vote Labour in February 1974, and all television and radio networks headed their news bulletins on 7 February with

<sup>12</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 10 Jan. 1974. The same views were expressed at the Governors' next meeting, although there was some criticism then of Hardcastle and of 'vox pop' interviews by Gerald Priestland (\**ibid.*, 24 Jan. 1974). A 'coverage of the crisis' item was inserted in the Minutes throughout the early months of 1974, and criticisms of the BBC, particularly in the *Sunday Express*, were given more weight on 7 Feb., especially criticisms of *The Dimbleby Talk In* on 25 Jan. Fuller said that the BBC did better than any newspaper.

his condemnation of the election and on 25 February with his attack on Britain's membership of the EEC, which had been negotiated by Heath. Powell was also bitterly opposed to the Government's prices and incomes policy. Finally, to complete the indictment, he objected to what he thought of as British 'concessions' in Northern Ireland, where the situation remained tense, following the Ulster Unionist Party's rejection of a power-sharing agreement reached at Sunningdale between Britain and the Irish Republic on 7 December 1973. Brian Faulkner, who had favoured the agreement, was forced to resign as official Unionist leader, and at the general election a new United Ulster Unionist Coalition was to sweep the board, with only Fitt surviving on the nationalist side.

Powell's speech on Europe on 25 February 1974 coincided with a pre-election edition of *Panorama*, planned earlier, that devoted the whole of its attention to Britain's relationship with the EEC.<sup>13</sup> The Conservative Party protested against the choice of subject for that particular time, fearing, among other things, that an extract from Powell's speech might be included live in the programme.<sup>14</sup> In fact, no Powell extract, live or recorded, was included, although an old speech of his delivered years before in 1971 was used. The reason for non-inclusion of his 1974 speech was not editorial policy, but the fact that the tapes of it did not arrive in time.<sup>15</sup>

It was radio, not television, that had introduced the first general election of 1974 in a news flash at 12.48 in the middle of the *Jimmy Young Show* on Radio 2.<sup>16</sup> Thereafter, although some of the framework rules were still in force, radio and television were able to work in an almost untrammelled manner during the campaign, relatively little constrained by rules.<sup>17</sup> A. L. Hutchinson, Head of Talks and

<sup>13</sup> As Butler and Kavanagh note (*op. cit.*, p. 91), there was more discussion of Europe between elections than during elections. This had been the case in 1962 and in 1971 and 1972. There had been little discussion at the general elections of 1964, 1966, or 1970.

<sup>14</sup> Lord Carrington complained by telephone to Swann, who replied that it was in no way so timed to irritate the Conservative Party. After the broadcast Carrington told him that he had been right, the only time a politician ever said so (\*Swann interviewed by Gillard, 23 March 1981).

<sup>15</sup> *The Times*, 26 Feb. 1974. *The Money Programme* on BBC-2 included comments by politicians on inflation and nationalization.

<sup>16</sup> On 12 Dec. 1973 there had been a headline in *The Times*: 'Ministers predict an election if the industrial situation gets worse'.

<sup>17</sup> The party ratio between the main parties, decided upon in the early Summer of 1973, was still 5 : 5 : 3. The Communist Party had no broadcasting time allotted to it because with forty-four candidates it was six below the requisite number of fifty. The National Front, which fielded fifty-four, had five minutes at its disposal. The Liberal Party was given more time than in 1970. The Labour Party refused to allow any of its

Current Affairs Group, was in overall control of election radio broadcasts, with a campaign unit run by Stan Taylor and Derek Lewis and with Sandy Hope in charge of operations,<sup>18</sup> while, as in 1970, BBC Television ran a joint News and Current Affairs operation, this time headed by Derrick Amooore and Michael Bunce.

The Government's decision to lift the 10.30 p.m. close-down on television, which had been imposed as a fuel economy during the power crisis, meant that—in a memorable phrase of Dennis Potter—there would now be part-time work and full-time television.<sup>19</sup> The result was a radical shift in programme times. There was also far more BBC political broadcasting than broadcasting by the parties themselves: the ratio was nine to one. Potter was not alone in disliking the consequences, but he was exceptionally savage in his criticism, claiming that despite what was at stake in February 1974, there was nothing 'full blooded' to watch on the screen. Moderation was all: 'The party managers know too well that public service broadcasting works adequately only when there is some sort of consensus to sanctify its terms and unstated assumptions.'<sup>20</sup>

Certainly much of the bitterness that had been anticipated when the 'crisis' general election was announced was not in evidence during the short campaign. For example—and it was more than an example—the Executive of the NUM resolved against mass picketing of mines and against action outside offices of the National Coal Board in order to deny television viewers 'the disagreeable jostling and intimidation that had filled the news bulletins' during the miners' strike of 1972.<sup>21</sup> Butler and Kavanagh went so far as to say in

candidates to appear on the screen alongside National Front candidates. There was a bizarre twist to the role of the minor parties. An edition of a Welsh comedy series, *Perils of Pendragon*, was postponed after the Communist Party protested against unfairness: there were references to a South Wales Marxist Party in it. The move was attacked in some sections of the Press as a BBC 'surrender to the Communists'. Plaid Cymru won a legal ruling to be allowed to broadcast at the original time allotted to it and not at a time changed by the BBC and ITV.

<sup>18</sup> \*Hutchinson to Editor, Morning Current Affairs Programmes, *et al.*, 'General Election 1974', 7 Feb. 1974 (R78/1458/1).

<sup>19</sup> *New Statesman*, 15 Feb. 1974. In the same article, Potter referred to 'necrotic party political broadcasts'.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* See also *ibid.*, 22 Feb. 1974, where Potter referred to 'a greasy smog of platitude, pretence, tactical challenge, anxious counter-challenge and careful deceit'. For the use of the terms 'moderate' and 'moderation' by both Heath and Wilson, see J. G. Blumler, 'The Media and the Election', and S. Pinto-Duschinsky, 'A Matter of Words', *New Society*, 7 March 1974.

<sup>21</sup> Butler and Kavanagh, *op. cit.*, p. 76. Four years before that it was students whose noisy demonstrations figured most prominently on the screens.



relation to the party managers that perhaps because the campaign was so short, 'it was a remarkably happy affair'.<sup>22</sup>

For Peter Fiddick, writing just before the election took place, what was being seen on television both in the lead-up to it and 'in concentrated form' after the campaign began was 'the first exposure of our political life to the new broadened context of communication'. As political coverage had greatly increased, the country had 'suddenly been plunged into a laboratory situation in which many ideas and methods' were being tested. 'Phone-ins' had robbed the politician of his earlier modes of insulation. 'Pundits' had stripped away his halo.<sup>23</sup> Yet during the short campaign it was broadcasters who lost any haloes they might once have acquired.

Voters showed many signs of disillusionment in February 1974 as they were to do in even more marked degree at the second general election in October. An articulate minority amongst them had come to the conclusion that the economic and social problems of the country were intractable and that the country itself was ungovernable.<sup>24</sup> But disillusionment was not the only reaction of viewers. There was a stronger feeling than there had been at the previous general election that the BBC (and ITV) were devoting too much coverage to the election: the proportion that believed this had increased from 17 to 31 per cent.<sup>25</sup>

Nine hundred letters—some of them written by or on behalf of children—complained of the rescheduling of popular programmes like *Colditz* and *The Liver Birds* to a late hour in the evening.<sup>26</sup> Two hundred letters were received at the end of the campaign after a special edition of *The World at One* was broadcast in place of the repeat of *Any Questions?* One viewer went so far as to congratulate

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>23</sup> *Guardian*, 25 Feb. 1974. The American journalist James Reston praised the phone-ins as 'a genuine exchange of views between ordinary people and politicians'. Comparing them with 'rigged' phone-ins in the USA, he added that 'you should be proud of the way you do these things' (quoted in 'General Advisory Council, *Papers*, 'Coverage of the General Election: Summary of Public Reactions', 21 March 1974).

<sup>24</sup> *The Economist* had raised the question on 29 July 1972. See also *Sunday Times*, 30 July 1972. In a frank broadcast after the general election of Feb. 1974, the head of the Civil Service, Sir William (later Lord) Armstrong, told listeners that he had 'a very strong impression that governments are nothing like as important as they think they are, and that the ordinary work of making things and moving things about . . . is so much more important than what the Government does' (*The Listener*, 28 March 1974).

<sup>25</sup> 'BBC Audience Research Report LR/74/252, 'The Coverage of the 1974 General Election Campaign on Television and Radio', May 1974. See also *Annual Review of BBC Audience Research Findings*, 1975.

<sup>26</sup> 'General Advisory Council, *Papers*, 'Coverage of the General Election: Summary of Public Reactions', 21 March 1974.

the Government on actually saving electricity. 'Thanks to the seemingly endless election specials everyone can now turn off their TV after the BBC news at 9.20 p.m.'<sup>27</sup>

Not all such complaints came from viewers and listeners who were uninterested in politics. Indeed, one listener wrote that by overdoing coverage the BBC was likely to have created an attitude of 'Damn the election' and 'Damn the BBC'—they're 'as big a bore as politicians'—and thus to have reinforced political cynicism.<sup>28</sup> Another complainant was Mrs Whitehouse, once more in unusual company, in this case that of Dick Taverne, the former Labour MP who had held on to his Lincoln seat as an independent and was fighting a 'Campaign for Social Democracy'.<sup>29</sup> 'I can't imagine what Mary wants', wrote Clive Gammon in the *Spectator*. 'A perpetual *Crossroads*, I suppose, with a leavening of easy-listening pop.'<sup>30</sup>

In some respects the February 1974 election seemed to be Robin Day's election as much as that of Heath or Wilson, and although Day was scrupulously fair in his chairing of *Election Call*, a generally praised pioneering fifty-five minute phone-in programme at 9 a.m. on Radio 4 which gave the 'ordinary' listener—and voter—a chance to ask every kind of awkward question,<sup>31</sup> he was just as capable of dividing the electorate as Heath and Wilson were, particularly on television. After he clashed with Edward Short in a BBC television programme, *Election 74*, Short won substantial Labour Party backing when he accused him of following one standard when he interviewed Labour spokesmen and another when he interviewed Conservatives.<sup>32</sup>

Day had just interviewed Hailsham in a quite different style, and he himself thought that his Short interview had been a blunder. 'It

<sup>27</sup> *Sunday Times*, 17 Feb. 1974. The BBC's Programme Correspondence group, headed by Kathleen Haacke, celebrated its own jubilee in 1974. It received an average of 300 letters a day and 100 telephone calls (*Ariel*, 12 June 1974). Swann was surprised at the volume of correspondence he himself received (\*Swann interviewed by Gillard, 23 March 1981).

<sup>28</sup> 'Coverage of the General Election: Summary of Public Reactions', 21 March 1974.

<sup>29</sup> The *Guardian*, 18 Feb. 1974, reported Mrs Whitehouse as reading a five-point questionnaire to each of the party leaders, asking them where their parties stood on the issue of 'indecency, obscenity, and sex education'.

<sup>30</sup> *Spectator*, 23 Feb. 1974.

<sup>31</sup> 'To have the Prime Minister answering questions fired at him over the telephone by listeners in many parts of the country was a unique experience', wrote H. B. Boyne, an experienced lobby correspondent (*Daily Telegraph*, 1 March 1974). For praise of *Election Call* see Kenneth Adam, writing in the *Financial Times*, 26 Feb. 1974. Adam also expressed admiration for William Hardcastle in *The World at One* and *PM*, and expressed disappointment with what had by then become a television standby, *Election Forum*.

<sup>32</sup> Around 250 viewers telephoned or wrote to the BBC to support Short. For Day's comments see his book *Grand Inquisitor* (1989 edn.), pp. 212–13.

did not look fair. We had not only to be impartial, we had to be *seen* to be impartial.' None the less, at the end of the campaign, in fair weather and in foul, Day was still there, as he had been there at the beginning, busily interviewing politicians and pundits with tireless zest. *Broadcast* described him as 'relaxed', not perhaps quite the right adjective, in dealing with politicians, 'believing himself (with some justice) to be on the same level as them'.<sup>33</sup>

At the time there were some criticisms in the Press of the effects of political television not on viewers and listeners but on the politicians themselves. Their early morning Press Conferences, to which they attached such importance—the Liberals held theirs at 10 a.m., the Conservatives at 11 a.m., and the Labour Party at 11.45 a.m.—were felt by some Press journalists to be mainly designed to provide copy for the television cameras. The Liberal Party, however, was in a different position from the rest. Tied to his own constituency in North Devon, Thorpe had set up a television link of his own at considerable expense, so that he could conduct the Press Conference in full colour from Barnstaple. It was a one-way link only, and interviewers could see him at the London end without his seeing them.

This was the most novel technical feature of the election as far as television was concerned. In other respects, including use of polls, no new notes were struck. The fact that the polls had been wrong in 1970 was conveniently forgotten, and this time both the Labour Party and the Conservative Party (but not the Liberal Party) organized their own daily private polls. How far they influenced campaign tactics is a matter of debate. In the light of them, towards the end of the campaign, the Conservatives began to warn that Liberal gains would ensure a weak Government, unable to take the necessary national measures. The most striking change in the polls had been a doubling of Liberal Party support in the second week of the campaign, when it once more reached the level of the late summer of 1973.

As the campaign proceeded the polls showed the Labour Party making gains, but no poll attributed to it more than 40 per cent of the electorate; and when the real poll was over, and it had secured

<sup>33</sup> *Broadcast*, 8 March 1974. Not all viewers agreed. While one viewer said that Day deserved the highest praise for his behaviour, others called him 'rude' (\*LR/74/252). In 1977, in a series called *The Interviewers*, Day was to be interviewed by Benn. See 'The grill chef grilled', *The Listener*, 2 June 1977. It was 'misleading', Day told Benn, 'to suggest that I, personally, have a lot of power'.

301 seats, it was still seventeen seats short of a working majority. The Conservatives held a lead throughout, but the result in seats, 297, only four less than the Labour Party, was a rebuff to Heath's hopes of a ratification of his approach to politics. The Liberal Party had tripled its share of the total national vote, but only fourteen Liberal MPs were returned. There were also twenty-three Welsh and Scottish nationalists and Ulster MPs. The House of Commons was 'dead-locked'.

It was a matter of argument, as always, as to what the 'effects' on voting had been of the relentless flow of election talk on radio and television. A Marplan survey of the reactions of a small sample of 299 people questioned in London on polling day, which had been commissioned by *Broadcast*, showed that 7 per cent of them claimed that broadcast coverage had influenced their choices.<sup>34</sup> Adequate or inadequate though the sample was, it was of great interest that the swing from Conservative to Labour in the London area was 5 per cent.<sup>35</sup>

The BBC's results sequence, one of the most exciting in its history, was in new hands in February 1974. Alastair Burnet, who had previously been with ITV, was now in charge of the reporting, leading the *Daily Mail's* television critic to claim that this was the first time that the BBC won the contest behind the screen. Over 350 people were employed in the huge Studio A at Television Centre, while 2,000 people were employed in the country.<sup>36</sup> Viewers stayed up longer to watch the results programmes than in 1970, with 9 per cent of the population still watching between 2.30 and 3 a.m., in the ratio of 7 to 2 in favour of the BBC.<sup>37</sup>

On the day after the election, 1 March, Jimmy Young was back in action on Radio 1 with *Election Extra with Jimmy Young*, while the BBC-1 programme which ran from 6.00 a.m. to 6.45 p.m. was called *Election 74: And Now to Work*. There was no government, however, to get back to work immediately. Difficult and ultimately abortive

<sup>34</sup> *Broadcast*, 8 March 1974. A higher proportion of voters under the age of 35 changed their voting intentions than voters over 35. The proportionate change did not differ according to income groups.

<sup>35</sup> For an analysis of the role of the media in the election see J. Blumler, 'The Media and the Election', *New Society*, 7 March 1974.

<sup>36</sup> *Daily Mail*, 2 March 1974. For Burnet's comments see *Radio Times*, 23 Feb.–1 March 1974: 'If I weren't in the studio, working and involved, I'd be waiting and watching anyway. It's the greatest peak in politics.' See also *Broadcast*, 8 March 1974, which devoted most of the issue to coverage of the results.

<sup>37</sup> \*LR/74/252.

discussions took place from 1 March to 4 March between Heath and Thorpe, and it was only after these failed that Wilson accepted office as head of the first minority government since 1929.

Two days later, the miners' strike was settled—they won an increase around 35 per cent—and two days after that a rent freeze was announced. The working week was restored to five days. Even then, however, there was no return to normality. The inflation rate for the year was to be 19 per cent, and the new Parliament, in the words of the *Annual Register*, was 'a Parliament of minorities'.<sup>38</sup> The Wilson Government remained in power despite several defeats in the House of Commons, as negotiations concerning Britain's continued participation in the EEC continued in Brussels. The most alarming fact of all was that there was a new crisis in Northern Ireland—or rather, a new twist to what seemed like a perpetual crisis. After direct rule was reimposed on 28 May, chaos reigned for a month. The British Army found it difficult to maintain essential services, and a few hundred Protestant-led electricity workers at the four Ulster power-stations held the province to ransom.<sup>39</sup>

The BBC was in the middle of the *mêlée*, not above it. Reporting the Northern Irish crisis tested its efficiency and at the same time brought into question its role. In June 1973 Richard Francis had become Controller, Northern Ireland,<sup>40</sup> and while the 1974 strike lasted—and later—he found himself simultaneously defending the BBC's sixteen news reporters, most often Ulstermen, against charges of bias and insisting that there was 'nothing that we [the BBC] should not cover'.<sup>41</sup> Comparisons were drawn—and have subsequently been drawn—with the BBC's handling of the General Strike in 1926. This time, however, there was a Labour Home Secretary in London, Merlyn (later Lord) Rees, and there was an active Board of Governors that backed Francis throughout.

<sup>38</sup> *Annual Register*, 1974, p. 14.

<sup>39</sup> The Protestant Ulster Workers' Council objected to the proposed Council for Ireland agreed upon at Sunningdale. In the summer of 1974 there were also IRA bombings in England, including an explosion in Westminster Hall on 18 June.

<sup>40</sup> Maguire, his predecessor, had a stroke while fishing in Sept. 1972. Stuart Wyton was Acting Controller until Francis took over on 26 June 1973 (\*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 3, 21 June 1973).

<sup>41</sup> *Belfast Newsletter*, 17 Sept. 1974. Francis told the Belfast Rotary Club that the BBC would have to consider closing down all services in Northern Ireland if any future situation threatened to restrict broadcasting freedom. See also *Irish Times*, 17 Sept. 1974. For sharp criticisms of the BBC, which came from different sides, see R. Fisk, *Point of No Return* (1975), and R. Cathcart, *The Most Contrary Region* (1984), pp. 231–3.

In retrospect, Francis wrote a vivid account of the problems which, pugnaciously, he always thought of as challenges. He focused on independence and responsibility.

The experience in Northern Ireland, where communities and governments are in conflict but not in a state of emergency or a state of war, suggests a greater need than ever for the media to function as the 'fourth estate', distinct from the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. But if the functions are to remain separate, it must be left to the media themselves to take the decisions (within the limits of responsibility) as to what to publish, as to when, and as to how. That puts a lot of responsibility on all of us to answer these questions wisely, not, I submit, by adopting special criteria for Northern Ireland, but by deploying the best available professional skills and by scrupulously fair dealing.<sup>42</sup>

In such circumstances the prime task of the BBC, as Francis saw it, was to provide a comprehensive, accurate, and credible news service.<sup>43</sup>

Northern Ireland raised issues of its own, but the BBC was in the middle of the general *mêlée* too during the summer of 1974—and itself making news—when industrial disputes disrupted television at peak times,<sup>44</sup> and it remained in trouble after the disputes were settled. A generous BBC pay agreement reached in August 1974 after the end of statutory incomes policy irritated Michael Foot, the Labour Government's Employment Secretary.<sup>45</sup> Should not the BBC have offered a lead to other employers? The question was worth asking, but to answer it positively would have been extremely difficult, for with what *The Economist* called 'the perpetual inflation machine' still roaring ahead, the settlement, generous though it appeared, was not uncharacteristic of other settlements that year. With Phase 3 over, it gave a minimum 20 per cent increase to all BBC staff, and for some staff on lower grades—this was also characteristic of the year—more than 20 per cent.<sup>46</sup> Attention was paid throughout difficult negotiations—and subsequent arbitration on a number of

<sup>42</sup> *Broadcasting to a Community in Conflict*, lecture at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 22 Feb. 1977, p. 5.

<sup>43</sup> In 1979, when Director of News and Current Affairs, he was to talk of producing 'newspapers of the air' on BBC-2. He also looked forward then to the new vistas of the 1980s (*Ariel*, 7 March 1979; this number of *Ariel* is misleadingly dated 7 March 1969).

<sup>44</sup> There was a dispute with NATKE, deemed official by the union, in May 1974, which hit television over the Bank Holiday weekend (*Ariel*, 30 May 1974). Other lightning strikes followed, as did a strike by ninety production assistants in Television Drama and Light Entertainment.

<sup>45</sup> D. Butler and D. Kavanagh, *The British General Election of October 1974* (1975), p. 119.

<sup>46</sup> *Ariel*, 7 Aug. 1974. For the negotiations, which continued while there was a strike in Drama and Light Entertainment, see *ibid.*, 24 July 1974.



issues—to the ‘disturbance and unpredictability’ of work patterns, to the complexities of grading, to London allowances, and to the extension of holidays. These also were not issues exclusive to the BBC.

After the settlement Swann had ‘a long and extraordinary conversation’ with Lord Harris, Minister of State at the Home Office, in which he had to insist in face of talk about the ‘social contract’ that the BBC’s relations with its own employees depended on trust. It could not be expected to take the lead—under orders—in sustaining the Government’s new voluntary policy of wage restraint.<sup>47</sup> In 1969 there had been complaints that it had not been sufficiently engaged in ‘consultation’.<sup>48</sup> Now there were complaints that it was consulting too much.

Much seemed strange in the summer of 1974, and when on 8 August the most dramatic news of all came from across the Atlantic—the resignation of President Nixon<sup>49</sup>—there was gossip in London about the creation of a possible ‘national government’ in Britain to cope with the continuing domestic economic and political crisis.<sup>50</sup> That was never a likely outcome. What was inevitable instead, from the day Wilson took office, was another general election. Indeed, the only question was when the short Parliament would be dissolved. Confusion remained, since there was no clear-cut intention on the part of the Opposition to force the Labour Government out of power, and the air was not cleared until Wilson, who had played with the idea of a June election, decided to dissolve Parliament on 18 September.<sup>51</sup> In his television announcement he apologized for plunging the country into a second general election campaign within a year, and fixed the date only twenty-two days ahead—on 10 October.

<sup>47</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 26 Sept. 1974. At a later meeting (*ibid.*, 24 Oct. 1974) it was noted that Jenkins had been disturbed too. It was feared that he would be further disturbed by rises for senior staff if he were not forewarned about them. Swann covered this and other points at a meeting with Jenkins and Harris on 26 Nov. (*ibid.*, 5 Dec. 1974). Correspondence continued.

<sup>48</sup> See above, p. 790.

<sup>49</sup> Much other international news was dramatic throughout 1974: a Portuguese revolution on 25 April, the Turkish invasion of Cyprus on 20 July, the ousting of the Greek colonels on 24 July, and the Chilean coup and killing of President Allende on 11 Sept. Reporting a visit to Portugal in the summer, David Wedgwood Benn, Programme Organiser of the Yugoslav and Slovene Sections, External Services, and Tony Benn’s brother, described the calm of Lisbon. There were signs of ‘tension’, but the atmosphere was ‘a good deal less tense’ than he had known it at the London School of Economics (*Ariel*, 24 July 1974).

<sup>50</sup> See J. Mackintosh, ‘Is a Coalition Government Likely?’, *The Listener*, 18 July 1974.

<sup>51</sup> See B. Pimlott, *Harold Wilson* (1992), pp. 643 ff.

The main parties were all prepared. The Conservative manifesto, *Putting Britain First*, appeared on 13 September, the first of the manifestos. It had been leaked three days earlier. The Labour Party's manifesto, which laid great emphasis on the 'social contract' between party and trade unions, appeared three days later, and the Liberals' one day after that.<sup>52</sup> All parties agreed that the country was facing the worst economic crisis since 1945.<sup>53</sup>

The BBC was ready too, but in the light of the experience of the previous general election, it changed its coverage, as ITV also did more dramatically. On television, BBC-1 now offered an average of only eleven minutes of election news at 9 p.m., about a third of the February level. The old characters remained in charge, however, with Robin Day figuring prominently once more on BBC-2 in *Newsday* interviews timed at 7.30 p.m. and in *Campaign Special*.<sup>54</sup> Radio not only maintained its February output, but added a late evening programme called *Election Platform*, which included long extracts from the political speeches of the day, rather than short news snippets. A broadcasting innovation was a series of reports from one constituency, Keighley, a marginal seat, where David Jessel described local attitudes and towards the end of the campaign organized a panel of Keighley people to question leading politicians.<sup>55</sup>

As at the previous election, economics provided the main electoral theme, although it was political economy rather than textbook economics. Between the elections the Wilson government had raised benefits for old-age pensioners. It also made the most of the 'social contract' between Labour and the trade unions which had been embodied in a document *Economic Policy and the Cost of Living*, published in February 1973.<sup>56</sup> The Conservative opposition pointed

<sup>52</sup> For a critical account of the 'social contract' as a phrase and as an idea, see *Sunday Telegraph*, 29 Sept. 1974. The Government's White Paper on Devolution, Cmnd. 5732 (1974), *Democracy and Devolution Proposals for Scotland and Wales*, appeared on 17 Sept.

<sup>53</sup> The National Institute for Economic and Social Research had produced a forecast on 30 Aug. that Britain's gross domestic product would rise less than 1% in the next year, that prices would rise by 17½%, and that unemployment would reach 900,000 by the end of 1975.

<sup>54</sup> ITN's *News at Ten* was ten minutes shorter than in Feb., and Granada's *World in Action* significantly did not deal with the election at all until the final week. Strikes in ITN and regional ITV newsrooms freed some viewers from election broadcasting. *Newsday* included interviews with people who were not directly involved in politics, among them Arnold (later Lord) Weinstock and the former senior civil servant Baroness Sharp. For a sharp interchange between Day and Benn see Butler and Kavanagh, *British General Election of October 1974*, pp. 148–9.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.

<sup>56</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 28, and Pimlott, *op. cit.*, pp. 644–6.

to the statistics of inflation and to the danger of politicians fuelling inflation still further. During the last stages Heath himself even talked of a national government.

The *Radio Times* provided its readers with what it called 'the most comprehensive and detailed election guide' that it had ever published, but because of the short time intervening between the announcement of it and election day it appeared without its colour cover.<sup>57</sup> The lack of colour, the editor noted, would doubtless please, among others, the pop singer Pete Townsend of The Who, who was not 'an election enthusiast'. It seemed symbolic. Between the February and October elections the percentage of those who were 'apathetic' towards the election broadcasts rose from 35 per cent to 41 per cent, while that of the 'uninterested' who did not listen or view at all if they could help it doubled from 9 per cent to 18 per cent.<sup>58</sup>

Presentation of the results programme, elaborately prepared, with Michael Townson as editor, was once again in the hands of Alastair Burnet, working with a team which was described proudly as having been 'the first with the right prediction' and the 'fastest with the results' in February. The experienced team, which included Butler, McKenzie, and Day, had to deal again with polls that proved wrong—not about who would be the victors but about the size and nature of the victory. Early talk of an overall Labour majority of thirty, based on computer analysis, slowly evaporated, and Wilson, in winning his fourth general election, was left with an overall majority of only three.

*Broadcast* believed that on this occasion ITV's presentation was 'compact and bright' when compared to the BBC's. 'There comes a point', it observed—and the BBC, it maintained, was approaching that point—'when the sheer size of the operation can impose itself on the efficiency of communication.'<sup>59</sup> The BBC's Governors shared this feeling. Many of them thought that the television treatment of the election was wasteful and over-complicated, and Roy Fuller went so far as to call the exercise 'a late Roman Empire symptom of decadence'.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup> *Radio Times*, 3 Oct. 1974.

<sup>58</sup> \*BBC Audience Research Report LR/76/274, 'The Coverage of the October 1974 Election Campaign on Television and Radio', June 1976. See also General Advisory Council, *Papers*, 'BBC Coverage of the General Election, Sept.–Oct. 1974: Summary of Public Reactions', 18 Oct. 1974.

<sup>59</sup> *Broadcast*, 14 Oct. 1974.

<sup>60</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 24 Oct. 1974. During the previous election, *Ariel* (22 Feb. 1974) had boasted that even in radio 300 people would be working in

There were few complaints from senior politicians about the coverage of the election, local or national, while it lasted, and what there were, happily for the BBC, came from all three principal parties in turn.<sup>61</sup> They were described by Lord Feather as no more than 'shots across the BBC's bow'.<sup>62</sup> After the election, however, the National Executive of the Labour Party, frustrated by the narrowness of the Labour majority, claimed angrily that the Party had been unfairly treated. Coverage had been trivial and cynical, it declared, and had pandered to the lowest common denominator. On this occasion the strongest complaints came not from Wilson himself, already getting ready for retirement, but from the General Secretary of the Labour Party, Ron Hayward. Swann called the charges sweeping and unsubstantiated.<sup>63</sup>

#### 14. Attack and Defence

Already before the election had begun there had been ample evidence of suspicion inside the Labour Party of the role of the media, including the Press, and a report, *The People and the Media*, the product of two years of discussions, had been published in the late spring. The Home Policy Committee of the Party, which produced it, had drawn on the services both of MPs, among them Whitehead, and of writers on the media, among them Nicholas Garnham and James Curran. Another signatory was Alan Sapper, then President of the Confederation of Entertainment Unions.

The Report, which was described as a discussion document and which included a section on broadcasting, 'our window on the world', suggested that both the BBC and the IBA should disappear.

Broadcasting House on election night, with 80 other people on 40 radio outside broadcast locations, 60 people in local radio, and 30 people in the Regions.

<sup>61</sup> One awkward situation concerned the Labour Party rather than the BBC. At the televised Press Conference on 25 Sept. Shirley Williams suddenly declared that she would leave active politics if a referendum went against Britain remaining in the EEC. An irritated Wilson tried to shield her from other questions—and statements.

<sup>62</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 10 Oct. 1974. Survey evidence pointed in the same direction. 'The people who detect bias are split equally in the bias they detect' (\*Swann, Thomson Lecture, 28 Nov. 1974, delivered to the Institute of Measurement and Control (R78/1054/1)).

<sup>63</sup> \*Swann, Thomson Lecture; *Ariel*, 11 Dec. 1974. During the general election Wilson had made one attack on the BBC's broadcasting of the election at a Party Press Conference on 8 Oct.

In their place two new public bodies should be created: a Communications Council and a Public Broadcasting Commission, the former carrying out research and serving as an ombudsman, the latter not itself producing programmes, but commissioning them and collecting and allocating funds. The licence fee would disappear, and its place would be taken by a quinquennial grant-in-aid and television advertising.<sup>1</sup>

Much of the thinking in the document followed ideas already propounded by Benn, who served as its Chairman until he became Secretary of State for Industry in March 1974;<sup>2</sup> but an increased interest was shown by its members, as it was in other circles, in 'a wide variety of dispersed programme units', 'reflecting the creative talent of all parts of the United Kingdom'. Two possible television and radio corporations were mentioned, but it was to independents, free from institutional restraints, that the Broadcasting Commission would largely have to turn. Throughout the report 'commercialism' remained the main enemy.<sup>3</sup> Consequently cable, which opened up 'exciting possibilities', was not to be left to 'random private enterprise development', and 'no future for commercial radio as such' was foreseen.

For all the 'radicalism', much in the document was vague, as both Swann and Hill pointed out, and it was difficult to see how its proposals would or could be implemented. Swann said that he had not made up his mind as to whether the drastic reorganization proposed would lead to 'anarchy' or to 'much closer governmental control', or 'most likely, perhaps, the former followed by the latter'.<sup>4</sup> Hill queried both the reliance on 'dispersed programme makers'—presumably, he concluded, this would involve the abandonment of the large existing programme-making studios, like those at Television Centre. Meanwhile, the end of the licence fee would destroy the independence of the broadcasters. Few people, Hill added, would cavil at the stated purpose of the members of the Committee that had produced the document—that of strengthening the principle of public service broadcasting. Many would wonder, however, what contribution to this end would be made by destroying in 'an act of vandalism' 'the finest public broadcasting service in the world'.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The People and the Media* (1974), price 20p. The section on the Press was longer than the section on broadcasting, and the section on television was longer than the section on radio.

<sup>2</sup> His successor was John Grant, MP.

<sup>3</sup> A previous Labour Green Paper on Advertising was described as a 'complement'.

<sup>4</sup> *The Listener*, 23 May 1974.

<sup>5</sup> Hill, 'A Labour View of Broadcasting', *ibid.*, 18 July 1974.

Before *The People and the Media* appeared, Labour's Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins, announced on 10 April 1974 in a written reply in the House of Commons the setting up of a very different kind of committee to inquire into the future of broadcasting.<sup>6</sup> It was he who made the announcement, because the functions exercised since 1969 by the Minister of Posts and Telecommunications had now been transferred to the Home Secretary. The Committee was to be chaired, as it would have been in 1970, by Lord Annan, and appropriately it was Whitehead, who was to serve on both committees, the Labour Party Committee and the Annan Committee, who asked Jenkins the question that led to the announcement.<sup>7</sup>

Only Annan's name was then given. As in the case of Pilkington, the other names had not yet been chosen.<sup>8</sup> Annan would have preferred not to have had MPs on his Committee; but Jenkins insisted, and in the event Annan thought that he had been right to do so.<sup>9</sup> Other members were to include Marghanita Laski, knowledgeable about most aspects of broadcasting; Antony Jay, former editor of *Tonight*; Dipak Nandy, Founder-Director in 1968 of the Runnymede Trust, who in a sense represented new immigrants, but who became deeply interested in broadcasting problems in general; and Sara Morrison, who was in close touch with provincial Conservative opinion and who in 1980 was to become a member of the Board of the new Fourth Channel.<sup>10</sup> Annan advised them all at their first meeting on 18 July 1974 to keep open minds and closed lips.<sup>11</sup> He hoped that they would report in two and a half years' time.

The Annan inquiry, welcomed by Swann and by large sections of the Press, was to be comprehensive:

<sup>6</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 872, written answers, col. 212, 10 April 1974.

<sup>7</sup> For Whitehead's views at that time, see his 'Waiting for Annan', *New Statesman*, 19 April 1974. In *The Listener*, 20 Sept. 1973, he had agreed with Mrs Whitehouse that there should be a 'structured debate about accountability', and that a permanent Broadcasting Commission should be set up. For a further view of the different elements in the situation see the open letter to Annan written by Chris Dunkley a week after Annan's appointment (*Financial Times*, 17 April 1974).

<sup>8</sup> See above, p. 261.

<sup>9</sup> Annan, in 'Television Today and Tomorrow', *The Granada Guildhall Lectures, 1977*, p. 90. The other MP, a Conservative, was Sir Marcus Worsley, who had been a Programme Assistant in the BBC's European Service from 1950 to 1953 and MP for Keighley from 1959 to 1964.

<sup>10</sup> The *Spectator*, 20 April 1974, had urged the Government to 'bring the experts in'. Too many past inquiries had been vitiated by 'an understandable inaptitude of a distinguished and talented assortment garnered in from every field except broadcasting'. Cf. Peter Fiddick, *Guardian*, 10 June 1974: 'Please, not Billy Wright again', insisting that this was not a slur on Wright, the footballer.

<sup>11</sup> Letter from Lord Annan to Briggs, 30 June 1993.



To consider the future of the broadcasting services in the United Kingdom, including the dissemination by wire of broadcast and other programmes and of television for public showing; to consider the implications for present or any recommended additional services of new techniques; and to propose what constitutional, organisational and financial arrangements and what conditions should apply to the conduct of these services.<sup>12</sup>

In welcoming this remit, Swann, who knew Annan through his university connections, noted that 'fortunately for the BBC' and, he suggested, 'for society', a powerful convention had grown up that 'major changes in broadcasting' were not made without 'a major public inquiry, followed by extensive public debate'. 'Any radical notions' would be subjected, therefore, he hoped, 'to more searching criticism than they get from their proponents'.<sup>13</sup>

The range of questions in the Annan Committee's remit appealed to most observers, including *Broadcast*, which noted that it would be dealing both with technology and with 'structures', and which suggested that its results would be long-lasting. It considered that it was 'reasonable to suppose' that it would 'set a pattern, at least for British broadcasting, until the year 2000'. Swann also looked ahead. There was a good chance, he felt, that having just celebrated its fiftieth anniversary the BBC would now go on to celebrate its centenary.<sup>14</sup>

*The Times* was at one with Swann—but not with *Broadcast*—in refusing to believe that the pattern of broadcasting need greatly change. It urged, however, that if the Committee were to reach the same conclusion, it should be reached from 'deliberate intent, not from a combination of accident and lethargy'. Annan and his colleagues would be carrying out 'what should be one of the most searching social inquiries for many years'. The danger was that it could once again become 'the sport of party politics'.<sup>15</sup>

In discussing the setting up of the Annan Committee, Swann, in line with influential outside opinion, called for more formal academic research on broadcasting, 'an agreeable countryside where

<sup>12</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 872, written answers, col. 212, 10 April 1974.

<sup>13</sup> *The Listener*, 23 May 1974. The Government also set up in 1974 a Royal Commission on the Press, chaired by the lawyer Sir Morris Finer. On his death in 1975, O. R. (later Lord) McGregor took over the chairmanship. The Commission reported, like the Annan Committee, in 1977 (Cmnd. 6810, *Royal Commission on the Press: Final Report*).

<sup>14</sup> *Broadcast*, 20 May 1974. See also 'The Annan Parameters', *ibid.*, 2 Sept. 1974, where it added that the future of Mrs Whitehouse had to be settled as well as the future of broadcasting: 'It must either silence Mrs. Mary Whitehouse for ever or appoint her to be Director-General.'

<sup>15</sup> *The Times*, 15 April 1974.

topics for long-term research as well as PhD theses bloom in countless numbers'. There were, he noted, only two university research centres, and he regretted that when he had been a Vice-Chancellor and 'money was fast and free'—his judgement—he had done nothing to support the extension of research. He blamed 'our social science faculties who surely do know the importance of mass communications'.<sup>16</sup> This was new language for a BBC Chairman, who during his period of office was to do much to encourage policy-orientated research which would concern itself with management and with governance as much as with programmes.<sup>17</sup>

Long before Annan reported in 1977, another important report on broadcasting had appeared which demanded policy-orientated research and which in a clear manner raised fundamental questions of national importance. It appeared, indeed, within a month of the second general election of 1974, less than eighteen months after it had been commissioned by Sir John Eden in May 1973. Under the chairmanship of Sir Stewart Crawford, a former diplomat, who by a coincidence had been educated at the same school as Reith, Gresham's School, Holt, the Committee's remit was more restricted, as both Eden and Heath thought right, than that of Annan. It was called upon to examine 'the Broadcasting Authorities' plans for the coverage of television and sound broadcasting services' in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and 'rural England', 'bearing in mind the particular needs of people in those areas'.

The allotment of a fourth television channel was outside the Committee's remit, but the terms of reference were wide enough to include an examination of priorities in the allocation of resources and a judgement on the feasibility and cost of both BBC and ITA proposals.<sup>18</sup> One of the first points made by the Committee was the effectiveness of the sharing of television transmitters by BBC and ITV during the 1960s. It had also facilitated the work of the Committee,

<sup>16</sup> Speech at Newcastle University, quoted in *Broadcast*, 20 May 1974. In fact, Professor Tom Burns in Edinburgh had carried out his own highly distinctive research on the BBC. In other university social science departments the main tendency in broadcasting research was Marxist in flavour and in line with the work of the Labour Party Study Group. James Halloran of Leicester University was one of the signatories of *The People and the Media*.

<sup>17</sup> For Hill's comments on Annan, see *The Listener*, 18 Sept. 1975, 'What Annan Should Say'. See also A. Sandles, 'Firing the First Shots as the Broadcasting War Reopens', *Financial Times*, 20 April 1974.

<sup>18</sup> Cmnd. 5774 (1974), *Report of the Committee on Broadcasting Coverage*. The members of the Committee included Professor J. C. West, Dean of the School of Applied Sciences at Sussex University, and two women: Mrs G. L. Pike and Miss E. M. Rennie, both JPs.

since it had ready access to information on the same subject from two sources.<sup>19</sup>

Among the eight chapters in the Report, two dealt with 'Regionalism', one in television, the other in radio, and others with television and the Welsh language and with local radio. Inevitably, therefore, serious matters which had preoccupied the BBC for the previous ten years were raised and discussed. In Broadcasting House the conclusions of the Crawford Committee were welcomed as an endorsement of the policies that the BBC had followed, particularly that of extending local radio.<sup>20</sup> None the less, the Report noted how many expressions of regret they had received about 'the reduction, and in most areas virtual elimination of regional information in sound broadcasting in England, particularly by country people', and it urged some extension, without duplication and on an experimental basis, of BBC local radio through the building of a number of new low-power stations.<sup>21</sup>

Clearly the Committee was impressed by 'the great interest' people were taking in 'broadcasting matters' and 'the strength of their feelings about them, as was shown by the willingness of witnesses to make long journeys to see us'.<sup>22</sup> People now expected television services to be provided like electricity and water; they were 'a condition of normal life'.<sup>23</sup> Not surprisingly, the Committee interpreted the term 'rural England' as broadly as possible, 'since radio waves flow over both city and countryside indiscriminately'.

Within the BBC itself more emphasis was being placed on 'Regionalism' in 1974, at least in television, than in 1970, and Swann had himself expressed the view in the autumn of 1973 that the Corporation was concentrating too great a proportion of its resources in London (80 per cent was the figure he gave) and not enough in the Regions.<sup>24</sup> In fact, as a result of developments in the new regional Network Production Centres, the proportion of television produced outside London had increased.<sup>25</sup> *Pebble Mill at One* was born on 2 October 1972, and the total Birmingham contribution to the

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, paras. 8–9.

<sup>20</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1976, p. 15.

<sup>21</sup> *Ariel*, 11 Dec. 1974, headed its article on the Crawford Report 'Big Boost for Radio's Mini Stations'.

<sup>22</sup> Cmnd. 5774 (1974), para. 10.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 11.

<sup>24</sup> Address to the Royal Television Society Convention at Cambridge, reported in *Ariel*, 21 Sept. 1973.

<sup>25</sup> For the Centres, see above, p. 668.

television network increased from 6,721 hours in 1970 to 8,149 hours in 1974.<sup>26</sup> At a time when the working week was under threat for other reasons, Studio A at Pebble Mill moved from a four-day to a five-day and occasionally a six-day working week.<sup>27</sup>

Three months before the Crawford Committee was appointed, the General Advisory Council had discussed an important paper on the broadcasting role of the Regions, and the experience both of local and of regional broadcasting was re-evaluated. Wheldon stressed how much work of quality was now being produced in Regional centres, including Newcastle, while Curran admitted that 'ideally, except in the network production centres, the creative nucleus of staff should be larger'. Patrick Nuttgens, Chairman of the North Advisory Council, as it was now called, stated firmly that from his Leeds vantage-point he saw no conflict between local radio and Regional broadcasting. 'Local radio had an informality which made it particularly suited to meeting public demands for participation in programmes. Regional programmes, however, had to achieve a standard comparable to national programmes.'

Nuttgens admitted that the BBC, like the Arts Council, had to recognize that 'culture lay partly in the regions', directly involved as it was in 'the exploration, delineation, enlargement and transmission of a culture'. That there were problems in identifying that culture was equally firmly pointed out by another speaker, Philip Mason, who urged that when the use of both Regional and fourth television channels was being discussed—for example, for Welsh-language broadcasts—the Asian community would have to be considered also. 'Over the next twenty to thirty years the country was going to become far less homogeneous than it was at present.'<sup>28</sup>

The chapter in the Crawford Committee's Report which was to prove most significant for the future was that called 'Television and the Welsh Language'. It concluded that the argument for making special provision for the Welsh language was compelling, given that

<sup>26</sup> \*Television quarterly statistics compiled by Costing Services Television (Birmingham Registry files, statistics; File IX).

<sup>27</sup> *Ariel*, 22 Feb. 1974.

<sup>28</sup> \*General Advisory Council, *Minutes*, 7 Feb. 1973. The paper being discussed was 'The Broadcasting Role of the English Regions', 12 Dec. 1972. It included a section on ITV competition. Any changes to be made, it argued, should 'benefit the BBC's output and minimise its costs of production as a whole. While satisfying local aspirations, they should not be so planned or financed as to detract from the general effectiveness of the national network operations which are the basis of the BBC's comprehensive public service.'

the Welsh language, the survival of which was seen as 'the key to the preservation of Welsh culture', was fighting a difficult and protracted battle. In the allocation of a fourth channel, priority should be given in Wales to the establishment of a separate Welsh-language service, and it should be established, even though it might entail a Government subsidy. A certain amount of time would have to elapse.<sup>29</sup>

The first step to carry forward the Crawford Committee recommendations was taken soon after the Annan Committee met, when a Working Party was set up under the chairmanship of J. M. W. Siberry, formerly of the Welsh Office, to consider how best such a channel could be set up and how it should be financed.<sup>30</sup> Most of the other recommendations of the Crawford Committee were passed over to the Annan Committee to consider.<sup>31</sup>

One whole area of broadcasting, external broadcasting, fell completely outside the Annan Committee's remit. It was an important, if understandable, omission in 1974, but it had bearings on most decisions concerning the future shape, structure, and financing of broadcasting.<sup>32</sup> The changing international context was, of course, significant entirely in its own right. Between the Suez crisis and the 1973 crisis there had been a huge increase in the number of radio sets, particularly in Africa and the Middle East. In the Middle East there had been about 2 million sets at the time of the Suez crisis: in 1973 there were 19 million.<sup>33</sup> It seemed a sign of hope in any radio war that the Soviet Union stopped jamming BBC broadcasts in September 1973.<sup>34</sup> Britain was then sixth in the league of international broadcasters.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>29</sup> The BBC provided substantial evidence on this subject to the Crawford Committee, including reports from the Broadcasting Councils for Wales (30 July 1973) and Scotland (July 1973) and from the Advisory Council for Northern Ireland (Aug. 1973). Lady Avonside, Chairman of the Scottish Broadcasting Council, described the report on Scotland as 'the best amalgam we can achieve of the passionately-held views of this divergent group of Scots' (\*Avonside to Swann, July 1973 (R78/160/1)).

<sup>30</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1976, p. 15.

<sup>31</sup> *Hansard*, vol. 881, written answers, col. 475, 21 Nov. 1974.

<sup>32</sup> *The People and the Media* ignored the subject altogether.

<sup>33</sup> *Ariel*, 18 May 1973. In Africa numbers had risen from 360,000 to over 11m. The figures based on UNESCO reports were given by Mansell in an address to the Royal Institute of International Affairs, reported in *Ariel*.

<sup>34</sup> In *ibid.*, 30 Nov. 1973, Noel Clark, External Services News Correspondent for East and Central Europe, described other difficulties in reporting from Communist countries: e.g., when Mrs Ceauşescu, wife of Romania's President, was promoted to membership of the Party's Executive Bureau, no biographical details could be found about her.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 May 1973. At that time, however, the Soviet Union, at the head of the league, China, and Egypt were broadcasting in no fewer than forty-eight languages in which there were no programmes either from the BBC or from the Voice of America.

Suez had created serious immediate and long-term problems for external broadcasting, but the first effect of the Arab/Israeli War in 1973 was to create new opportunities. While the War lasted, it was news everywhere. There was even greater hunger for reliable, up-to-date information abroad than there was in Britain. In Yugoslavia, for example, there was a steep increase in listening to the BBC at a time when 'the local Yugoslav media were suspected of distortion'.<sup>36</sup> Within twenty-four hours of the outbreak of war, current affairs output in Arabic had been trebled, and no fewer than sixty-nine speakers took part in a series of *Middle East Specials*. Meanwhile, the Hebrew Unit sent over 300 direct date-line reports.<sup>37</sup> There was also intense activity at Caversham.

In the same year, during the Cyprus crisis, a writer to *The Times* described another great increase in listening to the BBC. 'These events', he stated, 'demonstrate the continued world-wide reputation of the BBC as a source of truth and objectivity, free of Government control. As such it is particularly valued in areas where all information services are controlled to serve the purpose of the current Government and trustworthy information as distinct from mere propaganda is virtually unobtainable.'<sup>38</sup>

At the beginning of 1974 the sense of opportunity was still strong, but ironically, the Arab/Israeli War had created long-term financial problems. As a consequence of Britain's domestic crisis, which was directly related to the international energy crisis, the Foreign Office, pressed by the Treasury, asked BBC External Services to find revenue savings on the 1974-5 budget amounting to £600,000. All this preceded the first general election of 1974, and although the £600,000 was later reduced to £400,000, serious cuts had to be made, not least in the Monitoring Service, which had been so important during the 1973 war. There were bigger cuts still in the Transcription Service, and there was a loss of one important post in a sensitive political area—that of a Foreign Correspondent based in Teheran with the responsibility of covering Iran, Turkey, and Pakistan.

Learning of such problems, sections of the Press rallied strongly to the BBC. 'It looks as if the Treasury wants a big cutback in the BBC's

<sup>36</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1975, p. 65.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>38</sup> The letter is quoted in Mansell's 'Report on the External Services to the Board of Governors, 20 Sept. 1974. He also referred to telephone calls during the crisis from the Greek Press Attaché in London, seeking information, and to other requests, from King Constantine and Archbishop Makarios.



overseas services', *The Economist* stated in the second of two articles on 'The Radio War' in March 1974. 'It would be a very expensive saving.'<sup>39</sup> If the rumoured cuts were to be made, the *Evening Standard* observed, 'Britain would drop right down the league table of overseas broadcasters to a place below Egypt's propaganda station'.<sup>40</sup> Financial pressure did not as yet seriously inhibit programming. Yet, while in 1974/5 Jacob Bronowski's last major work for broadcasting, *Voyage Round a Twentieth Century Skull*, was being recorded specifically for overseas audiences, a series on economics was called very appositely *Understanding Inflation*.<sup>41</sup>

The long-term implications of the financial crisis, which worsened during 1974, preoccupied Mansell, who was particularly sad to see a huge modernization project for Bush House placed in jeopardy. Work had begun, 'not without teething troubles', at the beginning of 1974, but the scheme now had to be drastically modified. Nor was it only building and maintenance that were under threat. Yet another Civil Service Departmental investigation into Bush House's use of resources was carried out later in 1974—a three-man study, led by Ron Burton—and although Mansell knew that he now had strong Foreign Office support, he found it necessary to issue a warning that a 10 per cent cut in the budget would result not only in staff cuts but in a reduction of 25 per cent in programmes.<sup>42</sup>

Not surprisingly, therefore, there was a demand for a full public inquiry into external broadcasting at the very time that the Annan Committee was holding its first meetings to inquire into domestic broadcasting. The Governors were deeply concerned, too, as Mansell presented his yearly report to them in the autumn of 1974. One of them described it as 'beautiful but sad'. 'Could not the Board', he asked, 'lean on someone on behalf of the External Services. Here was the jewel in the BBC's crown.'<sup>43</sup>

Could anyone, including Annan, be leaned on as far as the BBC's domestic services were concerned? As the year 1974 drew to a close—and with it this history—the financial problems of broadcasting loomed larger than any others. There were even pressures on Christmas programmes, with BBC-2 offering nothing new that was

<sup>39</sup> *The Economist*, 23, 30 March 1974. The first article was called 'One Battle We're Winning'.

<sup>40</sup> *Evening Standard*, 22 March 1974.

<sup>41</sup> *BBC Handbook*, 1976, p. 60.

<sup>42</sup> *Ariel*, 3 April 1974.

<sup>43</sup> \*Board of Governors, *Minutes*, 26 Sept. 1974.

expensive and with further cuts being confirmed in all services, to start on 4 January 1975.<sup>44</sup> Among the decisions announced—and they applied both to television and to radio—BBC-2 programmes were to disappear between 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. on Monday to Friday, on Saturdays in the summer, and on Sundays in the winter, and Radios 1 and 2 were to be amalgamated.

For Curran, the two key words to keep in mind at the end of the year 1974 were 'excellence' and 'uncertainty'. The evidence of BBC excellence in programming he considered overwhelming.<sup>45</sup> The uncertainty came from outside. 'We have no decision about the licence fee and no knowledge of when we may expect one.'<sup>46</sup> Swann too, who had made few comments on finance earlier in the year, now began to make more gloomy statements; and the *BBC Handbook, 1976*, which incorporated the *Annual Report and Accounts for 1974–75*, began with the grim words: 'It is inevitable that this report should open, like its predecessor, with a discussion of financial matters.'<sup>47</sup>

By the time that this report appeared, however, the licence fee had been increased, on 29 January 1975—the monochrome licence from £7 to £8 and the colour licence from £12 to £18, with history once again inexorably repeating itself as the increase was not to take place until 1 April. Of the years that were to follow after 1975, Swann was to remark that 'we were forever either having just got an inadequate increase or preparing the ground to try to get another increase'.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>44</sup> *Ariel*, 24 Dec. 1974. In *ibid.*, 17 Dec. 1974, Milne announced that BBC-2 would provide 'a quiet and low-key alternative to an entertaining and spectacular BBC-1'. On 25 Dec. 1974 BBC-1 offered among other items *Billy Smart's Christmas Circus*, *The Mike Yarwood Christmas Show*, *Parkinson Takes a Look at Morecambe and Wise*, the film *Bridge on the River Kwai*, and *Bruce Forsyth and the Generation Game*. BBC-2 presented a repeat of *La Traviata*, the film of Olivier's *Henry V*, and a film, *Futtock's End*, starring Ronnie Barker.

<sup>45</sup> For reviews of 1974 programmes by a number of viewers and listeners, including Lindsay Anderson, Benny Green, Hugh Jenkins, Ken Russell, Mrs Whitehouse, and Oliver Whitley, see *The Listener*, 19 and 26 Dec. 1974. It pictured some of them, including Mrs Whitehouse, on its front page. Mrs Whitehouse praised the 'fast-moving' *Generation Game*; Russell called *The Family* 'a real life soap opera without the soap', 'the best TV for years'; and Whitley complained that television did not tackle social problems in depth. Among the problems that he mentioned were alcohol and its abuse, school indiscipline, tax evasion, and property speculation.

<sup>46</sup> *Ariel*, 24 Dec. 1974. Wheldon's message to television staff began: 'We have had our share of difficulties during 1974 and I see no reason for believing that 1975 is going to be any easier.'

<sup>47</sup> *BBC Handbook, 1976*, p. 9. Swann's introduction to the *BBC Handbook, 1974*, the first he had written, had dealt with finance as a perennial rather than an exceptional issue. 'There are—as always—problems of finance.'

<sup>48</sup> \*Swann, interviewed by Gillard, 23 March 1981.

Was the BBC then secure as an institution?<sup>49</sup> That now depended in the first instance on the response of the Annan Committee, or, more accurately, on what a Government of the future would do with the Report of the Annan Committee. Sir Hugh Greene would have been confident, because he understood the logic as well as the experience that lay behind the case for public broadcasting. Indeed, in an earlier 'examination of broadcasting finance' he had boldly asserted that the BBC had acquired the same historic character in Britain as the Standing Army. 'Just as nobody seriously imagines that the Army would be disbanded, so it would be assumed by most people that the periodic review of broadcasting in Britain will not lead to the abolition of the BBC.'<sup>50</sup>

Despite *The People and the Media* and despite occasional thunder on the Right, most people, including Annan himself, still shared that assumption on 1 January 1975. All else for this historian is round the corner.

<sup>49</sup> The question had been asked by Rod Allen in *Television Mail*, 3 Nov. 1972, at the time of the jubilee, when he suggested percipiently, but prematurely, that the BBC was 'simply another broadcaster in the growing ranks of British broadcasters'. None the less, he ended his article with praise of Reith, and posed the question: 'Shall we burn down the mission—or does it have in it the promise to let us give it another chance?'

<sup>50</sup> *What Price Culture? An Examination of Broadcasting Finance*, an address to the Verein für Literatur und Kunst, Duisberg, 11 Oct. 1966, p. 6. Sir Arthur Forde had told the Pilkington Committee on 29 March 1961 that after he had been made Chairman Jacob had said to him, with no army parallel to make, 'You have got to get it into your head that the BBC is a jolly fine show' and 'when you do get involved in it you will realise that . . . it would take a very long time and a fairly strong man to wreck it' (PRO HO 244/311).

# Appendix A

## *Numbers of Licences Issued*

| Year | Radio     | TV and Radio | Colour TV | Total      |
|------|-----------|--------------|-----------|------------|
| 1955 | 9,476,730 | 4,503,766    |           | 13,980,496 |
| 1956 | 8,521,958 | 5,739,593    |           | 14,261,551 |
| 1957 | 7,558,843 | 6,966,256    |           | 14,525,099 |
| 1958 | 6,556,347 | 8,090,003    |           | 14,646,350 |
| 1959 | 5,480,991 | 9,255,422    |           | 14,736,413 |
| 1960 | 4,535,258 | 10,469,753   |           | 15,005,011 |
| 1961 | 3,908,984 | 11,267,741   |           | 15,176,725 |
| 1962 | 3,538,507 | 11,833,712   |           | 15,372,219 |
| 1963 | 3,256,185 | 12,442,802   |           | 15,698,991 |
| 1964 | 2,999,348 | 12,885,331   |           | 15,884,679 |
| 1965 | 2,793,558 | 13,253,045   |           | 16,046,603 |
| 1966 | 2,611,066 | 13,567,090   |           | 16,178,156 |
| 1967 | 2,505,934 | 14,267,271   |           | 16,773,205 |
| 1968 | 2,557,314 | 15,068,079   | 20,428    | 17,645,821 |
| 1969 | 2,463,872 | 15,396,642   | 99,419    | 17,959,933 |
| 1970 | 2,301,191 | 15,609,131   | 273,297   | 18,183,719 |
| 1971 | abolished | 15,333,221   | 609,969   | 15,943,190 |
| 1972 |           | 15,023,691   | 1,634,760 | 16,658,451 |
| 1973 |           | 13,792,623   | 3,331,996 | 17,124,619 |
| 1974 |           | 11,766,424   | 5,558,146 | 17,324,570 |

## **Appendix B**

*Numbers of BBC Staff (as of  
31 March of each year)*

| Year | Number |
|------|--------|
| 1955 | 13,524 |
| 1956 | 14,519 |
| 1957 | 15,242 |
| 1958 | 15,472 |
| 1959 | 16,108 |
| 1960 | 16,889 |
| 1961 | 17,515 |
| 1962 | 18,012 |
| 1963 | 18,940 |
| 1964 | 20,836 |
| 1965 | 22,128 |
| 1966 | 22,758 |
| 1967 | 22,898 |
| 1968 | 22,933 |
| 1969 | 23,753 |
| 1970 | 23,854 |
| 1971 | 24,761 |
| 1972 | 24,857 |
| 1973 | 24,882 |
| 1974 | 25,131 |
| 1975 | 26,080 |

## Appendix C

### *BBC Radio and Television: Operating Expenditure (£)*

| Year    | Radio      | Television |
|---------|------------|------------|
| 1955-6  | 10,930,584 | 7,033,044  |
| 1956-7  | 11,570,053 | 9,095,889  |
| 1957-8  | 11,856,120 | 11,149,207 |
| 1958-9  | 11,441,818 | 13,988,812 |
| 1959-60 | 11,902,019 | 15,815,904 |
| 1960-1  | 12,613,060 | 17,946,535 |
| 1961-2  | 13,551,189 | 20,157,485 |
| 1962-3  | 14,576,341 | 22,825,496 |
| 1963-4  | 15,076,409 | 27,587,960 |
| 1964-5  | 16,221,892 | 35,847,719 |
| 1965-6  | 17,146,162 | 38,496,302 |
| 1966-7  | 17,975,970 | 42,769,027 |
| 1967-8  | 19,394,628 | 47,461,763 |
| 1968-9  | 20,801,713 | 54,189,388 |
| 1969-70 | 21,706,926 | 59,447,503 |
| 1970-1  | 24,657,458 | 67,520,733 |
| 1971-2  | 27,906,000 | 73,730,000 |
| 1972-3  | 30,827,000 | 81,895,000 |
| 1973-4  | 33,933,000 | 90,497,000 |

*Source:* Annual Reports to Parliament.



## Appendix D

### BBC External Services: Income and Expenditure

| Year    | Income (£) | Operating expenditure (£) | Capital expenditure (£) | Other expenditure (£) | Grant-in-Aid carried forward (£) |
|---------|------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1955-6  | 5,370,430  | 5,092,554                 | 275,114                 | 30,000                | 35,607                           |
| 1956-7  | 5,781,582  | 5,441,933                 | 324,287                 | —                     | 50,969                           |
| 1957-8  | 6,078,931  | 5,841,173                 | 225,423                 | —                     | 63,304                           |
| 1958-9  | 6,271,797  | 5,912,079                 | 239,821                 | 89,881                | 93,320                           |
| 1959-60 | 6,694,940  | 6,363,676                 | 295,148                 | 19,678                | 109,758                          |
| 1960-1  | 6,614,139  | 6,407,530                 | 204,062                 | —                     | 112,305                          |
| 1961-2  | 7,423,566  | 6,978,276                 | 481,590                 | —                     | 76,005                           |
| 1962-3  | 7,731,750  | 7,175,125                 | 368,921                 | 189,276               | 74,433                           |
| 1963-4  | 8,071,706  | 7,585,575                 | 528,954                 | 1,103                 | 30,507 <sup>a</sup>              |
| 1964-5  | 9,583,451  | 8,021,571                 | 1,354,510               | 2,814                 | 111,326 <sup>b</sup>             |
| 1965-6  | 10,569,172 | 8,498,884                 | 2,024,209               | 4,502                 | 152,903                          |
| 1966-7  | 11,630,543 | 9,503,324                 | 2,047,211               | 5,097                 | 227,814                          |
| 1967-8  | 10,609,829 | 9,431,034                 | 1,133,836               | 7,869                 | 264,904                          |
| 1968-9  | 11,107,621 | 9,894,222                 | 1,318,733               | 6,942                 | 152,628                          |
| 1969-70 | 11,531,436 | 10,613,970                | 957,185                 | 649                   | 112,260                          |
| 1970-1  | 13,212,609 | 11,756,914                | 1,494,885               | 9,520                 | 63,550                           |
| 1971-2  | 14,177,000 | 13,191,000                | 895,000                 | 8,000                 | 143,000                          |
| 1972-3  | 15,076,000 | 14,025,000                | 755,000                 | 51,000                | 388,000                          |
| 1973-4  | 16,746,000 | 15,808,000                | 1,074,000               | -20,000               | 272,000                          |

\* Other expenditure is mainly income tax or corporation tax.

<sup>a</sup> Less £43,283 inc. tax written back = £12,776 deficit.

<sup>b</sup> A further £80,454 inc. tax written back.

Source: Annual Reports to Parliament.

## Appendix E

### 1969 Revision of the 1948 *Aide-Mémoire*

1. In view of its executive responsibilities the Government of the day has the right to explain events to the public, or seek co-operation of the public, through the medium of broadcasting.
2. Experience has shown that such occasions are of two kinds and that different arrangements are appropriate for each.
3. The first category relates to Ministers wishing to explain legislation or administrative policies approved by Parliament, or to seek the co-operation of the public in matters where there is a general consensus of opinion. The BBC will provide suitable opportunities for such broadcasts within the regular framework of their programmes; there will be no right of reply by the Opposition.
4. The second category relates to more important and normally infrequent occasions, when the Prime Minister or one of his most senior Cabinet colleagues wishes to broadcast to the nation in order to provide information or explanation of events of prime national or international importance, or to seek the co-operation of the public in connection with such events.
5. The BBC will provide the Prime Minister or Cabinet Minister with suitable facilities on each occasion in this second category. Following such an occasion they may be asked to provide an equivalent opportunity for a broadcast by a leading Member of the Opposition, and will in that event do so.
6. When the Opposition exercises this right to broadcast, there will follow as soon as possible, arranged by the BBC, a broadcast discussion of the issues between a Member of the Cabinet and a senior Member of the Opposition nominated respectively by the Government and Opposition but not necessarily those who gave the preceding broadcasts. An opportunity to participate in such a discussion should be offered to a representative of any other party with electoral support at the time in question on a scale not appreciably less than that of the Liberal Party at the date of this *Aide Memoire*.
7. As it will be desirable that such an Opposition broadcast and discussion between Government and Opposition should follow the preceding broadcast with as little delay as possible, a request for the necessary facilities by the Opposition should reach the BBC before noon on the day following the Ministerial Broadcast. This will enable the BBC to arrange the Opposition broadcast and the discussion as soon as possible.
8. Copies of the scripts of these broadcasts will be supplied to the Leaders of the Government, the Opposition and of other parties where they participate.
9. These arrangements will be reviewed annually.

## Appendix F

### Appendix to News and Current Affairs Meeting, Minutes of 1 October 1971, Standing Instructions on Coverage of Events in Northern Ireland

During the last two years reports of discussions at the News and Current Affairs meeting have included a number of rulings, instructions and notes for the guidance of reporting and editorial staff about the coverage of events in Northern Ireland. These are now summarised here, with minute numbers in parenthesis, and will be brought up to date from time to time.

#### PASSING IT ON

Recipients of these Minutes must pay the most scrupulous attention to the communication of editorial instructions, including those contained in the Minutes, to the people who have to carry them out (210/71).

#### CONSULTATION

C.N.I. has the right to be consulted about all programmes having a bearing on the constitutional position in Ireland as a whole, and on the relationship of Northern Ireland to the United Kingdom. He does not have a veto, but his advice might sometimes amount to a suspensory veto, in that E.N.C.A., or, if necessary, D.G. himself, may have to make the editorial decision if C.N.I. and the programme people concerned are not in agreement (134/71). Martin Wallace (News Editor, Northern Ireland) is the first point of contact in any consultation with C.N.I. (104/71).

#### THE BBC'S RESPONSIBILITY

Whatever happens, the BBC has a continuing responsibility to report facts and reflect opinions for its audience in the United Kingdom as a whole. Coverage should be such as to make it unnecessary for C.N.I. to want to opt out, and yet fulfil the BBC's responsibility to the audience as a whole (401/69). This guidance originated in discussion of the crisis in the middle of August 1969. It underlies everything that has been said about coverage in these Minutes since then.

#### OPTING OUT OF NORTHERN IRELAND A LAST RESORT

BBC Northern Ireland opted out of "Panorama" on 6 July 1970 with D.G.'s permission, because of anxiety about the effect of some of the material in the programme on people in Northern

Ireland at a time of even greater tension than usual. In discussion of such opt-outs it has been made clear that the network may only be broken as a last resort when all other possibilities have been explored, and then only on the authority of D.G. or his deputy. Not all applications to opt out have the same motivation. For instance, C.N.I. opted out of "24 Hours" on 28 September 1971 in order to make room for an extended regional opt-out programme on the tri-partite talks in London. But D.G.'s permission was still required.

INTERVIEWS WITH  
MEMBERS OF PROSCRIBED  
ORGANISATIONS

In practice this has meant interviews with members of the IRA. Since the end of April 1971 all such interviews have been banned, on the instructions of D.G. If the ban were lifted, such interviews would still be subject to special precautions, including consultation and reference *before* embarking on them, giving no undertaking to shield the identity of the persons interviewed (168/70), and ensuring that no payment was made for the interviews (86/71). The case for broadcasting an interview with such people would always have to be very strong indeed. Nor must the audience be left in any doubt of the BBC's utter hostility to terrorism in Northern Ireland. What has been said about interviews with the IRA applies also to items on the training of the IRA in Southern Ireland if such items include interviews. If they do not, such items still need authorisation by E.N.C.A.

VISITS TO NORTHERN  
IRELAND

D.G. has on several occasions urged Heads of Groups to follow the example of Ed.Tel.N. and Ed.R.N. by sending some of their people to Belfast on brief attachments to enable them to get the feel of the situation. E.N.C.A. has emphasised the need to ensure that members of staff have the opportunity to experience conditions for themselves. "They were not working on a story about Patagonian Indians but about a place in which the BBC's output reached into every home" (533/71).

BOMB "SCARES" IN B.H.  
BELFAST

These are not to be treated lightly. Internal knowledge of bomb "scares" in B.H. Belfast should not be used to provide a public explanation of failure to get a current affairs story from there (533/71). Network programmes should not report bomb "scares" concerning BBC buildings, though factual reports that BBC buildings have

- had to be evacuated are permissible after the event.
- ATTRIBUTION OF RTE NEWS FILM  
If normal editorial considerations suggest that it would be right to identify a piece of news film as having been supplied by RTE then it should be so identified. Its origin should not be disguised, but there may be occasions when identification is unnecessary.
- ILLEGAL RADIO STATIONS  
Recordings of broadcasts by illegal radio stations are not to be used in BBC programmes without reference to E.N.C.A. (502/71)
- Last but not least*
- FAIRNESS  
The following ruling by M.D.X.B., endorsed by D.G., is still in force: It is necessary, in each current affairs programme concerned with Northern Ireland, whether on radio or television, to aim at treatment defensible as a whole on grounds of fairness, even if this has to be contrived against the flow of the news, which would be the normal and legitimate criterion in less exceptional circumstances (543/71).
- N.B.  
Martin Wallace's special attachment in London ended at the end of September, and on 1 October 1971 E.N.C.A. suspended his instruction that all current affairs items on Northern Ireland should be referred to him or his deputy. But reference to Martin Wallace is still the rule.

## Chronology (1955–1974)

In this chronology TV programmes or events marked with an asterisk also on ITV

| Year        | BBC   | ITV   | UK  | World Events   |
|-------------|---|---|---|--|
| <b>1955</b> | Ch: Sir Alexander Cadogan<br>DG: Sir Ian Jacob                              | Ch: Sir Kenneth Clark<br>DG: Sir Robert Fraser                    | PM: Churchill; Eden (from 5 April)<br>PMG: De La Warr; Hill (from 7 April)  |  |
| Jan.        | 7: <i>The Grove Family</i> (TV)   | 14: First meeting of ITA Advertising Advisory Committee           |   |  |
| Feb.        | 18: Four MPs, speaking in <i>In the News</i> , protest against 14-Day Rule. |   | 2: 4-year motorway plan announced by Government.<br>PMG agrees weekly max. of 50 hours on TV for BBC and ITV plus OBs and religious programmes. | 8: Khrushchev effectively takes power in USSR.                                   |
| March       |   |   | 26: Newspaper strike, no national newspapers until 21 April   |  |
| April       | 13: <i>For Deaf Children</i> (TV) (later called <i>Vision On</i> )          | Television Programme Contractors Association formed (later ITCA). |   | 18: Einstein dies.<br>24: Bandung communiqué signed by 29 non-aligned countries. |
| May         | 2: First VHF radio station opened at Wrotham.                               |   | 27: Conservatives, led by Eden, win general election.   | 5: West Germany declared a sovereign state.<br>14: Warsaw Pact signed.           |



| Year          | BBC  | ITV  | UK   | World Events   |
|---------------|--|--|--|--|
| May           |  |  | 31: After wave of strikes, state of emergency announced.                                   |  |
| June          | 14: <i>Look</i> (TV)<br>29: <i>Life with the Lyons</i> (TV)  | 2: Publication by ITA of <i>Principles of TV Advertising</i>   | 14: Rail strike called off.<br>Dock strike continues.                                      |  |
| July          | 9: <i>Dixon of Dock Green</i> (TV)<br>14: BBC tells PMG it will only obey 14-Day Rule if formally prescribed to do so.<br>29: <i>This is Your Life</i> (TV)                                  |  | 1: Dock strike ends.<br>13: Ruth Ellis hanged.<br>27: PMG issues 14-Day Rule prescription. | 9: Bertrand Russell among international signatories to peace declaration.<br>24: West Germany volunteer army formed ( <i>Bundeswehr</i> ). |
| Aug.<br>Sept. | 6: <i>Brains Trust</i> (TV)<br>9: <i>Woodentops</i> (TV)<br>14: <i>Crackerjack</i> (TV)<br>22: <i>Highlight</i> (TV); Death of Grace Archer (R)<br>25: <i>From Our Own Correspondent</i> (R) | 22: Start of ITV in London area; banquet at Guildhall<br>23: <i>Dragnet, Take Your Pick</i><br>24: <i>Michaela &amp; Armand Denis</i><br>25: <i>The Adventures of Robin Hood, Free Speech, I Love Lucy, Sunday Night at the London Palladium</i><br>26: <i>Double Your Money</i> |  | 10/11: British troops arrive in Cyprus.  |
| Oct.          | 4: <i>Pick of the Pops</i> (R)<br>10: Colour TV test transmission on 405 lines from Alexandra Palace<br>19: BBC buys Ealing studios.   |  |  | 24: South Africa walks out of UN Assembly discussion.  |

|             |  |  |  |   |
|-------------|--|--|--|---|
| Nov.        | 10: BBC given exclusive right to televise cricket tests.         | 11: First meeting of ITA Children's Advisory Committee   | 8: Philby denies he was 'Third Man'.   | 26: State of emergency declared in Cyprus.<br>27: USSR claims to have exploded more powerful H-bomb |
| Dec.        |  | 7: <i>Gun Law</i> (later <i>Gunsmoke</i> )<br>14: First meeting of ITA Panel of Religious Advisers   | 14: Gaitskell voted Labour leader.   |   |
| <b>1956</b> | Ch: Cadogan<br>DG: Jacob   | Ch: Clark<br>DG: Fraser  | PM: Eden<br>PMG: Hill  |   |
| Jan.        | 26: Winter Olympics first televised from Cortina via Eurovision. | 6: <i>This Week</i><br>8: ATV broadcasts first regular Sunday evening programme— <i>About Religion</i> .   | 2: Astronomer Royal says idea of space travel is 'bilge'.<br>23: Alexander Korda dies.                 | 1: Sudan declared an independent republic.  |
| Feb.        | 1: First opera commissioned by BBC TV ( <i>Mañana</i> ).         | 10: <i>Before Your Very Eyes</i><br>17: Midlands transmitter opens for ATV (weekdays) and ABC (weekends).<br>18: ATV starts broadcasting in the Midlands.<br>29: <i>Muffin the Mule</i> (moved from BBC) | 16: Bank rate 5½ % highest since 1932.<br>17: Macmillan (Chancellor) announces tighter credit squeeze. | 25: Stalin denounced by Khrushchev at 20th Communist Party Congress.                                |

| Year  | BBC   | ITV   | UK   | World Events   |
|-------|---|---|--|--|
| March | 8: <i>Men in Battle</i> (Sir Brian Horrocks) (TV)<br>9–29: Dispute with Musicians' Union<br>28: Crystal Palace TV station opened. | 6: First meeting of CRAC at which ITV religious programmes are considered.                  | 5: Britain jams Greek broadcasts to Cyprus.<br>15: Malenkov visits Britain.                      | 2: Dismissal of General Glubb from command of Arab Legion<br>9: Makarios deported from Cyprus to Seychelles.<br>20: France recognizes Tunisian independence. |
| April | 18: <i>Music for You</i> (TV)<br>27: First TV Ministerial broadcast by PM   |   | 18: Khrushchev and Bulganin arrive in London.<br>19: Cmdr Crabb lost in dive off Portsmouth.     | 14: Ampex magnetic tape TV recorder demonstrated in Chicago.   |
| May   | 22: <i>Billy Cotton Band Show</i> (TV)<br>24: <i>Eurovision Song Contest</i> (TV)   | 3: Northern area transmitter opens for Granada (weekdays), ABC (weekends).                  | 7: <i>Look Back in Anger</i> opens at Royal Court Theatre.                                       | 20: USA drops first H-bomb on Bikini Atoll.  |
| June  |   | 5: <i>Zoo Time</i><br>13: <i>Opportunity Knocks</i>   | 26: Macmillan announces large spending cuts.<br>28: Commons vote for abolition of death penalty. | 24: Nasser elected President of Egypt.   |
| July  | 6: <i>Hancock's Half-Hour</i> (TV)  | 8: <i>The Outsider</i> (1st Armchair Theatre—shown in London 2 Aug in Television Playhouse) | 5: Clean Air Bill passed.<br>10: Lords vote against abolition of capital punishment.             | 19/20: USA and later UK refuse to fund Aswan dam in Egypt.<br>26: Nasser seizes Suez Canal.  |
| Aug.  | 8: *Eden broadcasts on Suez crisis.   |   | 16: Suez Canal Users' Conference   |  |

|       |   |  |  |   |
|-------|---|--|--|---|
| Sept. |   | 17: <i>Son of Fred</i> (The Goons)         | 2 onwards: showing of Bill Haley film causes teddy boy riots.      | 23: Suez dispute referred to Security Council by UK & France. |
|       |   |  | 12: Emergency debate on Suez                                       |   |
|       |   |  | 29: Jo Grimond succeeds Clement Davies as leader of Liberal Party. |   |
| Oct.  | 4: <i>Whack-O!</i> (TV)                           | 13: ITA and TPC become members of EBU.     | 17: Queen opens nuclear power station at Calder Hall.              | 21: Gomulka becomes Polish PM                                 |
|       | 14: <i>Meeting Point</i> (TV)                     |  | 18: Head replaces Monckton at Ministry of Defence.                 | 23: Hungarian uprising.                                       |
|       |   |  | 31: Nutting resigns from Government.                               | 29: Israel attacks Egypt.                                     |
|       |   |  | 1: First Premium Bonds on sale                                     | 31: Anglo-French bombing of Egypt.                            |
| Nov.  | 3: *Eden's second Suez broadcast                  | 3: Opening of second Northern transmitter. | 14: Commons debate on BBC 'bias'.                                  | 4: Soviet tanks enter Budapest.                               |
|       | 4: *Opposition reply by Gaitskell                 | 5: <i>What the Papers Say</i>              |  | 5: Britain and France land troops in Egypt.                   |
|       | 19: <i>Lenny the Lion</i> (TV)                    |  |  | 6: Cease-fire, Eisenhower re-elected US President.            |
| Dec.  | 98% of population covered by BBC TV transmitters. | 24: <i>Boyd QC</i>                         | 18: 14-Day Rule suspended for trial period of 6 months.            | 19: Eden ordered to take complete rest.                       |
|       |   | 31: <i>Cool for Cats</i>                   |  | 22: Start of Olympic Games in Melbourne                       |

| Year        | BBC  | ITV   | UK  | World Events  |
|-------------|--|---|---|---|
| Dec.        | 12: IRA attacks a BBC Londonderry relay station.   |   |   |   |
| <b>1957</b> | Ch: Cadogan; Sir Arthur fforde (from 1 Dec.)<br>DG: Jacob  | Ch: Clark (until 31 Aug.);<br>Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick<br>(from 7 Nov.)<br>DG: Fraser      | PM: Macmillan (from<br>10 Jan.)<br>PMG: Marples (from<br>16 Jan.)<br>11: Eden resigns from<br>House of Commons. |   |
| Jan.        | 1: <i>My Word!</i> (R)<br>5: <i>The Benny Hill Show</i> (TV)   |   |   | 15: Egypt nationalizes<br>British and French banks.   |
| Feb.        | 16: End of Toddlers' Truce<br><i>Six-Five Special</i> (TV)<br>18: <i>Tonight</i> (TV)<br>22: <i>On Safari</i> (TV) | 19: <i>Emergency Ward 10</i>  |   | 15: Gromyko becomes<br>USSR Foreign Minister.   |
| March       | 13: Start of Hausa Service   | 14: <i>Jim's Inn</i> (advertising<br>magazine)<br>25: <i>Cooper—Life with<br/>Tommy</i> | 28: Government<br>announces Makarios to<br>be released.   | 6: Ghana becomes<br>independent. Israel<br>withdraws from Gaza strip.<br>25: Treaty of Rome creates<br>Common Market. |
| April       | 1: Spaghetti harvest April<br>Fool on <i>Panorama</i><br>24: <i>The Sky at Night</i> (TV)                          |   | 10: Olivier plays in<br>Osborne's <i>The Entertainer</i> .  |   |
| May         | 30: Start of ball-by-ball<br>cricket Test Match<br>commentary on Third and<br>Light Programmes                     | 13: <i>Looking and Seeing</i><br>(first school TV<br>programme—AR)                      | 15: Emergency petrol<br>rationing ends.<br>15: Britain's first H-bomb<br>exploded on Christmas<br>Island.       |   |

|       |  |  |  |  |
|-------|--|--|--|--|
| June  | 27: Start of Swahili Service   | 17: <i>Criss Cross Quiz</i><br>19: <i>The Army Game</i><br>20: <i>Mark Saber</i>             | 1: 'Ernie' picks first Premium Bond winners.<br>26: Medical Research Council reports direct link between cancer and smoking.   |  |
| July  | 18: Start of Somali Service  |  | 15: Publication of White Paper on Overseas Information Services ( <i>Hill Report</i> )<br>20: Macmillan makes 'never had it so good' speech at Conservative rally.<br>25: PM announces indefinite suspension of 14-Day Rule. | 3: Khrushchev beats off a <i>coup</i> attempt.<br>8: De Valera announces state of emergency in Eire, and clamps down on IRA. |
| Aug.  | 9: End of Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Dutch, and Portuguese Services   | 12: First meeting of ITA's Scotland Committee<br>31: Central Scotland transmitter opens—STV. | 1: Combined TV and radio licence £3 + £1 excise duty   | 9: Some emergency provisions in Cyprus revoked.  |
| Sept. | 7: Afrikaans Service ends.<br>14: Austrian Service ends.<br>24: Start of BBC TV programmes for schools<br>30: Reorganization of radio services; start of Network Three; start of regional TV news. | 16: <i>Murder Bag</i> (later <i>No Hiding Place</i> )  | 4: Wolfenden Report suggests liberalization of homosexuality law.<br>19: Counter-inflation measures announced. 7% bank rate  | 15: Adenauer re-elected in West Germany.<br>26: Hammarskjöld re-elected UN Secretary-General for 5 years.                    |



| Year        | BBC   | ITV  | UK  | World Events  |
|-------------|---|--|---|---|
| Oct.        | 5: <i>Record Review</i> (R)<br>15: <i>Lifeline</i> (TV)<br>20: <i>Pinky and Perky</i> (TV)<br>21: First experimental use of cablefilm (Queen's arrival in New York)<br>26: <i>Saturday Night on the Light</i> (R)<br>28: <i>Today</i> (R) |  | 3: Labour Party Conference votes to renounce H-bomb.<br>17: Windscale nuclear power station shut down following fire.<br>30: Government proposes life peerages and seats for women peers in House of Lords. | 4: USSR announces launch of first man-made satellite (Sputnik I).                         |
| Nov.        |   |  |   | 3: Sputnik II launched with dog on board.   |
| Dec.        | 25: Queen's Christmas message televised for first time.   |  | 4: House of Lords debates Wolfenden recommendations.  | 6: First US satellite launch fails.   |
| <b>1958</b> | Ch: fforde<br>DG: Jacob   | Ch: Kirkpatrick<br>DG: Fraser                                      | PM: Macmillan<br>PMG: Marples   |   |
| Jan.        |   | 8: <i>Ivanhoe</i><br>14: S. Wales and West transmitter opened—TWW. | 6: Three Ministers (inc. Thorneycroft & Powell) resign over economic policy. Macmillan talks of 'little local difficulty'.  | 27/8: Anti-British riots by Turks in Cyprus<br>31: First US satellite (Explorer) in space |
| Feb.        | 2: <i>Monitor</i> (TV)<br>11: <i>Your Life in Their Hands</i> (TV)  | 12: Rochdale by-election coverage                                  | 6: Most of Manchester United football team killed in Munich air crash.  |   |

|       |  |  |  |  |
|-------|--|--|--|--|
| Feb.  | 21: Harold Macmillan appears in <i>Press Conference</i> (first time a PM figures in a regular TV programme). |  | 17: Inaugural meetings of Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND)   |  |
| March | 31: Number of combined licences (8m.) exceeds radio licences (6.8m.).  | 16: <i>The Sunday Break</i>  | 20: Bank rate cut from 7 to 6%.  | 27: Khrushchev takes over Bulganin's job and becomes supreme leader. |
| April | 14: Start of BBC Radiophonic Workshop; VERA (BBC experimental TV recording device) used in <i>Panorama</i> . | 23: <i>People in Trouble</i>   | 4: First CND march to Aldermaston<br>30: Life Peerages Act   | 29: Egypt agrees to pay £29m. compensation to Suez Canal Company.    |
| May   | 5: Experimental use of 625 lines for TV  |  |  | 2: State of emergency in Aden  |
| June  | 7: <i>White Heather Club</i> (TV)<br>14: <i>Black and White Minstrel Show</i> (TV)                           | 15: <i>Oh Boy!</i>   | 19: Bank rate cut to 5%.   | 1: De Gaulle becomes French PM.<br>9: Cypriot towns under curfew.    |
| July  | 1: <i>Beyond Our Ken</i> (R)<br>30: BBC acquires Hulton Picture Library.                                     | 1: <i>The Verdict is Yours</i><br>4: <i>The Dickie Henderson Half-Hour</i> | 3: Chancellor announces relaxation of credit squeeze.<br>26: Prince Charles created Prince of Wales.<br>25: Midland Bank first bank to offer personal loans. | 14: King Feisal of Iraq murdered; republic proclaimed.               |
| Aug.  | 23: Starting prices included in reports of racing results.   | 30: South transmitter opened—Southern TV.                                  |  | 1: Britain recognizes new regime in Iraq.                            |

| Year  | BBC   | ITV   | UK  | World Events   |
|-------|---|---|---|--|
| Aug.  |   |   | 23: Race riots in Nottingham<br>27: Hi-fi dominates Radio Show.<br>30: Race riots in Notting Hill |  |
| Sept. |   | 19: <i>The Larkins</i><br>25: <i>Parents, Children and Television</i> , research study published by ITA.<br>26: <i>Educating Archie</i> |   | 2: Verwoerd becomes PM in South Africa.<br>28: Referendum gives de Gaulle support to create 5th Republic.  |
| Oct.  | 1: Ampex video-recording equipment used at Lime Grove for first time.<br>11: <i>Grandstand</i> (TV)<br>16: <i>Blue Peter</i> (TV) |   | 21: First women peers take seats.<br>28: Opening of Parliament televised for first time.          | 1: National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) set up in USA.<br>23: USSR lends Egypt \$100m. for Aswan dam.<br>28: Pope John XXIII elected.<br>31: Start of US/UK/USSR conference on discontinuance of nuclear tests |
| Nov.  |   | 19: <i>John Gabriel Borkman</i> (Ibsen) (first TV appearance by Olivier)  | 20: Bank rate cut to 4%.  | 5: Democrats win biggest majority in Congress since 1930s.   |

Dec.

3: National Coal Board announces closure of 36 pits and open cast mines.  
5: Preston bypass (first stretch of motorway) opened by PM.

19: USSR, USA, and UK agree 4 articles of treaty at nuclear test ban conference.  
21: De Gaulle elected President.

1959· Ch: fforde  
DG: Jacob

Ch: Kirkpatrick  
DG: Fraser

PM: Macmillan  
PMG: Marples; Bevins (from 22 Oct.)

Jan. 4: *Face to Face* (TV)

15: North-east transmitter opened—Tyne Tees.

Research shows two-thirds of population own TV set; 7.6m. can receive BBC only. Viewing ratio 66 ITV : 34 BBC  
7: Britain recognizes Castro.

2: Castro proclaims new regime in Cuba.

Feb.

3: Details of new Victoria underground line unveiled by London Transport.  
4: End of credit squeeze  
10: 620,000 unemployed.

2: Indira Gandhi elected President of Congress Party.  
16: Castro becomes Cuban PM.  
21: Macmillan visits USSR.  
26: State of emergency in Southern Rhodesia  
31: Dalai Lama arrives in India from Tibet.

March

7: *The Skin of Our Teeth*  
31: *A Day by the Sea* (with Gielgud and Margaret Leighton)

| Year  | BBC   | ITV  | UK  | World Events   |
|-------|---|--|---|--|
| April | 3: <i>Pick of the Week</i> (R)<br>6: *Joint BBC/ITA committee under chairmanship of May O'Connor to study recommendations of Nuffield Report on <i>Television and the Child</i> . |  | 3: Test bore for Channel tunnel   |  |
| May   |   | 30: <i>Have Gun—Will Travel</i>  | 7: British Railways submit plans to close 230 stations.<br>12: Government announces details of space research plans.  | 5: World Bank warns that 'poverty gap' is more dangerous than 'cold war'.        |
| June  | 1: <i>Juke Box Jury</i> (TV)  |  |   | 18: Riots in South Africa over slum clearance<br>25: De Valera President of Eire |
| July  | 3: <i>Sing Something Simple</i> (R)   | 2: <i>Skyport</i><br>30: Repayment of outstanding deficit to Government by ITA | 8: BR fares rise by up to 50%.<br>27: Average male manual wage £11+ a week  |  |
| Aug.  | 31: Macmillan and Eisenhower filmed in 'conversation' at No. 10.  |  | 4: Barclays first British bank to install computer.<br>19: Coal Board announces big pit closures.<br>26: BMC unveils Mini. Transistor radios popular at Radio Show. |  |
| Sept. |   | 12: <i>The Four Just Men</i><br>14: <i>Probation Officer</i>                   | 4: Number of university entrants has doubled since 1939.  | 13: Soviet space craft hits moon.  |

|       |  |   |  |  |
|-------|--|---|--|--|
| Sept. |  |   | 17: Rank announces many cinema closures. BBC buys 20 American films.                               | 15: Khrushchev arrives in USA.   |
| Oct.  | 8: General election—campaign covered in news bulletins for first time.<br>16: <i>News Extra</i> (R)  | 13: <i>Knight Errant '59</i><br>15: First Granada Lecture<br>18: <i>No Tram to Lime Street</i> (Alun Owen)<br>27: East England transmitter opened—Anglia (1000-ft. mast tallest in Europe at time).<br>31: Northern Ireland transmitter opened—Ulster TV. | 9: Conservatives, led by Macmillan, win general election.  | 16: François Mitterand escapes assassination attempt.<br>18: Soviet space craft photographs 'dark' side of moon. |
| Nov.  | 12: Cinema première of Richard Cawston's <i>This is the BBC</i><br>22: <i>The Hundred Best Tunes in the World</i> (R) ( <i>Your Hundred Best Tunes</i> from 1 Jan. 1961) | 11: ITA rejects complaints that ITV is showing too many advertisements.   | 26: Lords debate idea of commercial radio.<br>29: Gaitskell criticized at Labour Party Conference. | 3: Ben-Gurion wins Israel general election.<br>10: End of state of emergency in Kenya                            |
| Dec.  | 19: BBC electronic field store converter used to convert American and European programmes to British standard.   |   | 18: City office planning criticized by Royal Fine Arts Commission.                                 | 14: Makarios President of Cyprus<br>16: Nkrumah proclaims Ghana a republic.                                      |



| Year        | BBC  | ITV   | UK                           | World Events   |
|-------------|--|---|------------------------------|--|
| <b>1960</b> | Ch: fforde<br>DG: Hugh Greene  | Ch: Kirkpatrick<br>DG: Fraser   | PM: Macmillan<br>PMG: Bevins |  |
| Jan.        | 6: BBC survey finds half population watch TV at peak times.<br>27: BBC proclaims it wants second TV channel.   | ITA and ITCA jointly become full members of EBU.<br>5: First meeting of ITA Northern Ireland Committee<br>31: Second Southern transmitter opened. |                              |  |
| Feb.        |  |   |                              | 2: De Gaulle obtains emergency powers to deal with Algerian question.<br>3: Macmillan makes 'wind of change' speech in Capetown.<br>17: Martin Luther King arrested. |
| March       | 4: Thai Service ends.<br>7: Kenneth Adam issues internal guide-lines on violence in TV programmes.<br>26: Grand National televised for first time.<br>31: Over 10m. combined TV and radio licences | 22: <i>The Birthday Party</i> (Harold Pinter)   |                              | 21: Sharpeville massacre<br>29: Britain and USA agree to put test-ban treaty proposals to USSR.  |

|       |  |   |  |   |
|-------|--|---|--|---|
| April | 28: <i>An Age of Kings</i> (TV)  |   | 4: Abolition of cinema tax in budget<br>6: Beeching appointed to study rail network.<br>13: Government announces scrapping of Blue Streak project.                             |   |
| May   | 6: Princess Margaret's wedding televised.  | 8: <i>Bonanza</i><br>22: <i>The Royal Variety Performance</i> televised for first time. |  | 1: US spy plane (U-2) shot down by Soviets. |
| June  | 1: *The Derby televised for first time.<br>20: First female network newsreader in vision on BBC (Nan Winton); start of French Service for Africa.<br>29: Opening of Television Centre: showing of <i>This is the BBC</i> (TV). | 13: <i>Deadline Midnight</i>  | 1: TV Advisory Committee recommends 625-line TV; against colour at this time<br>9: Armstrong Siddeley to go out of production.<br>18: Jaguar complete deal to acquire Daimler. |   |
| July  |  |   | 6: Aneurin Bevan dies.<br>13: Pilkington Committee appointed to examine broadcasting.<br>19: Summons against Penguin for planned publication of <i>Lady Chatterley's Lover</i> | 15: UN troops arrive in Congo.              |
| Aug.  |  |   |  | 16: Cyprus becomes a republic.              |

| Year  | BBC   | ITV  | UK  | World Events   |
|-------|---|--|---|--|
| Aug.  |   |  |   | 19: Gary Powers, U-2 pilot, convicted of spying in USSR.<br>25: Start of Olympic Games in Rome<br>31: E. Germans close border to West. |
| Sept. | 19: <i>Ten o'clock</i> news and current affairs programme starts on radio; protests by 'Silent Minute' Society at ending of 9p.m. news bulletin | 10: <i>77 Sunset Strip</i><br>11: <i>Danger Man</i><br>23: <i>Bootsie and Snudge</i> | 19: First day of parking tickets  | 20: 13 new African states admitted to UN.<br>26: First Kennedy-Nixon TV debate   |
| Oct.  | 31: <i>Maigret</i> (TV)   | 14: <i>Kipps</i> (H. G. Wells)   | 3: Gaitskell makes 'Fight, fight' speech at Labour Party conference.<br>17: <i>News Chronicle</i> to close and merge with <i>Daily Mail</i> .                                       | 1: Nigeria independent<br>18: <i>Pravda</i> attacks 'dogmatists', i.e. Chinese Communists.   |
| Nov.  |   |  | 2: Jury rules <i>Lady Chatterley's Lover</i> not obscene.<br>16: Gilbert Harding drops dead opposite Broadcasting House.<br>17: Anthony Wedgwood Benn succeeds to father's peerage. | 9: Kennedy elected US President.   |

|       |   |  |  |  |
|-------|---|--|--|--|
| Nov.  |   |  | 17: Last national servicemen join units.   |  |
| Dec.  | 31: 97% coverage by VHF radio transmitters  | ITA reduces amount of advertising time from 8 to 7 mins. in any clock hour.<br>9: <i>Coronation Street</i> |  |  |
| 1961  | Ch: fforde<br>DG: Greene  | Ch: Kirkpatrick<br>DG: Fraser  | PM: Macmillan<br>PMG: Bevins   |  |
| Jan.  |   |  |  | 3: USA breaks off relations with Cuba.<br>8: Referendum supports de Gaulle on Algeria.<br>Radio Veronica off Dutch coast starts to broadcast in English.<br>16: Cyprus applies to join Commonwealth. |
| Feb.  | 9: <i>Gallery</i> (TV)  | 1: <i>Survival</i><br>27: <i>First World War</i> (lectures by A. J. P. Taylor)                             | 1: PMG announces plan to build Post Office Tower.<br>8: Stormy debate in Commons on proposed NHS increased charges<br>15: Beeching appointed Head of British Rail.<br>16: Whip withdrawn from Michael Foot and 4 other Labour MPs.<br>3: Major anti-nuclear protest outside US Embassy |  |
| March | 21: Pre-race betting odds broadcast for first time.   | 18: <i>The Avengers</i>  |  |  |
| April | 7: Last <i>Children's Hour</i><br>14: First TV relay from USSR (Yuri Gagarin's return to Moscow after space flight) | 29: South-West transmitter opens—Westward TV.  |  | 11: Start of Eichmann trial in Israel<br>12: USSR puts first man into space.   |

| Year  | BBC   | ITV  | UK   | World Events   |
|-------|---|--|--|--|
| April |   |  | 18: George Blake charged under Official Secrets Acts (later gets 42-year sentence).  | 17: Bay of Pigs invasion by USA                                  |
| May   | 1: <i>Panorama</i> from Moscow<br>26: BBC wins Golden Rose at Montreux Festival.<br>29: First TV interview with member of Royal Family—Duke of Edinburgh in <i>Panorama</i> | 1: Introduction of television advertisement duty by Chancellor, to be paid by companies<br>3: <i>The Quiet War</i> | 4: Benn re-elected with increased majority, but is barred from Commons as a peer.<br>21: Amnesty International formed.   | 5: USA put man in space.   |
| June  |   | 26: <i>Harpers West One</i><br>27: <i>Route 66</i><br>28: <i>Family Solicitor</i>                                  | 28: ETU ballot declared rigged by Communists.  | 25: Iraq claims Kuwait.  |
| July  |   |  | 12: Government grant of £1m. and LCC grant of £1.3m. proposed for new National Theatre.<br>31: Macmillan announces bid to join Common Market (approved by MPs: formal application follows on 10 Aug.). | 2: British troops land in Kuwait.                                |
| Aug.  |   | ITA moves to Brompton Road.<br>11: <i>Top Secret</i><br>21: <i>Into Europe</i>                                     |  | 13: E. Germany closes Berlin border.<br>17: Berlin wall started. |

|       |   |   |  |  |
|-------|---|---|--|--|
| Sept. | 7: <i>Thanks for the Memory</i> (R)   | 1: Border transmitter opens—Border TV.<br>29: <i>Cuba . . . Si!</i><br>30: NE Scotland transmitter opens—Grampian TV. | 4: ETU expelled from TUC.<br>7: TUC votes against unilateral nuclear disarmament.<br>12: Bertrand Russell gaoled for inciting breach of peace.<br>17: Massive ban-the-bomb demonstration in Trafalgar Square. Contraceptive pill now available at family planning clinics.<br>2: First new university opens (Sussex).<br>9: Margaret Thatcher gets her first Government job as Parliamentary Secretary.<br>25: <i>Private Eye</i> published.<br>29: Government plans abolition of London County Council. | 3: USA and UK call for ban on atmospheric nuclear tests (rejected by USSR on 9th).<br>18: Hammarskjöld, UN Secretary-General, dies in air crash. |
| Oct.  | 1: <i>Songs of Praise</i> (TV)<br>2: <i>Points of View</i> (TV)<br>6: <i>The Rag Trade</i> (TV)<br>8: <i>In Touch</i> (R)<br>31: <i>Television and the World</i> (TV) | 1: <i>Tempo</i>   | 19: Government agrees principle of currency decimalization.  | 3: U Thant acting UN Secretary-General<br>10: Stalingrad renamed Volgograd.<br>9: USSR breaks relations with Albania.                            |
| Nov.  | 7: Dinner at Grocers' Hall to celebrate 25th anniversary of BBC TV  |   |  |  |
| Dec.  |   | 1: Second border transmitter opens.   |  |  |



| Year        | BBC  | ITV   | UK   | World Events   |
|-------------|--|---|--|--|
| <b>1962</b> | Ch: fforde<br>DG: Greene                                   | Ch: Kirkpatrick; Sir John Carmichael (acting from 7 Nov.)<br>DG: Fraser | PM: Macmillan<br>PMG: Bevin  |  |
| Jan.        | 2: <i>Z Cars</i> (TV)<br><i>Compact</i> (TV)               |   | 1: Start of Post Office work to rule   | 4: Kennedy increases aid to South Vietnam.<br>14: EEC agrees Common Agricultural Policy.<br>20: John Glenn first American to orbit earth |
| Feb.        |  |   | 4: <i>Sunday Times</i> colour supplement<br>26: IRA calls end to 5-year campaign of violence.<br>27: Bill passed curbing immigration.<br>15: Liberals win Orpington by-election. |  |
| March       |  |   |  | 4: Nehru wins Indian general election.   |
| April       | 13: <i>Animal Magic</i> (TV)                               |   |  | 8: 90% vote in France in favour of Algerian peace accord.  |
| May         |  | 25: ITA Conference on Adult Education                                   | 25: New Coventry Cathedral consecrated.<br>29: Share prices fall in biggest slump since Munich crisis.   | 12: Kennedy sends troops to Laos.<br>31: Eichmann hanged.  |
| June        | 3: Thai Service resumes.<br>7: <i>Steptoe and Son</i> (TV) | 30: <i>The Morecambe and Wise Show</i><br><i>Police 5</i>               | 27: Report of Pilkington Committee published.  |  |

|       |   |   |  |   |
|-------|---|---|--|---|
| July  | <p>BBC's first computer installed for audience research work.<br/>         1: 4th Charter extended to 29 July 1964.</p> | 6: <i>Saki</i>  | <p>4: White paper authorizes BBC to increase hours of radio broadcasting and to start second TV channel; offer of extra hours for adult education if BBC and ITA can agree on a definition.<br/>         11: First live TV transmission by Telstar satellite<br/>         13: Macmillan sacks 7 members of Cabinet.<br/>         17: Hovercraft launched.<br/>         9: Olivier to head new National Theatre</p> | <p>3: France proclaims Algeria independent.<br/>         10: Martin Luther King gaoled. Telstar satellite launched.</p> |
| Aug.  | <p>16: <i>Dr. Finlay's Casebook</i> (TV)<br/>         28: Start of experimental stereo radio transmissions</p>          | <p>1: Channel Islands transmitter opens—Channel TV.<br/>         14: Full ITV coverage of UK attained with opening of Wales, West, and North and associated transmitter.<br/>         19: <i>Bulldog Breed</i><br/>         21: <i>University Challenge</i></p> | <p>11: Commonwealth leaders against Britain joining EEC<br/>         19: Royal Commission recommends a more powerful Press Council.</p>  | <p>13–30: Riots at Berlin wall<br/>         22: De Gaulle escapes 4th assassination attempt.</p>                        |
| Sept. |   |   |  | <p>16: 20 refugees escape by tunnelling under Berlin wall.<br/>         30: Race riots in Mississippi</p>               |

| Year  | BBC   | ITV   | UK  | World Events   |
|-------|---|---|---|--|
| Sept. |   | 24: First meeting of ITA Advisory Committee on Charitable Appeals (later Central Appeals Advisory Council with BBC)<br>30: <i>The Saint</i> |   |  |
| Oct.  | 30: <i>The Men from the Ministry</i> (R)  |   | 22: William Vassall gaoled for 18 years for spying.   | 28: End of Cuban missile crisis; De Gaulle plans direct Presidential elections after referendum. |
| Nov.  | 5: English by Television Service launched at Press Conference.<br>11: <i>Elgar</i> (Ken Russell) (TV)<br>24: <i>That Was The Week That Was</i> (TV) | 28: <i>Elektra</i> (in Greek)   | 5: Purchase tax on cars halved.   | 1: USSR launches rocket to Mars.<br>28: Nelson Mandela gaoled for 5 years.                       |
| Dec.  |   | 23: First ITV national charitable appeal  | 4/5: London smog causes deaths.<br>16: Macmillan–de Gaulle talks on British entry to EEC end deadlocked.<br>18: Second White Paper rejects Pilkington proposal to restructure ITV, but increases powers of ITA; agrees on formula for adult education broadcasts. |  |

|             |  |  |   |  |
|-------------|--|--|---|--|
| Dec.        |  |  | 21: Deal announced on purchase of American Polaris missiles for UK submarines.  |  |
| <b>1963</b> | Ch: fforde<br>DG: Greene   | Ch: Carmichael; Lord Hill<br>(from 1 July)<br>DG: Fraser   | PM: Macmillan; Home<br>(from 18 Oct.)<br>PMG: Bevins  |  |
| Jan.        | 7: Northern Ireland Home Service separated from NE England Home Service.<br>15: BBC ends ban on politics, royalty, religion, and sex in comedy programmes. | 7: <i>World in Action</i><br>20: First regular adult education programmes following agreement with PMG on extra hours  | 14: De Gaulle vetoes British entry to EEC.<br>18: Gaitskell dies.   | 14: De Gaulle turns down US offer of Polaris missiles. |
| Feb.        |  | 1: First meeting of ITA Welsh Committee<br>4: <i>The Plane Makers</i><br>8: First meeting of ITA Adult Education Committee<br>First issue of the ITA Annual Handbook<br>26: <i>War and Peace</i><br>31: Ban on advertising magazines takes effect. | 14: Harold Wilson selected as new leader of Labour Party.   | 14: Another assassination attempt on de Gaulle foiled. |
| March       | 4: Bidault interview on <i>Panorama</i>  |  | 15: John Profumo denies offer of resignation.<br>26: Large demonstration by unemployed dispersed by mounted police outside Commons. |  |

| Year  | BBC                             | ITV   | UK   | World Events   |
|-------|---------------------------------|---|--|--|
| March |                                 |   | 27: Beeching report on railways recommends large cuts. |  |
| April | 28: Portuguese Service resumes. | 2: <i>Crane</i>                             | 15: Large Aldermaston march reaches London.            | 12: Martin Luther King arrested again in USA.  |
| May   |                                 | 31: <i>Stars and Garters The Victorians</i> |  | 7: Wynne-Penkovsky trial begins in Moscow.<br>12: Kennedy sends troops to Alabama to quell race riots.<br>27: Kenyatta becomes Kenya's first PM after first general election.                  |
| June  |                                 | 12: <i>Men of Our Time</i>                  | 5: Profumo resigns.                                    | 3: Death of Pope John XXIII; succeeded by Paul VI.<br>4: Khomeini arrested in Teheran; riots follow.<br>16: Soviets put first woman in space.<br>26: Kennedy proclaims 'Ich bin ein Berliner'. |

|       |                                |  |  |   |
|-------|--------------------------------|--|--|---|
| July  |                                | <p>31: ITA given various new responsibilities under Television Act, including guiding programme-makers on portrayal of violence; ITA extended to 1976.</p>     | <p>1: Government admits Philby was 'Third Man'.<br/>                 22: Start of Stephen Ward trial. Fierce debate in Commons over Rachman scandal.<br/>                 31: Television Act passed. Peerage Act receives royal assent. (Benn later disclaims peerage and announces intention of standing for Commons.)<br/>                 3: Ward dies after taking overdose.<br/>                 8: Great train robbery</p> | <p>21: China–Russia talks adjourned.</p> <p>5: Treaty signed in Moscow banning atmospheric nuclear tests.<br/>                 27: King makes 'I have a dream' speech.<br/>                 29: De Gaulle criticizes US military intervention in Indo-China.<br/>                 30: Guy Burgess dies in Moscow.</p> |
| Aug.  | 16: <i>Marriage Lines</i> (TV) | 9: <i>Ready, Steady, Go</i> ,  |  |   |
| Sept. |                                | <p>16: ITA invites applicants for new ITV contracts to run from July 1964.<br/>                 17: First meeting of ITA Scottish Religious Advisory Panel</p> | <p>8: Wilson refers to a University of the Air in speech in Glasgow.<br/>                 10: American Express sterling cards introduced in UK.</p>  |   |



| Year  | BBC   | ITV   | UK   | World Events   |
|-------|---|---|--|--|
| Sept. |   | 25: <i>Our Man at St. Mark's</i><br>29: <i>The Beverley Hillbillies</i> | 30: Wilson makes 'white heat of scientific revolution' speech.   |  |
| Oct.  | Regular adult education television programmes begin (6 series) following agreement on extra hours.                          |   | 1: Abolition of Excise Duty on TV licences—BBC receives full £4.<br>17: Newsom Report published.<br>19: Home succeeds Macmillan as PM.<br>23: Home renounces peerage and becomes Douglas-Home. Robbins Report published. | 16: Erhard succeeds Adenauer as W. German Chancellor.<br>21: UN votes against admitting China. |
| Nov.  | 23: <i>That Was The Week That Was</i> tribute to Kennedy; <i>Dr. Who</i> (TV)   |   | 18: Dartford tunnel opened.  | 22: Kennedy shot in Dallas; Johnson becomes President.<br>24: Lee Harvey Oswald shot.          |
| Dec.  | 28: TW3 taken off air earlier than planned after divided Governors' meeting.<br>30: Start of Study Session on Third Network | 20: <i>Burke's Law</i>  |  | 12: Kenya becomes independent.   |

|             |   |   |  |   |
|-------------|---|---|--|---|
| <b>1964</b> | Ch: fforde; Sir James Duff (from 26 Feb.); Lord Normanbrook (from 14 May)<br>DG: Greene | Ch: Hill<br>DG: Fraser  | PM: Douglas-Home; Wilson (from 16 Oct.)<br>PMG: Bevins;<br>Benn (from 19 Oct.)   |   |
| Jan.        | 1: Greene receives knighthood.<br><i>Top of the Pops</i> (TV)                           | 8: ITA offers new contracts to all existing companies for 1964-7. Wales West and North taken over by TWW. | Mrs Whitehouse establishes Clean Up TV Campaign (later NVLA).  |   |
| Feb.        | 17: Douglas-Home appears in <i>Panorama</i> .   | 4: First meeting of ITA General Advisory Council<br>5: <i>Freedom Road</i>                                | 6: Britain and France agree to build Channel Tunnel at cost of £160m.<br>10: London magistrate declares <i>Fanny Hill</i> obscene.<br>23: Beatles mobbed on return from USA.<br>26: Plans for 5th Polaris submarine announced.<br>27: Publication of Plowden Report on Representation Services Overseas. | 19: Papandreou wins Greek election.                                 |
| March       |   |   | 25: Television Act 1964 consolidates parts of 1954 Act with 1963 Act.  | 11: British and American embassies in Cambodia attacked by rioters. |

| Year  | BBC   | ITV  | UK   | World Events  |
|-------|---|--|--|---|
| March |   |  | 29: Radio Caroline begins illegal transmissions from ship off Essex.<br>30: Mods and Rockers clash in Margate. | 24: Nasser nationalizes Western oil companies in Egypt.   |
| April | 19: <i>Hamlet at Elsinore</i> (TV)<br>20: Start of BBC-2 (massive power failure in W. London upsets transmissions).<br>21: <i>Play School</i> (TV)<br>24: <i>Westminster at Work</i> (TV)<br>26: <i>News Review for the Deaf</i> (TV) |  |  | 13: Ian Smith becomes PM of Southern Rhodesia.<br>23: Nasser says Britain must leave Aden & Arab lands.                           |
| May   | 2: <i>Horizon</i> (TV)<br>30: <i>The Great War</i> (TV)   |  | 21: BBC survey shows Beatles to be most popular tourist attraction.<br>9: Lord Beaverbrook dies.               | 27: Nehru dies.<br>29: Palestine Liberation Organization founded.   |
| June  |   | 12: <i>The Celebrity Game Mainly Millicent</i><br>Publication of ITA Code on Violence in Programmes<br>2: First meeting of ITA Educational Advisory Council<br>14: <i>Cinema</i> |  | 12: Nelson Mandela given life sentence.   |
| July  | 13: <i>Listening Post</i> (R)<br>30: Start of 5th Royal Charter   |  | 27: Churchill's last appearance in Commons   | 2: Johnson signs Civil Rights Act.<br>19: Major race riots in NY State start in Harlem.<br>27: US sends more advisers to Vietnam. |

|       |   |   |  |   |
|-------|---|---|--|---|
| July  |   | 30: Exchequer levy on advertising revenue takes effect. |  |   |
| Aug.  | 22: <i>Match of the Day</i> (TV)<br>30: Start of Music Programme on Third Network | 17: <i>Blithe Spirit</i> (Noel Coward)                  |  | 9: UN calls for cease-fire in Cyprus.<br>12: South Africa unable to comply with conditions for entry to Olympics.   |
| Sept. |   |   | 4: Opening of Forth Road Bridge—longest in Europe<br>15: Cecil King relaunches <i>Daily Herald</i> as <i>The Sun</i> . | 5: Posthumous publication of memorandum by Togliatti, Italian Communist, calling for Euro-Communism<br>21: Malta becomes independent member of Commonwealth.<br>27: <i>Warren Commission Report</i> on Kennedy killing. |
| Oct.  | 28: Start of <i>The Wednesday Play</i> series (TV)                                | 4: <i>The Eamonn Andrews Show</i>                       | 16: Labour Party, led by Wilson, wins election by narrow majority of 4.  | 10: Start of Olympic Games in Tokyo.<br>14: Martin Luther King awarded Nobel Peace Prize.<br>15: Khrushchev replaced by Brezhnev in holiday <i>coup</i> .<br>16: China explodes atomic bomb.                            |

| Year        | BBC   | ITV   | UK  | World Events   |
|-------------|---|---|---|--|
| Nov.        | 13: <i>Not So Much a Programme, More a Way of Life</i> (TV)   | 2: <i>Crossroads</i>  | 17: Government imposes arms ban on South Africa.<br>25: 11-nation loan to Britain to stem slide in sterling   | 3: Lyndon Johnson elected President.<br>28: US rocket sent to Mars.<br>30: Soviet rocket sent to Mars. |
| Dec.        | 12: <i>Jazz Record Requests</i> (R)<br>15: <i>Culloden</i> (TV)<br>16: <i>The Likely Lads</i> (TV)            |   | Britain starts drilling for oil in North Sea.<br>21: MPs vote to abolish death penalty.<br>23: Beeching sacked.   |  |
| <b>1965</b> | Ch: Normanbrook<br>DG: Greene   | Ch: Hill<br>DG: Fraser  | PM: Wilson<br>PMG: Benn   |  |
| Jan.        | 6: <i>Petticoat Line</i> (R)<br>9: <i>Not Only . . . But Also</i> (TV)<br>30: *Churchill's funeral televised. | 2: <i>World of Sport</i> (network)<br>19: <i>Front Page Story</i> | 22: Leyton by-elections<br>24: Churchill dies.  | 2: Indonesia leaves UN.<br>14: PMs of Northern Ireland and Eire meet for first time in Belfast.        |
| Feb.        |   | 15: S. Wales transmitter opened to provide Welsh programmes.      | 8: Government announces end of cigarette advertising on TV.<br>16: BR publishes plan to halve rail network based on <i>Beeching Report</i> .<br>25: Conservative party decides future leaders will be elected by MPs. | 3: Franco intensifies blockade on Gibraltar.   |

|       |   |  |  |  |
|-------|---|--|--|--|
| March | 7: <i>Round the Horne</i> (R)   | 26: Transmitter opened for Isle of Man by Border TV. | 8: Japanese to compete in European saloon car races, and thus begin assault on car market.   | 8: USA sends Marines to Vietnam.<br>18: First space walk by Russian<br>21: Big civil rights marches begin led by King.   |
| April | 8: <i>The Wars of the Roses</i> (TV)  |  | 5: Chancellor announces cancellation of TSR2 project.<br>7: Bill published announcing that incitement to racial hatred will be outlawed. | 6: Early Bird satellite launched.<br>29: Australia sends troops to Vietnam.  |
| May   | 1: General Overseas Service renamed the World Service.<br>18: <i>Debussy</i> (Ken Russell) (TV)<br>30: <i>The World of Wooster</i> (TV) | 20: <i>Redcap</i>                                    | 24: Government states Britain will switch to metric system.  | 7: Rhodesian voters back anti-British Rhodesian Front party.<br>12: W. Germany establishes relations with Israel; 9 Arab states break diplomatic ties with Germany.<br>28: State of emergency declared in parts of Rhodesia. |



| Year  | BBC  | ITV  | UK  | World Events   |
|-------|--|--|---|--|
| June  | Donald Baverstock and Alasdair Milne leave Television Service.<br>24: <i>The Man from Uncle</i> (TV) |  | 2: With Speaker's casting vote, MPs approve corporation tax to be imposed on company profits.<br>14: Protests at award of MBEs to Beatles<br>18: Government plans to introduce legal blood alcohol limit for drivers. | 3: First American space walk   |
| July  | 7: <i>Tomorrow's World</i> (TV)<br><i>Mogul</i> (later <i>The Troubleshooters</i> ) (TV)             | 30: Figures issued showing <i>Coronation Street</i> most popular TV show.                        | 20: Lords approve bill to abolish hanging.<br>22: Douglas-Home resigns as Tory leader.<br>27: Heath becomes Tory leader.  |  |
| Aug.  |  | 1: Ban on cigarette advertising comes into force (accounting for 7% of ITV advertising revenue). | 1: Radio licence £1 5s., TV licence £5<br>12: First female High Court judge appointed.  | 5: Bill passed guaranteeing right to vote to all US citizens.  |
| Sept. |  | 16: 10th anniversary dinner at Guildhall<br>28: <i>Peyton Place</i>                              | 2: Death of Speaker cuts Wilson's majority to two.<br>16: Publication of George Brown's National Plan.  | 9: De Gaulle threatens France will leave NATO in 1969.<br>22: UN demands end to India–Pakistan war in Kashmir. |

|             |   |                                  |  |  |
|-------------|---|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Sept.       |   |                                  |  | 29: Argentina restates claim to Falklands.   |
| Oct.        | 4: <i>The World at One</i> (R)<br>I'm Sorry I'll Read That Again (R)<br>10: Start of programmes for immigrants<br>17: <i>Call My Bluff</i> (TV) | 2: <i>Thunderbirds</i>           | 8: Post Office Tower opened.   | 29: Wilson fails to persuade Smith against Rhodesian UDI.                                    |
| Nov.        | 3: <i>Up the Junction</i> (TV)<br>26: BBC announces it will not broadcast <i>The War Game</i> .   | 19: <i>George and the Dragon</i> | BP announces discovery of gas in North Sea.<br>8: Bills abolishing death penalty and enforcing race relations become law.<br>9: Wilson drops plan for steel nationalization.<br>11: Parliament imposes sanctions on Rhodesia.<br>29: Mary Whitehouse sets up NVLA. | 5: State of emergency in Rhodesia<br>11: Smith makes unilateral declaration of independence. |
| Dec.        | 13: <i>Jackanory</i> (TV)   | 13: <i>The Power Game</i>        | 1: PMG announces Television Advisory Committee recommends German PAL colour system.<br>22: Richard Dimbleby dies.  | 15: USA achieves first space rendezvous.<br>19: De Gaulle elected for 7 more years.          |
| <b>1966</b> | Ch: Normanbrook<br>DG: Greene   | Ch: Hill<br>DG: Fraser           | PM: Wilson<br>PMG: Benn; Short (from 4 July)   |  |

| Year  | BBC  | ITV   | UK  | World Events   |
|-------|--|---|---|--|
| Jan.  | 5: <i>Softly, Softly</i> (TV)                                      | 3: <i>Stories of D. H. Lawrence</i><br>27: ITA offered extension of existing contracts till July 1968 pending Government decision on ITV-2. | 31: UK imposes complete trade ban on Rhodesia.  | 19: Indira Gandhi elected PM of India after death of Shastri.<br>20: Menzies resigns as PM in Australia after 16 years.  |
| Feb.  | 2: <i>Man Alive</i> (TV)<br>22: Meeting between Greene and Goodman |   | 3: Companies Bill introduced requiring firms to reveal donations to political parties.<br>8: CND supporters picket showing of <i>The War Game</i> at National Film Theatre.<br>18: Mayhew resigns over proposed defence cuts.<br>25: Government White Paper proposing 'University of the Air' | 3: Soviet spaceship makes soft landing on moon.  |
| March | 3: BBC announce plans to broadcast in colour in 1967.              | 15: <i>Mrs. Thursday</i>  | 3: Government confirms PAL system for colour TV to be used.<br>7: Government announces plans to create Ministry of Social Security.   | 16: First space docking by US astronauts<br>23: Pope and Archbishop of Canterbury meet for first time in 400 years.<br>31: Verwoerd retains power in South Africa. |

|       |   |   |   |   |
|-------|---|---|---|---|
| April | 5: <i>The Money Programme</i><br>(TV)   | 7: <i>Weavers Green</i>                                   | 1: Labour increases majority after general election; Wilson forms new government. British Airports Authority created.   | 4: Soviet spacecraft orbits moon.   |
| May   |   |   | 6: Moors murderers convicted.<br>18: Home Secretary announces number of police forces to be cut by 68.<br>23: State of emergency declared over Seamen's strike.   | 8: Brezhnev becomes General Secretary of Soviet Communist Party.<br>15: Thousands of Vietnam protesters encircle White House. |
| June  | 2: Live TV from the moon<br>6: <i>Till Death Us Do Part</i><br>(TV)<br>14: <i>Woman's Hour</i> from Moscow (R)<br>18: <i>Chronicle</i> (TV) | 20: <i>Who Were the British?</i><br>27: <i>Public Eye</i> | 15: Lords votes in favour of televising of proceedings; Commons against.<br>28: Ulster Volunteer Force banned in Northern Ireland by PM O'Neill. Wilson names Communists in Seamen's strike which ends next day.<br>29: Barclaycard introduced. | 2: Soft landing on moon by US Surveyor<br>29: US bombs Hanoi.   |

| Year  | BBC  | ITV   | UK   | World Events  |
|-------|--|---|--|---|
| July  | 29: <i>Matador</i> (TV)<br>30: World Cup Final: England beats W. Germany (TV)    | 5: <i>Batman</i>  | 3: Frank Cousins resigns; Benn moves to Ministry of Technology.<br>4: Prices and Incomes Bill published.<br>20: Announcement of pay and wages freeze.<br>21: First Welsh Nationalist MPs sworn in. | 1: French forces withdrawn from NATO command.<br>24: EEC countries reach long term agreement on Common Agricultural Policy. |
| Aug.  | 7: <i>It's a Knockout</i> (TV)   | 1: <i>The Informer</i>  | 10: Brown becomes Foreign Secretary.   | 12: Mao proclaims Cultural Revolution in China.   |
| Sept. |  | 28: <i>The Frost Programme</i><br>30: <i>Intrigue</i>   | 26: Big lay-offs at BMC.<br>30: Lord Thomson buys <i>The Times</i> .   | 6: Verwoerd assassinated.<br>13: Vorster new PM of South Africa   |
| Oct.  |  |   | 21: Aberfan disaster<br>22: George Blake escapes from prison.  | 26: NATO to transfer headquarters from Paris to Brussels  |
| Nov.  | 1: Ascension Island relay station operational<br>16: <i>Cathy Come Home</i> (TV) |   | 24: Big rise in unemployment to 541,585  | 4: Floods in Florence.<br>8: Reagan elected Governor of California.   |
| Dec.  | 28: <i>Alice in Wonderland</i> (J. Miller) (TV)                                  | 21: ITA announces new franchising arrangements from July 1968; 5 major companies, 7-day operators except in London; Lancashire, and Yorkshire to be separate. | 2: Wilson talks with Ian Smith on <i>HMS Tiger</i> .<br>20: Broadcasting White Paper published empowering BBC to set up local radio and pop music channel.   | 5: Smith rejects British proposals.<br>16: UN oil embargo against Rhodesia<br>22: Rhodesia leaves Commonwealth.             |

|       |  |   |                          |  |   |
|-------|--|---|--------------------------|--|---|
| 1967  | Ch: Normanbrook;<br>Lord Hill (from 1 Sept.)<br>DG: Greene<br>Jan. 3: <i>My Music!</i> (R)<br>4: <i>Melodies for You</i> (R)<br>7: <i>The Forsyte Saga</i> (TV)<br>20: End of Albanian<br>Service. | Ch: Hill; Lord Aylestone<br>(from 1 Sept.)<br>DG: Fraser                              | PM: Wilson<br>PMG: Short | 10: <i>Children and Their<br/>         Primary Schools</i> published.<br>11: <i>Cathy Come Home</i><br>repeat sparks off row<br>about housing.<br>12: Britain's largest new<br>town named Milton<br>Keynes.<br>18: Thorpe replaces<br>Grimond as leader of<br>Liberal Party.<br>26: Sterling crisis ended<br>by cut in bank rate to<br>6.5%.<br>Feb. 14: 100 Labour MPs revolt<br>over renewed bombing in<br>Vietnam, and add names<br>to Early Day Motion.<br>15: PMG authorizes BBC<br>and ITA to set up 625-line<br>UHF transmitter network<br>and to introduce colour.<br>13: Start of strike at LSE | 6: Stalin's daughter defects.<br>12: Mrs Gandhi re-elected<br>as PM of India. |
| Feb.  |  | 15: <i>At Last the 1948 Show</i><br>28: ITA invites applicants<br>for new franchises. |                          |  |   |
| March | 26: <i>Frost Over England</i> (TV)   |   |                          |  |   |



| Year  | BBC  | ITV   | UK   | World Events   |
|-------|--|---|--|--|
| March |  |   | 18: Torrey Canyon oil tanker goes aground off Land's End.  | 29: De Gaulle launches first French nuclear submarine.   |
| April | 1: Ascension Island relay station completed. | 3: <i>Market in Honey Lane</i>  | 1: Britain's first ombudsman starts work.  | 19: Adenauer dies.<br>21: Army colonels seize power in Greece.   |
| May   | 6: <i>One Pair of Eyes</i> (TV)              | ITA announces colour in all regions by 1972.  | 5: First all-British satellite (Ariel 3) launched by USA.<br>25: Enoch Powell calls Britain 'the sick man of Europe'.  | 16: De Gaulle rebuffs Wilson's renewed application for EEC membership.<br>30: Biafra to break away from Nigeria          |
| June  | 25: <i>Our World</i> (TV)                    | 11: New franchises announced: Thames (AR & ABC), HTV in place of TWW, LWT, and Yorkshire.   | 27: Barclays introduces first cash dispenser.  | 5-10: Israel 6-day war against Arabs.<br>10: USSR breaks with Israel.  |
| July  | 1: Colour service begins on BBC-2.           | 3: <i>News at Ten</i><br>8: <i>Callan; The Golden Shot</i><br>9: <i>The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe; Tonight with Dave Allen</i> | 18: Government announces withdrawal of troops from East of Suez by mid-70s.<br>28: British Steel Corporation formed. Government states BBC Board of Governors will be increased to 12. | 17: First Chinese H-bomb.<br>14: Start of urban race riots in USA<br>24: De Gaulle makes controversial speech in Quebec. |

|       |   |  |  |  |
|-------|---|--|--|--|
| Aug.  | <p>3: <i>Face the Music</i> (TV)<br/> 25: <i>Not in Front of the Children</i> (TV)<br/> 31: Colour TV standards converter used for first time.</p>  |  | <p>14–15: Marine Etc. Broadcasting (Offences) Act comes into operation to suppress pirate radio.</p>   |  |
| Sept. | <p>4: 17 ex-pirate DJs join BBC.<br/> 16: Sir Malcolm Sargent appears at <i>Last Night of the Proms</i>.<br/> 17: <i>The World This Weekend</i> (R)<br/> 26: <i>Talkback</i> (TV)<br/> 30: Start of Radio 1, other networks renamed Radios 2, 3 and 4. <i>Nightride</i> (R)</p> | <p>25: <i>Sexton Blake Inheritance</i><br/> 30: <i>Man in a Suitcase</i></p> |  | <p>10: Gibraltar votes to keep ties with UK.</p>   |
| Oct.  | <p>13: <i>Omnibus</i> (TV)</p>  | <p>1: <i>The Prisoner</i></p>  | <p>Stansted chosen as 3rd London airport.<br/> 1: Reform of law allows majority verdicts.<br/> 3: Sir Malcolm Sargent dies.<br/> 8: Attlee dies.<br/> 9: Introduction of breathalysers<br/> 19: Bank rate rises to 6%.</p> | <p>9: Che Guevara shot dead in Bolivia.<br/> 21: Violent anti-war demonstration outside Pentagon</p> |

| Year        | BBC  | ITV                         | UK   | World Events   |
|-------------|--|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Oct.        |  |                             | 27: Abortion Bill becomes law.   |  |
| Nov.        | 8: Radio Leicester opened (first BBC local radio station).<br>15: Radio Sheffield opened.<br>23: <i>Lord Reith Looks Back</i> (TV) |                             | 18: Pound devalued.<br>19: Wilson makes 'pound in your pocket' speech.   | 29: British troops leave Aden.   |
| Dec.        | 3: <i>The World About Us</i> (TV)<br>22: <i>Just a Minute</i> (R)  |                             |  | 3: First human heart transplant in South Africa<br>11: Concorde rolled out of hangar in France |
| <b>1968</b> | Ch: Hill<br>DG: Greene   | CH: Aylestone<br>DG: Fraser | PM: Wilson<br>PMG: Short; Mason (from 6 April); Stonehouse (from 1 July)   |  |
| Jan.        | 31: Radio Nottingham opened.   |                             | 1: £5 colour supplement on TV licence<br>16: Government announces large spending cuts.<br>17: BM Holdings and Leyland to merge | 5: Dubcek becomes leader of Czech Communist party.   |

|       |   |  |  |
|-------|---|--|--|
| Jan.  |   |  | 18: Labour MPs abstain in vote (Michael Foot leads revolt of Labour MPs against spending cuts).<br>22: Port of London to close 2 docks<br>26: National Provincial and Westminster banks merge.                         |
| Feb.  | 6-8: *Closed circuit television and radio experiment in broadcasting proceedings of Lords involving BBC and ITV<br>14: Radio Brighton opened. |  | 18: Introduction of British Standard Time.<br>20: Bill introduced to end free secondary school milk and raise National Insurance.<br>22: New legislation announced to stem tide of Kenyan Asian refugees.              |
| March | 7: <i>Newsroom</i> (TV) first news in colour<br>24: Alistair Cooke's 1000th <i>Letter from America</i> (R)                                    | 4: <i>The Father</i> (Strindberg)<br>27: <i>Virgin of the Secret Service</i> | 1: Commonwealth Immigrants Bill becomes law.<br>27: Foreign Secretary says UK will not transfer sovereignty of Falklands without consent of Islanders.<br>20: Powell makes 'river of blood' speech. Backed by dockers. |
| April | 23-17 May: Radio only closed-circuit experiment in Lords  |  | 14: Announcement that 20,000 American troops had been killed in Vietnam since Jan. 1961.<br>8-12: Anti-government riots in Poland<br>4: Martin Luther King shot dead.  |

| Year  | BBC   | ITV  | UK  | World Events   |
|-------|---|--|---|--|
| April | 29: <i>Marty</i> (TV)                                     |  | 27: Abortion Act comes into force.  | 11: Major riots in USA following King's death. Student riots in Europe following shooting of Rudi Dutschke.<br>21: Trudeau succeeds Pearson as Canadian PM.  |
| May   |   |  | 3: First British heart transplant<br>16: Ronan Point tower block collapse<br>28: Student 'sit-in' at Hornsey College following earlier demos at LSE | 3 onwards: Major riots in Paris. De Gaulle dissolves General Assembly, and calls election.<br>5: Spanish Government closes Gibraltar frontier.<br>13: American/North Vietnamese peace talks in Paris |
| June  | 2: <i>Savile's Travels</i> (R)<br>24: Radio Leeds opened. |  | 24: Work to rule on railways (until 5 July)   | 5: Robert Kennedy assassinated.<br>30: De Gaulle receives big majority in election.  |
| July  | 3: Radio Durham opened.<br>31: <i>Dad's Army</i> (TV)     | 30: Start of new company franchises<br>31: <i>Frontier</i> ; TV commercials blacked out by ACTT industrial action. | 8: 12 countries promise UK credit to bolster pound.<br>10: Prices and Incomes Act receives royal assent.<br>25: Barclays and Martins banks merge.   | 1: 36-nation nuclear non-proliferation treaty signed.<br>24: Soviet tanks on Czech border  |

|       |  |   |   |   |
|-------|--|---|---|---|
| July  |  |   | 26: Theatres Act abolishing censorship powers of Lord Chamberlain receives royal assent.<br>31: <i>Last Exit to Brooklyn</i> judged not obscene on appeal.      | 29: Pope refuses concessions on birth control.  |
| Aug.  |  | 15: <i>Nearest and Dearest</i><br>24: <i>The Franchise Trail</i>  | 1: First cross-channel service by Hovercraft  | 18: Nigeria mounts major assault against Biafra.<br>20: Soviet tanks enter Czechoslovakia to crush 'Prague spring'.<br>11: Press censorship in Czechoslovakia<br>12: Albania to leave Warsaw Pact |
| Sept. | 2: <i>Morecambe and Wise</i> (TV)<br>12: <i>Sportsnight with Coleman</i> (TV)    | 19: <i>TV Times</i> published in 14 editions by Independent Television Publications.<br>22: <i>The Caesars</i><br>25: Television Gallery opened at Brompton Road containing exhibition tracing development of TV. | 6: GEC and English Electric to merge<br>13: Big banks announce Saturday closing.<br>30: Labour Party Conference votes for repeal of wage restraint legislation. |   |
| Oct.  | 12: First use of advanced standards converter to relay Olympic Games from Mexico |   | 6: Police break up large riot in Londonderry.<br>9: Wilson and Smith meet on <i>HMS Fearless</i> .  | 12: Start of Olympic Games in Mexico<br>28: Demonstrations in Prague  |



| Year        | BBC  | ITV  | UK   | World Events   |
|-------------|--|--|--|--|
| Oct.        |  |  | 18: Benn says 'broadcasting too important to be left to the broadcasters'.<br>27: Large anti-Vietnam war march in London   | 31: Johnson orders end to bombing in Vietnam.  |
| Nov.        | 3: <i>All My Loving</i> (TV)<br>9: <i>Braden's Week</i> (TV) | 8: <i>Please Sir!</i>                            | 26: Race Relations Act comes into force.<br>16: End of 11-day sit-in at Bristol University   | 6: Nixon wins Presidential election in USA.<br>2: Nixon names Kissinger his adviser on national security.<br>27: US astronauts return after orbiting the Moon. |
| Dec.        |  |  |  |  |
| <b>1969</b> | Ch: Hill<br>DG: Greene; Charles Curran (from 1 April)        | Ch: Aylestone<br>DG: Fraser                      | PM: Wilson<br>PMG: Stonehouse  |  |
| Jan.        |  | 1: <i>The Life and Times of Lord Mountbatten</i> | 1: Black-and-white licence £6, colour licence £11. Murdoch beats Maxwell in buying <i>News of the World</i> .<br>3: Civil rights supporters clash in Londonderry.<br>17: Barbara Castle's White Paper 'In Place of Strife' published.<br>24: Student unrest at LSE (closed until 19 Feb.). |  |

|       |   |   |  |   |
|-------|---|---|--|---|
| Jan.  |   |   | 27: Ian Paisley sentenced to gaol.   |   |
| Feb.  | 23: <i>Civilisation</i> (TV)                                      | 28: <i>On the Buses</i>                 | 11: Announcement that Ford women-workers will get equal pay.<br>14: Report published on successful fertilization of human eggs in test-tube in Cambridge.                                      | 4: Yasser Arafat designated leader of PLO.<br>12: Wilson faces African students' protest in Bonn over Biafra policy.            |
| March | 1: Prince Charles's first broadcast (on Radio 4)                  |   | 5: Kray brothers imprisoned.<br>22: Football hooligans riot on London tube.  | 2: Maiden flight of Concorde from Toulouse<br>17: Golda Meir PM of Israel<br>28: Eisenhower dies.                               |
| April | 25: End of <i>The Dales</i> (R)<br>28: <i>Waggoners' Walk</i> (R) | 23: <i>The Mind of Mr. J. G. Reeder</i> | 1: BOAC pilots strike.<br>9: British Concorde flies.<br>18: Bernadette Devlin elected MP. Representation of the People Act 1969 receives royal assent: voting age to be reduced from 21 to 18. | 22 onwards: Student riots in New York force closure of campuses.<br>28: De Gaulle resigns after defeat in referendum on reform. |
| May   |   |   | 5: Increase in NHS charges for spectacles and dental treatment   | 15: State of emergency in Malaysia after racial clashes   |
| June  | 1: Masirah relay station opened.<br>21: <i>Royal Family</i> (TV)  | 29: <i>Royal Family</i>                 | 18: Wilson postpones introduction of Industrial Relations Bill.  | 8: Franco closes border with Gibraltar.   |

| Year | BBC  | ITV                            | UK   | World Events   |
|------|--|--------------------------------|--|--|
| June |  |                                | 20: High grade oil found in North Sea.<br>26: Steelworkers start strike (ends 24 Aug.).<br>16: Publication of <i>Duncan Report on Overseas Information Services</i><br>30: Damages awarded in thalidomide case.                  | 15: Pompidou elected French President.   |
| July | 1: *Prince of Wales investiture televised.<br>10: Publication of <i>Broadcasting in the Seventies</i><br>18: <i>The Liver Birds</i> (TV)<br>22: BBC receives Queen's Award to Industry for advanced colour standards converter.<br>23: <i>Pot Black</i> (TV) | 12: <i>Doctor in the House</i> |  | 1: Red Cross issues warning of famine in Nigeria.<br>19: Edward Kennedy in car accident on Chappaquiddick Island<br>21: Neil Armstrong lands on Moon.<br>22: Franco names Juan Carlos as his heir. |
| Aug. |  | 17: <i>Stars on Sunday</i>     | 8: Handley Page calls in receiver.<br>12: Fighting between Catholics and Protestants in Londonderry<br>14: British troops deployed in Londonderry after riots. Catholics welcome them.<br>31: Big rock festival on Isle of Wight | 15: Woodstock Festival in USA attended by 400,000 rock fans.   |

|       |  |   |   |  |
|-------|--|---|---|--|
| Sept. | <p>9: <i>Nationwide</i> (TV)<br/> 27: <i>The First Churchills</i> (TV)</p> | <p>5: First colour programme on ITV<br/> 15: <i>Dear Mother . . . Love Albert</i><br/> 17: <i>Special Branch</i><br/> 18: Peacock dismissed by LMT.<br/> 23: <i>The Dustbinmen</i><br/> 26: <i>Hadleigh</i></p> | <p>Amoco discovers oil in Montrose field.<br/> 3: TUC votes for repeal of Prices and Incomes Act.<br/> 10–15: British Army erects Peace Wall in Belfast.</p>  | <p>1: Gadaffi seizes power in Libya.<br/> 3: Ho Chi Minh dies.<br/> 28: Communist party expels Dubcek from Praesidium.</p> |
| Oct.  | <p>5: <i>Monty Python's Flying Circus</i> (TV)</p>                         |   | <p>1: PO becomes a public corporation, and PMG is redesignated Minister of Posts and Telecommunications.<br/> 10: 'B' Specials to be disbanded.<br/> 15: Print unions allow Murdoch to buy <i>The Sun</i>.<br/> 22: Divorce Reform Act receives royal assent.<br/> 25: Phillips discovers oil in Ekofisk field.</p> | <p>21: Willy Brandt elected German Chancellor.</p>   |
| Nov.  | <p>15: Colour service extended to BBC-1 and ITV.</p>                       | <p>19: <i>This Is Your Life</i></p>   | <p>3: Work begins on National Theatre.<br/> 25: Government authorizes 12 new BBC local radio stations.</p>  | <p>14: Gadaffi nationalizes foreign banks.</p>   |

| Year        | BBC  | ITV   | UK   | World Events   |
|-------------|--|---|--|--|
| Dec.        | 20: 1000th <i>Desert Island Discs</i> (R)<br>30: <i>War and Peace</i> (R)          |   | 16–18: Commons and Lords vote to make permanent abolition of death penalty.<br>18: UDR replaces 'B' Specials.<br>22: Bernadette Devlin sentenced to prison after involvement in riots. | 12: Red Brigade suspected in terrorist bombings in Italy.                                      |
| <b>1970</b> | Ch: Hill<br>DG: Curran   | Ch: Aylestone<br>DG: Fraser; Sir Brian Young (from 17 Oct.) | PM: Wilson; Heath (from 19 June)<br>MinP&T: Stonehouse; Chataway (from 24 June)  |  |
| Jan.        | 1: <i>Six Wives of Henry VIII</i> (TV)   | 2: <i>Aquarius</i>  | 1: Age of majority reduced from 21 to 18.  | 12: Biafra capitulates to Nigeria.<br>19: India opens first nuclear power station.             |
| Feb.        | 9: <i>Doomwatch</i> (TV)<br>15: <i>Dance of the Seven Veils</i> (Ken Russell) (TV) | 17: <i>The Tribe that Hides from Man</i>                    | 2: Bertrand Russell dies.  |  |
| March       | 23: <i>Up Pompeii!</i> (TV)  | 3: <i>The Misfit</i>  | 29: Serious rioting in Bogside area of Londonderry.  | 2: Rhodesia declares itself a republic.<br>19: First meeting between E. and W. German leaders. |

|       |   |                                   |  |   |
|-------|---|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| April | 4: Start of new pattern of generic broadcasting on radio; <i>WeekEnding</i> (R)<br>6: <i>Start the Week</i> (R)<br><i>PM</i> (R)<br><i>The World Tonight</i> (R)<br>19: <i>Analysis</i> (R) | 14: <i>A Family at War</i>        | 9: Beatles split up.<br>18: Announcement that Morris Minor will cease production in 1971   | 17: Apollo 13 returns after explosion.<br>30: Nixon sends troops into Cambodia.   |
| May   |   | 19: <i>The Disappearing World</i> | 10: Bombs found in luggage of Spanish airliners at 4 airports, including Heathrow.<br>22: MCC agrees to cancel English tour of S. Africa after Government intervention.<br>7: E. M. Forster dies.<br>19: Heath wins general election.<br>29: Methodist church agrees to women ministers. | 4: Four students shot dead at Kent State University, Ohio, in anti-war demonstration.<br>15: S. Africa barred from 1972 Olympics. |
| June  | 9: <i>Brothers-in-Law</i> (R)   |                                   | 16: Heath declares state of emergency over national docks strike.<br>20: Iain Macleod dies.  |   |
| July  | 22: <i>Louis Malle's India</i> (TV)   | 12: <i>Twelfth Night</i>          |  | 21: Aswan dam fully operational   |



| Year  | BBC  | ITV  | UK  | World Events   |
|-------|--|--|---|--|
| Aug.  | 23: Indian Government objects to L. Malle programmes, and threatens restriction on BBC.<br>29: BBC suspends office in India. | Completion of ITA's 405-line transmitter network<br>19: 1000th episode of <i>Coronation Street</i> | 2: Army uses rubber bullets in N. Ireland for first time.<br>14: Community Relations Commission accuses policemen on beat of racial prejudice.<br>24: Radioactive leak at Windscale | 4: Israel accepts cease-fire, but refuses to withdraw to pre-1967 borders.   |
| Sept. | 4: Radio Bristol opened.<br>6: <i>Sunday</i> (R)<br>10: Radio Manchester opened.   |  |   | 1: King Hussein escapes assassination attempt.<br>5: Allende elected President of Chile.<br>6-12: Several airliners hijacked and blown up.<br>22: State of emergency in Chile<br>27: Jordan and 8 Arab states sign agreement with PLO.<br>28: Nasser dies of heart attack. |
| Oct.  | 5: <i>You and Yours</i> (R)<br>6: Radio London opened.<br>13: <i>It's Your Line</i> (R)<br>29: Radio Oxford opened.          | 27: <i>The Lovers</i>  | 19: BP announces major oil find in North Sea.   | 15: Sadat to succeed Nasser<br>16: Trudeau invokes emergency powers against Quebec rebels.   |

|             |   |  |   |  |
|-------------|---|--|---|--|
| Nov.        | 8: <i>The Goodies</i> (TV)<br>9: Radio Birmingham opened.   |  | 11: Government announces help for Rolls-Royce.<br>26: Strikes at highest level since 1926.<br>27: Gay Liberation Front holds first demonstration in London. | 9: De Gaulle dies.   |
| Dec.        | 18: Radio Medway opened.<br>26: <i>Talking Politics</i> (R)<br>31: Radio Solent and Radio Teesside opened.                        | 14: <i>Man at the Top</i>  | 2: End of British Standard Time<br>3: Industrial Relations Bill published.<br>18: Roskill Commission recommends Cublington as site for 3rd London airport.  | 8: Bhutto becomes leader of West Pakistan.<br>14–20: Major riots in Poland<br>17: Pravda attacks Solzhenitsyn who earlier had won Nobel Prize. |
| <b>1971</b> | Ch: Hill<br>DG: Curran  | Ch: Aylestone<br>DG: Young   | PM: Heath<br>MinP&T: Chataway   |  |
| Jan.        | 2: Radio Newcastle opened.<br>3: Start of Open University broadcasts.<br>26: Radio Blackburn opened.                              |  | 14: Angry Brigade claim responsibility for bombing Employment Secretary Robert Carr's home on 12th.<br>20: Postmen strike for first time.                   | 8: British Ambassador to Uruguay kidnapped by left-wing Tupamaros.<br>25: Idi Amin overthrows Obote in Uganda.                                 |
| Feb.        | 9: BBC sets up Advisory Group on the Social Effects of Television.<br>17: <i>Elizabeth R</i> (TV)<br>25: Radio Humberside opened. | 2: <i>Bless This House</i><br>18: Rupert Murdoch takes control of LWT.<br>25: ITA declares Murdoch cannot run both LWT and a national newspaper. | 1: Radio licence abolished. Start of major strike at Fords<br>4: Rolls-Royce bankrupt<br>6: First British soldier killed in Ulster.                         | 3: OPEC states threaten to increase oil prices.<br>5: Britain recognizes Amin's government.  |

| Year  | BBC  | ITV                                       | UK   | World Events  |
|-------|--|---|--|---|
| Feb.  |  |   | 15: New decimal currency introduced.<br>16: Local government reform announced.<br>24: Immigration Bill published.  | 7: Referendum in Switzerland gives women votes in national elections.   |
| March |  |   | 1 & 18: One-day strikes against Industrial Relations Bill<br>23: Faulkner becomes Northern Ireland PM.<br>29: White Paper proposes 60 commercial local radio stations. | 3: Winnie Mandela gaoled.<br>31: Lt. Calley sentenced to life for My Lai massacre.                                  |
| April | 10: <i>Two Ronnies</i> (TV)<br>11: <i>Blue Peter Royal Safari</i> (with Princess Anne) (TV)<br>29: Radio Derby opened. | 9: <i>Budgie</i><br>18: <i>Persuasion</i> | 19: Unemployment highest in April since 1940—814,819<br>26: Government announces 3rd London airport to be built at Foulness.   | 14: Nixon eases trade boycott of China.   |
| May   | 16: <i>Owen Wingrave</i> (TV)  |   | 1: <i>Daily Mail's</i> last edition as a broadsheet<br>11: 100 Labour MPs support EEC entry, defying party policy. <i>Daily Sketch</i> closes.                         | 2: Announcement that more than 1m. refugees have fled from war in E. Pakistan.<br>28: Sadat signs treaty with USSR. |

|       |  |   |  |   |
|-------|--|---|--|---|
| May   |  |   | 13: Labour gains control of GLC.<br>18: Government announces plans to charge for entry to museums and galleries.<br>26: Debate on Commercial Radio White Paper         |   |
| June  | 17: <i>Yesterday's Men</i> (TV)<br>19: <i>Parkinson</i> (TV)                         |   | 14: Upper Clyde shipbuilders forced into liquidation.<br>15: LEAs protest at plan to end free school milk.<br>16: Reith dies.<br>23: EEC agrees terms of entry for UK. |   |
| July  |  |   | 1: Black-and-white licence £7, colour licence £12  | 25: First heart and lung transplant.  |
| Aug.  |  | 8: <i>Hamlet</i>                                      | 6: Industrial Relations Act receives royal assent.<br>9: Internment without trial introduced in Northern Ireland.  | 19: NATO to move Mediterranean HQ from Malta                                    |
| Sept. | 21: <i>The Old Grey Whistle Test</i> (TV)<br>22: <i>The Search for the Nile</i> (TV) | 17: <i>The Persuaders</i><br>18: <i>The Comedians</i> | 6-7: Talks between Heath and Irish PM Lynch<br>24: 105 Russian diplomats expelled for spying.  | 9: British Ambassador in Uruguay released by Tupamaros.<br>11: Khrushchev dies. |

| Year        | BBC   | ITV  | UK  | World Events  |
|-------------|---|--|---|---|
| Oct.        | 2: <i>Bruce Forsyth and the Generation Game</i> (TV)<br>3: BBC Programmes Complaints Commission established.<br>15: <i>The Onedin Line</i> (TV)<br>21: <i>Edna the Inebriate Woman</i> (TV) | Publication of new ITA code on Violence in Television Programmes. ITA announces a Complaints Review Board to be set up.<br>10: <i>Upstairs, Downstairs</i> | 4: Labour Party Conference votes against EEC entry terms agreed by Heath.<br>28: Commons votes to join EEC.<br>31: PO Tower damaged by bomb.<br>24: Agreement with Rhodesia signed (MPs approve on 1 Dec.). | 8: USSR expels Britons in tit-for-tat reply.<br>25: US defeated in UN over China policy —Formosa out, China in.   |
| Nov.        | 10: Princess Anne opens Pebble Mill Centre in Birmingham.<br>21: <i>The Long March of Everyman</i> (R)  |  |   |   |
| Dec.        |   | 8: ITA publishes proposals for a 2nd ITV channel.  | 2: Proposals to double Queen's allowance much criticized.<br>20: Christmas bombing campaign in Ulster   | 3: Pakistan attacks India in full-scale war.<br>7: Libya nationalizes BP holdings.<br>16: Bangladesh establishes independence.<br>17: India defeats Pakistan.<br>31: Kurt Waldheim new UN Secretary-General |
| <b>1972</b> | Ch: Hill<br>DG: Curran  | Ch: Aylestone<br>DG: Young   | PM: Heath<br>MinP&T: Chataway; Eden (from 7 April)  |   |

|       |  |                                |   |  |
|-------|--|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Jan.  | 5: <i>The Question of Ulster</i> (TV)<br>11: <i>The British Empire</i> (TV)                              | 23: <i>Adam Smith</i>          | 9: Coal strike begins.<br>19: Government ends restriction on broadcasting hours.<br>20: Unemployment over 1m.<br>22: Britain signs Treaty of Accession to EEC.<br>30: Bloody Sunday in Ulster | 30: Pakistan leaves Commonwealth.  |
| Feb.  | 18: <i>Clochemerle</i> (TV)  | 19: <i>Sale of the Century</i> | 9: Government declares state of emergency.<br>22: IRA bombs army barracks in Aldershot.   | 2: British Embassy in Dublin destroyed.<br>4: Britain recognizes Bangladesh.<br>21: Nixon visits China.                                      |
| March | BBC publishes <i>The Portrayal of Violence in Television Programmes</i> .<br>10 <i>The Brothers</i> (TV) |                                | 2: Power cuts end after 20 days of blackouts due to miners' strike.<br>24: Direct rule of Ulster from London<br>27: Protestant protest against direct rule in Ulster                          |  |
| April | 11: <i>I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue</i> (R)  | 13: <i>Love Thy Neighbour</i>  | 10: Roy Jenkins resigns as Deputy Leader of Labour Party over EEC referendum.<br>17: Start of work to rule on railways  | 14: US resumes bombing of N. Vietnam.<br>23: French referendum approves enlarged EEC.<br>22: Nixon visits USSR.<br>28: Duke of Windsor dies. |
| May   |  |                                |   |  |



| Year  | BBC                                       | ITV  | UK   | World Events   |
|-------|---|--|--|--|
| May   |   |  |  | 29: Official IRA declares cease-fire, but Provisionals do not.   |
| June  |   |  | 23: Pound floated.   | 17: Watergate entry<br>22: Provisionals offer cease-fire.  |
| July  | 4: <i>André Previn's Music Night</i> (TV) | 12: ITA becomes IBA under terms of Sound Broadcasting Act. | 10: Whitelaw, Northern Ireland Secretary, admits he has met Provisionals.<br>12: Sound Broadcasting Act comes into force.<br>18: Reginald Maudling resigns as Home Secretary over Poulsen scandal.<br>28: Nationwide dock strike |  |
| Aug.  | 25: Radio Durham closes.                  | 18: <i>Shut That Door!!</i><br>20: <i>Country Matters</i>  | 1: National Health Service Reorganization White Paper published.<br>Select Committee on Nationalized Industries calls for greater accountability of IBA.   | 4: Amin expels Asians from Uganda.<br>11: Last American ground combat mission in Vietnam.<br>26: Start of Olympic Games in Munich. |
| Sept. | 11: <i>Mastermind</i> (TV)                | 13: <i>Van Der Valk</i><br>23: <i>Black Beauty</i>         |  | 5: Arab attack on Israelis at Munich Olympic Games.  |

|             |  |   |  |  |
|-------------|--|---|--|--|
| Oct.        | 5: <i>The Last Goon Show of All</i> (R)<br>19: <i>Colditz</i> (TV)   | 1: <i>Weekend World</i><br>8: <i>The Stanley Baxter Picture Show</i><br>16: <i>Emmerdale Farm</i><br>19: <i>General Hospital</i><br>21: <i>Russell Harty Plus</i> | 6: Benn attacks media at Labour Party Conference.<br>17: EEC Act receives royal assent.<br>19: Commons votes against televising of Parliament.<br>6: Government announces emergency price and wages freeze.<br>20: Queen's silver wedding<br>26: Race Relations Act comes into force for all firms.<br>13: Distillers offer £11.8m. to thalidomide victims.<br>20: Television Advisory Committee recommends phasing out of 405-line network, and makes proposals for cable and satellite broadcasting. | 3: Nixon and Gromyko exchange documents after signing strategic arms limitation treaty.<br><br>7: Nixon wins Presidential election.<br><br>26: Truman dies.<br>30: Nixon orders halt to air offensive against Hanoi. |
| Nov.        | 50th anniversary celebrations inc. Queen's visit, concert, banquet, and special stamps.<br>12: <i>America</i> (TV) | 7: IBA engineers demonstrate world's first TV picture converter (DICE) using digital techniques. <i>The Strauss Family</i>  |  |  |
| Dec.        |  |   |  |  |
| <b>1973</b> | Ch: Sir Michael Swann<br>DG: Curran  | Ch: Aylestone<br>DG: Young  | PM: Heath<br>Min.P&T: Eden   |  |
| Jan.        | 4: <i>Last of the Summer Wine</i> (TV)   | 7: <i>The Death of Adolf Hitler</i>   | 1: Britain joins EEC.<br>11: OU awards first degrees.  | 23: Cease-fire in Vietnam agreed.  |

| Year  | BBC   | ITV   | UK   | World Events   |
|-------|---|---|--|--|
| Feb.  | 5: <i>The Wombles</i> (TV)  |   | 7: Day of action (Unionist strike) in Northern Ireland<br>26 onwards: Week of strikes in protest against Government pay policy<br>8: New IRA bombing in London.  | 13: Dollar devalued by 10%. Many foreign exchange markets close.                     |
| March | 9: Philip Short ordered to leave Uganda.<br>14: <i>Are You Being Served?</i> (TV)   | 27: <i>Warhol</i>   |  | 29: Departure of last US troops from Vietnam   |
| April | 2: <i>Open Door</i> (access programme) (TV);<br><i>Kaleidoscope</i> (R)             | 22: <i>Long Day's Journey into Night</i> (with Olivier)   | 1: Pay & Prices Freeze Phase 2. VAT introduced.  | 30: Top Nixon aides resign over Watergate; Nixon accepts responsibility for bugging. |
| May   | 5: <i>Ascent of Man</i> (TV)<br>20: <i>MASH</i> (TV)<br>26: <i>That's Life</i> (TV) | 10: <i>James Paul McCartney</i><br>23: Independent Broadcasting Act consolidates 1964 TV Act & 1972 Sound Broadcasting Act. | 1: One-day protest strike against Government policy organized by TUC.<br>3: Government sets up Crawford Committee to examine broadcasting coverage.<br>15: Heath condemns Lonrho as 'the unacceptable face of capitalism'.<br>8: Enoch Powell, in speech on EEC, hints that public should vote Labour. | 17: Watergate Senate hearings begin.   |
| June  | 6: <i>Checkpoint</i> (R)  | 4: <i>Hunters Walk</i><br>12: <i>Sam</i>  |  | 7: Brandt first West German leader to visit Israel                                   |

|       |  |  |  |   |
|-------|--|--|--|---|
| July  |  | 11: <i>Shabby Tiger</i>  |  | 23: Nixon refuses to hand over White House tapes to Watergate hearing.  |
| Aug.  |  |  | 9: Petrol rationing coupons secretly prepared against fears of an oil crisis.<br>20: Fire bombs in West End of London. |   |
| Sept. | School radio transferred to VHF.                         | 9: <i>Kung Fu</i><br>30: <i>The Brontes of Haworth</i>               | 3: 20 trade unions expelled from TUC for obeying Industrial Relations Act.<br>10: Bombs in 2 London stations           | 6: Saudi Arabia threatens to cut oil sales to USA because of its support for Israel.<br>11: Allende killed in <i>coup</i> in Chile.   |
| Oct.  | 24: <i>Kojak</i> (TV)                                    | 8: LBC opens.<br>16: Capital Radio opens.<br>31: <i>World at War</i> | 1: Denis Healey promises higher taxes for the rich.  | 6: Egyptian & Syrian offensive across Suez Canal against Israel<br>7: Arab States agree to reduce oil production by 5%.<br>10: Agnew resigns as US Vice-President.<br>12: Nixon ordered to hand over tapes (agrees 23).<br>17: 17% rise in oil prices |
| Nov.  | 14: Princess Anne's wedding, huge TV audience world-wide |  | 1: Pay and Prices Freeze Phase 3.  | 11: Israel and Egypt sign cease-fire.   |

| Year        | BBC  | ITV   | UK   | World Events  |
|-------------|--|---|--|---|
| Nov.        | 24: Radio Carlisle opened.   |   | 13: State of emergency declared following industrial action by miners and power workers.<br>22: Power sharing deal in Northern Ireland arranged by Whitelaw. | 25: <i>Coup</i> in Greece by disaffected members of army.             |
| Dec.        |  | 31: Radio Clyde, 1st commercial radio in Scotland, opens. | 9: Council of Ireland set up.<br>17: Energy cuts, fuel cuts, 3-day week announced.   | 23: Shah of Iran announces Arab states to double price of oil in Jan. |
| <b>1974</b> | Ch: Swann<br>DG: Curran  | Ch: Aylestone<br>DG: Young                                | PM: Heath; Wilson (from 4 March)<br>Min.P&T: Eden; Benn (from 9 March)<br>HS: Jenkins  |   |
| Jan.        | 1: Curran knighted.<br>3: <i>It Ain't Half Hot Mum</i> (TV)<br>19: <i>The Pallisers</i> (TV) |   | 1: Brian Faulkner Chief Executive of Power Sharing Executive in Northern Ireland<br>10: Start of rail strike   |   |
| Feb.        |  | 19: BRMB, ILR station in Birmingham opens.                | 4: Miners vote to strike.<br>10: Start of miners' strike<br>11: Poulsen sentenced to gaol.   | 13: Solzhenitsyn deported and deprived of citizenship.                |

|       |  |   |  |  |
|-------|--|---|--|--|
| Feb.  |  |   | 28: General election won by Labour.  |  |
| March |  | 5: <i>Napoleon and Love</i><br>12: IBA extends TV contracts to 1976.                            | 4: Wilson forms new government without majority.<br>8: Return to 5-day week<br>11: Miners end strike; end of state of emergency.<br>29: Ministry of Posts & Telecommunications wound up. Home Office becomes responsible for broadcasting.   | 1: Grand jury in USA concludes in sealed report that Nixon was involved in Watergate cover-up.       |
| April | BBC engineers win Queen's award for Sound-in-sync. system on TV.<br>30: <i>The Family</i> (TV) | 2: Piccadilly Radio opens in Manchester<br>5: <i>The Zoo Gang</i>                               | 1: Family planning becomes available under NHS.<br>10: Home Secretary announces setting up of Annan Committee to look into future of broadcasting.<br>15: Strike in Northern Ireland<br>28: Faulkner resigns as Chief Executive in Northern Ireland.<br>29: Northern Ireland brought under direct rule from Westminster. | 2: <i>President Pompidou</i> dies.<br>25: <i>Coup</i> in Portugal                                    |
| May   | Strike by OB workers belonging to NATTKE<br>11: <i>Science Now</i> (R)                         | 23: Independent Broadcasting Authority Act in force: levy on profits replaces levy on turnover. |  | 16: Schmidt replaces Brandt as German Chancellor.<br>19: Giscard d'Estaing becomes French President. |

| Year  | BBC   | ITV  | UK   | World Events  |
|-------|---|--|--|---|
| June  | Strike by production assistants belonging to ABS and NUJ                                    | 1: <i>Thick as Thieves</i>   | 11: 3rd London airport at Maplin not to proceed.<br>15: Left- and right-wing demonstrators clash in Red Lion Square, London.<br>17: IRA bomb damages Westminster Hall.<br>21: Inflation reaches 16%.<br>26: 'Social Contract' approved by TUC General Council. | 27: Nixon meets Brezhnev in Moscow.   |
| July  | 2: BBC Charter extended to 1979.<br>5: <i>Quote . . . Unquote</i> (R)                       | 15: Metropolitan Radio opens in Tyne & Wear.<br>28: <i>Antony and Cleopatra</i><br>31: IBA Act No. 2 comes into force extending IBA to 1979. | 31: Industrial Relations Act repealed and replaced by Trade Union and Industrial Relations Act.  | 1: General Peron dies.<br>15: Makarios overthrown.<br>20: Turkish forces invade Cyprus.<br>24: Greek colonels ousted. |
| Aug.  |   |  | 19: FT share index slumps below 200 points for first time in 16 years.<br>29: Battle between police and hippies at Windsor Pop Festival  | 8: Nixon resigns.<br>9: Ford US President   |
| Sept. | 5: <i>Porridge</i> (TV)<br>23: Regular Ceefax transmissions<br>28: <i>Stop the Week</i> (R) | Oracle service begins.<br>16: <i>South Riding</i><br>26: <i>Father Brown</i><br>30: Swansea Sound opens.                                     | 5: Keith Joseph makes speech proposing 'monetarism'.<br>17: Nurses receive average 30% pay rise.   |   |



|      |                                    |   |   |  |
|------|------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Oct. | 31: <i>Leeds United</i> (TV)       | 1: Radio Hallam opens (Sheffield/Rotherham).<br>2: <i>Jennie, Lady Randolph Churchill</i> | 5: Guildford pub bombing<br>10: General election won by Labour with overall majority: Wilson becomes PM for 4th time.   | 1: Start of Watergate cover-up trial   |
| Nov. |                                    |   | 15: Riots in Maze prison<br>7: IRA bombs Woolwich pub.<br>21: IRA bomb attack on Birmingham pub<br><i>Crawford Report</i> published: recommendations include separate Welsh-language TV channel.<br>26: Government abandons plans for high-speed rail link between Folkestone and White City.<br>29: Prevention of Terrorism Act becomes law. | 24: Ford and Brezhnev reach agreement on limiting strategic nuclear weapons. |
| Dec. | 30: <i>Churchill's People</i> (TV) | 13: <i>Rising Damp</i>  | 24: Stonehouse in Australian court after faking drowning.<br>31: Inflation reaches 19.1%.   | 10: Solzhenitsyn collects Nobel Prize 4 years late.                          |

---

## Bibliographical Note

As in previous volumes in *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom*, this is a selective note, which does not set out to list references to all the books that are cited in the footnotes. It follows the general outline of the comparable note in Volume IV.

Material assembled at the BBC Written Archives Centre at Caversham, which acquired new premises in 1990, was by far the most important source for internal BBC information in researching and writing Volumes I–IV. It remains so for Volume V, although the catalogued material that is held at Caversham and is available for public access relates, broadly speaking, only to the years 1922–62. For the period from 1962 to 1974, therefore, internal files, not yet made open to outside use, are a major source. Some of them have not been transferred to Caversham or catalogued there. They are at present stored at the BBC Records Appraisal Unit or are in current operational use. Material relating to external broadcasting is patchy and scattered. Some of it is held in Bush House.

A non-documentary BBC source, not available when Volume IV was written, is the collection of transcripts of interviews conducted with people who have contributed to BBC history. Many of the interviews were carried out by Frank Gillard, who knew and had worked with many of the people being interviewed. The BBC Sound Archives Oral History Project will become indispensable for future scholars. Other interviews outside the scope of the Project have been carried out by John Cain, Leonard Miall, and myself.

In a wide range of published BBC sources, several are of basic importance: the series of *BBC Handbooks*, supplementing its *Annual Reports* to Parliament; *Lunch-Time Lectures*—forty-seven were given between 1962 and 1970 and, after a gap of nearly four years, three more in 1974; the *Radio Times*, for its articles as well as for its programme details; *BBC Record*, which first appeared in 1961; *London Calling*, which first appeared in 1939, the successor to *BBC Empire Broadcasting*; and the staff magazine *Ariel*, which first appeared in 1936. It is useful too to consult the regular flow of BBC Press releases, relating them to unpublished sources. The main periodicals which must be studied include *The Economist*, the *Spectator*, *The Listener* (since 1991 sadly deceased), the *Journal of the Royal Television Society*, *Combroad, Broadcast* (formerly *Television Mail*) from 1959, *Intermedia* from 1973, and from 1979 *Media, Culture and Society*.

As indicated in the Preface, valuable Independent Television sources are available for this period, as are the four volumes of the history of Independent Television, the first two written by BERNARD SENDALL and the second two by JEREMY POTTER. They are entitled *Independent Television in Britain*, Vol. 1: *Origin and Foundation, 1946–62* (1982); Vol. 2: *Expansion and Change, 1958–68* (1983); Vol. 3: *Politics and Control, 1968–80* (1989); Vol. 4: *Companies and Programmes, 1968–80* (1990). IBA files are well kept, and can be used in conjunction with annual reports and material from the ITC library.

Other important non-BBC unpublished sources include the Public Record Office, the Post Office Archive, and the archives of the Royal Television Society. PEP, Political and Economic Planning, produced two reports on

television, *Television in Britain* (1958) and *Prospects for Television* (1958). A wide range of newspapers and periodicals has been consulted in the BBC library, and a still wider range in the British Library's Newspaper Library at Colindale. Press comment on the BBC, even when not well informed, as it often was, is always revealing. In 1970 it was estimated that the BBC was mentioned in newspapers between 700 and 1,000 times each week.

*Hansard* is indispensable, and in assessing Parliamentary opinion both in the Commons and in the Lords, it is necessary to study answers to questions as well as debates. The main official enquiries, listed below, were followed by debates, and there were also important debates on external broadcasting.

The volume of other unpublished or published material relating to this twenty-year period is huge, and ranges from private papers (e.g., those of Cecil Madden, Grace Wyndham Goldie, Richard Francis, and Lord Hill) to biographies, autobiographies, election surveys, and accounts and critiques of specific areas of broadcasting and programmes. There are also several general studies of broadcasting policy from various points of view, political, social, and economic. The critiques have significantly increased in number during recent years, and many of them now appear as dated as the programmes.

*British Broadcasting 1922-82: A Selected and Annotated Bibliography*, edited by GAVIN HIGGENS (1983), is a most valuable guide to printed resources, although it is by now—inevitably so—badly out of date. BARRIE MACDONALD'S *Broadcasting in the United Kingdom: A Guide to Information Sources* (1988) is another helpful survey. KENNETH PASSINGHAM, *The Guinness Book of TV Facts and Feats* (1984) is packed with information that is not assembled anywhere else. There is important bibliographical information also in ASA BRIGGS, *The BBC: The First Fifty years* (1985) and *Governing the BBC* (1979).

In chronological order the key official documents are:

*Copyright Act 1956* (1956)

Cmnd. 39 (1956), *Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Welsh Broadcasting 1956*

*Report of the Select Committee on Broadcasting (Anticipation of Debates), Session 1955-56, HCP 288* (1956)

Cmnd. 225 (1957), *Overseas Information Services*

*Report of the Television Advisory Committee 1960* (1960)

Cmnd. 1753 (1962), *Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960*

Cmnd. 1770 (1962), *Broadcasting: Memorandum on the Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960*

Cmnd. 1819 (1962), *Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960, Appendix E: Memoranda Submitted to the Committee*

Cmnd. 1893 (1962), *Broadcasting: Further Memorandum on the Report of the Committee on Broadcasting, 1960*

Cmnd. 2236, *Broadcasting: Copy of the Licence and Agreement, dated the 19th day of December 1963, between H.M. Postmaster-General and the British Broadcasting Corporation*

*Television Act 1964* (1964)

Cmnd. 2385 (1964), *Broadcasting: Copy of the Royal Charter for the Continuance of the British Broadcasting Corporation*

Cmnd. 2922 (1966), *A University of the Air*

Cmnd. 3169 (1966), *Broadcasting*

*Marine etc. Broadcasting (Offences) Act 1967* (1967)

*Report of the Television Advisory Committee 1967* (1968)

- Ninth Report from the Select Committee on House of Commons (Services) . . . The Experiment in Radio Broadcasting*, Session 1967–68, HCP 448 (1968)
- The Open University: Report of the Planning Committee to the Secretary of State for Education and Science* (1969)
- Cmnd. 4107 (1969), *Report of the Review Committee on Overseas Representation 1968–69*
- Third Report from the Estimates Committee . . . British Broadcasting Corporation*, Session 1968–69, HCP 387 (1969)
- Cmnd. 4240 (1969), *Report of a Court of Inquiry under Mr. E. T. C. Grint, CBE, into a Dispute at the British Broadcasting Corporation*
- Department of Education and Science, *Report by H.M. Inspectors on a Survey of the Use of Broadcasts in Schools in England and Wales* (1971)
- Cmnd. 4636 (1971), *An Alternative Service of Radio Broadcasting*
- Sound Broadcasting Act 1972* (1972)
- Report of the Television Advisory Committee 1972* (1972)
- Second Report from the Select Committee on Nationalised Industries . . . Independent Broadcasting Authority*, Session 1971–72, HCP 465 (1972)
- Independent Broadcasting Authority Act 1973* (1973)
- Cmnd. 5774 (1974), *Report of the Committee on Broadcasting Coverage*

Among the best of the substantial studies of broadcasting are P. BLACK, *The Biggest Aspidistra in the World* (1972) and *The Mirror in the Corner* (1972); T. BURNS, *The BBC: Public Institution and Private World* (1977); G. MANSELL, *Let Truth Be Told: 50 Years of BBC External Broadcasting* (1982); and B. PAULU, *British Broadcasting in Transition* (1961) and *Television and Radio in the United Kingdom* (1981). See also the valuable collection of radio scripts written with commentary by A. CLAYRE, *The Impact of Broadcasting* (1973), and J. CAIN, *The BBC: 70 Years of Broadcasting* (1992), a volume produced to celebrate the BBC's seventieth anniversary.

Other studies of particular aspects of broadcasting include R. CATHCART, *The Most Contrary Region: The BBC in Northern Ireland 1924–80* (1984); M. COCKERELL, *Live from No. 10* (1988); I. HARTLEY, *2ZY to NBH* (1987) (BBC in the North-West, 1920–80); *Goodnight Children . . . Everywhere: An Informal History of Children's Broadcasting* (1983); A. HOME, *Into the Box of Delights: A History of Children's Television* (1993); R. LUCAS, *The Voice of a Nation: A Concise Account of the BBC in Wales 1923–73* (1981); and K. WHITEHEAD, *The Third Programme: A Literary History* (1989).

Among general studies and histories of broadcasting the following are relevant:

- J. BAKEWELL and N. GARNHAM, *The New Priesthood* (1970)
- T. BENNETT (ed.), *Popular Television and Film: A Reader* (1981)
- J. CURRAN and J. SEATON, *Power without Responsibility: The Press and Broadcasting in Britain* (3rd edn., 1988)
- A. DAVIS, *Television, the First 40 Years* (1976)
- *TV's Greatest Hits* (1988)
- D. J. ENRIGHT, *Fields of Vision: Essays in Literature, Language and Television* (1988)
- B. GRAHAM, *Television* (1974)
- S. HOOD, *A Survey of Television* (1967)
- *On Television* (1980)
- and G. O'LEARY, *Questions of Broadcasting* (1990)

- H. KINGSLEY and G. TIBBALLS, *Box of Delights* (1989) (chronicle of TV programmes, 1953–89)  
 M. LEAPMAN, *The Last Days of the Beeb* (1986)  
 P. M. LEWIS and J. BOOTH, *The Invisible Medium: Public, Commercial and Community Radio* (1989)  
 — C. PERLMAN, *Media and Power: From Marconi to Murdoch* (1986)  
 G. LYLE, *Broadcasting* (1973)  
 B. MADDOX, *Beyond Babel: New Dimensions in Communications* (1972)  
 D. MORLEY and B. WHITAKER (eds.), *The Press, Radio and Television: An Introduction to the Media* (1983)  
 D. NORDEN *et al.*, *Coming to You Live* (1985)  
 J. SCUPHAM, *Broadcasting and the Community* (1967)  
 M. SHULMAN, *The Least Worst Television in the World* (1972)  
 N. SWALLOW, *Factual Television* (1966)  
 F. WHEEN, *Television: A History* (1985)

The following books deal with economic, political, and constitutional questions concerning broadcasting:

- H. APPIA and B. CASSEN, *Presse, Radio et Télévision en Grande Bretagne* (1969)  
 J. BLUMLER and D. MCQUAIL, *Television in Politics* (1968)  
 Broadcasting Research Unit, *The Public Service Idea in British Broadcasting* (1985)  
 N. GARNHAM, *Structures of Television* (rev. edn., 1978)  
 P. GOULD *et al.*, *The Structures of Television* (1984)  
 B. GROOMBRIDGE, *Television and the People* (1972)  
 M. GUREVITCH *et al.*, *Television and Politics* (1977)  
 R. KUHN (ed.), *The Politics of Broadcasting* (1985)  
 Labour Party, *The People and the Media* (1974)  
 B. LAPPING (ed.), *The Bounds of Freedom* (1980)  
 C. MACCABE and O. STEWART (eds.), *The BBC and Public Service Broadcasting* (1986)  
 A. MAY and K. ROWAN, *Inside Information: British Government and the Media* (1982)  
 M. J. MOULDS, *British Television Revealed: An Economic Study* (1983)  
 C. R. MUNRO, *Television, Censorship and the Law* (1979)  
 R. NEGRINE, *Politics and the Mass Media in Britain* (1989)  
 J. SEATON and B. PIMLOTT (eds.), *The Media in British Politics* (1987)  
 C. SEYMOUR-URE, *The British Press and Broadcasting since 1945* (1991)  
 — *The Politics Impact of Mass Media* (1974)  
 A. SMITH, *British Broadcasting* (1974)  
 — *The Shadow in the Cave* (rev. edn., 1976)  
 — *The Politics of Information* (1978)  
 M. TRACEY, *The Production of Political Television* (1978)  
 — *The Throne We Honour: Essays on Public Service Broadcasting* (1991)  
 J. TUNSTALL, *The Media in Britain* (1983)  
 E. G. WEDELL, *Broadcasting and Public Policy* (1968)  
 J. WHALE, *The Half Shut Eye: Television and Politics in Britain and America* (1970)  
 — *The Politics of the Media* (1980)  
 M. WOBER and B. GUNTER, *Television and Social Control* (1988)

Technological developments and issues are covered in E. PAWLEY, *BBC Engineering, 1922–1972* (1972). See also:

- R. ARMES, *On Video* (1988)
- E. ARNOLD, *Competition and Technical Change in the Television Industry* (1985)
- L. BAGRIT, *The Age of Automation* (Reith Lectures, 1964)
- J. BENIGER, *The Control Revolution* (1986)
- D. BRISCOE and R. CURTIS-BRAMWELL, *The BBC Radiophonic Workshop* (1983)
- P. FAIRLEY, *Television: Behind the Screen* (1976)
- T. FORESTER (ed.), *The Microelectronics Revolution* (1980)
- K. GEDDES, *Broadcasting in Britain, 1922–1972: A Brief Account of its Engineering Aspects* (1972)
- and G. BUSSEY, *Television: The First 50 Years* (1986)
- J. HOWKINS, *New Technologies, New Policies* (1982)
- A. F. INGLIS, *Behind the Tube: A History of Broadcasting Technology and Business* (1990)
- G. J. KING, *Beginners' Guide to Colour Television* (1973)
- D. KIRK, *Audio and Video Recording* (1975)
- G. J. MULGAN, *Networks and the New Economics of Communication* (1991);
- S. NORA and A. MINC, *The Computerisation of Society* (English language edn. 1980)
- K. R. STURLEY, *Sound and Television Broadcasting: General Principles* (1961)
- K. WICKS, *Television* (1983)

Critiques of broadcasting output and policy include:

- H. BAEHR (ed.), *Women and the Media* (1981)
- and G. DYER, *Boxed In: Women and TV* (1987)
- and M. RYAN, *Shut Up and Listen: Women and Local Radio* (1984)
- J. CORNER (ed.), *Popular Television in Britain: Studies in cultural history* (1991)
- T. DANIELS and J. GERSON (eds.), *The Colour Black: Black Images in British Television* (1989)
- G. DUNN, *The Box in the Corner: Television and the Under Fives* (1977)
- M. ESSLIN, *The Age of Television* (1982)
- J. FISKE and J. HARTLEY, *Reading Television* (1978)
- J. KING and M. STOTT (eds.), *Is This Your Life? Images of Women in the Media* (1977)
- M. LARGE, *Who's Bringing Them Up? How to Break the TV Habit* (1980)
- J. MANDER, *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television* (1980)
- N. POSTMAN, *The Disappearance of Childhood* (1985)
- *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (1986)
- P. SCHLESINGER et al., *Televising 'Terrorism': Political Violence in Popular Culture* (1983)
- M. SHULMAN, *The Ravenous Eye* (1973)
- M. WHITEHOUSE, *Cleaning Up TV: From Protest to Participation* (1967)
- *Mightier than the Sword* (1985)
- T. C. WORSLEY, *Television: The Ephemeral Art* (1970)

Other books which deal with various aspects of broadcasting are listed below by category.

(i) Personal accounts of varying length and depth, including autobiographies and biographies, are sometimes indispensable, like D. G. BRIDSON, *Prospero and Ariel: The Rise and Fall of Radio* (1971); K. CLARK, *The Other Half: A Self-Portrait* (1977); R. DAY, *Day by Day* (1975); *idem*, *Grand Inquisitor* (1989); *idem*, *But with Respect* (1993); J. DIMBLEBY, *Richard Dimbleby: A Biography* (1977); H. GRISEWOOD, *One Thing at a Time: An Autobiography* (1968); C. MICHELMORE and J. METCALFE, *Two-Way Story* (1986); M. TRACEY, *A Variety of Lives: A Biography of Hugh Greene* (1983); M. WHITEHOUSE, *Mary Whitehouse, A Most Dangerous Woman?* (1982); and R. WILMUT, *Tony Hancock 'Artiste'* (1978).

Among personal accounts written by Director-Generals and Governors, the following are also necessary reading: C. CURRAN, *A Seamless Robe* (1979); C. HILL, *Both Sides of the Hill* (1964); *idem*, *Behind the Screen* (1974); R. LUSTY, *Bound to be Read* (1975); A. MILNE, *DG: Memoirs of a British Broadcaster* (1988); and I. TRETOWAN, *Split Screen* (1984). See also C. STUART (ed.), *The Reith Diaries* (1975), and D. DILKS (ed.), *The Diaries of Sir Alexander Cadogan* (1971).

Other accounts include:

- D. R. ALLEN, *A Word from Arlott* (1983)
- *Another Word from Arlott* (1985)
- E. and G. ANDREWS, *For Ever and Ever, Eamonn: The Public and Private Life of Eamonn Andrews* (1989)
- M. ASPEL, *Polly Wants a Zebra: The Memoirs of Michael Aspel* (1974)
- M. BARRATT, *Michael Barratt* (1973)
- R. BOLTON, *Death on the Rock* (1990)
- F. BOUGH, *Cue Frank!* (1980)
- T. BRENNAND, *Eamonn Andrews* (1989)
- S. BRYANT, *The Television Heritage* (1989)
- L. DAWSON, *A Clown Too Many* (1985)
- R. DOUGALL, *In and Out of the Box: An Autobiography* (1975)
- D. EDWARDS, *The Two Worlds of Donald Edwards* (1970)
- A. FAITH, *Poor Me* (1961)
- P. FERRIS, *Sir Hugu: The Life of Huw Wheldon* (1990)
- W. FRISCHAUER, *David Frost* (1972)
- D. FROST, *David Frost: An Autobiography* (1993)
- J. GALLAGHER, *Isobel Barnett: Portrait of a Lady* (1982)
- W. GLOCK, *Notes in Advance* (1991)
- T. GOLD, *The Life and Times of Colin MacInnes* (1983)
- N. HACKFORTH, *Solo for Home: The Biography of Kenneth Home* (1976)
- D. HAMILTON, *The Music Game* (1980)
- F. HANCOCK and D. NATHAN, *Hancock* (1969)
- B. JOHNSTON, *It's Been a Lot of Fun: An Autobiography* (1974)
- *Chatterboxes: My Friends the Commentators* (1983)
- D. JONES, *Microphones and Muddy Boots* (1987)
- P. JONES, *Television Behind the Scenes* (1984)
- L. KENNEDY, *On My Way to the Club: An Autobiography* (1989)
- J. LE MESURIER, *A Jobbing Actor* (1984)
- I. MCDUGALL, *Foreign Correspondent* (1980)
- I. MCINTYRE, *The Expense of Glory: A Life of John Reith* (1993)
- A. MARSHALL, *Life's Rich Pageant* (1984)
- L. MIALL (ed.), *Richard Dimbleby, Broadcaster, by his Colleagues* (1966)
- E. MORECAMBE and E. WISE, *There's No Answer to That!!* (1981)



- A. NIGHTINGALE, *Chase the Fade* (1981)  
 P. OAKES, *Tony Hancock* (1975)  
 A. PARKIN, *My Life on Your Farm* (1983)  
 C. PARSONS, *True to Nature: 25 Years of Wildlife Filming with the BBC Natural History Unit* (1982)  
 G. PRIESTLAND, *Something Understood: An Autobiography* (1986)  
 C. RALLING (ed.), *Muggeridge through the Microphone* (1967)  
 W. REYBURN, *Gilbert Harding: A Candid Portrayal* (1978)  
 C. RICHARDSON, *From Churchill's Secret Circle to the BBC: The Biography of Lt. Gen. Sir Ian Jacob* (1991)  
 A. RUSSELL, *A Certain Voice* (1984)  
 J. SAVILE, *As It Happens: Jimmy Savile OBE: His Autobiography* (1974)  
 E. SIMS, *Birds of the Air: Autobiography of a Naturalist and Broadcaster* (1976)  
 G. SMITH, *Eamonn Andrews: His Life* (1988)  
 ——— *Wogan* (1987)  
 J. SPEIGHT, *It Stands to Reason* (1973)  
 R. STOREY, *Gilbert Harding* (1961)  
 G. TALBOT, *Ten Seconds from Now: A Broadcaster's Story* (1973)  
 H. TENNYSON, *The Haunted Mind* (1984)  
 J. TIMPSON, *Today and Yesterday* (1976)  
 ——— *The Lighter Side of 'Today'* (1983)  
 ——— *John Timpson's Early Morning Book* (1986)  
 B. TOOK, *A Point of View* (1990)  
 M. TRACEY and D. MORRISON, *Whitehouse* (1979)  
 J. WARNER, *Evening All* (1979)  
 A. WHICKER, *Within's Whicker's World: An Autobiography* (1982)  
 T. WOGAN, *Wogan on Wogan* (1987)  
 J. YOUNG, *JY: The Autobiography of Jimmy Young* (1973)  
 ——— *Jimmy Young* (1982)

(ii) Descriptions of individual programmes, which can usefully be supplemented by BBC Audience Research Reports and Press comment, include:

- A. ASHERMAN, *The Star Trek Compendium* (1987)  
 D. ATTENBOROUGH, *The 'Zoo Quest' Expeditions* (1980)  
 G. BASELEY, *The Archers* (1971)  
 B. BAXTER and E. BARNES, *Blue Peter: The Inside Story* (1989)  
 S. BLACKWELL, *The Story of Top of the Pops* (1985)  
 M. BOWEN and D. JACOBS, *Any Questions?* (1981)  
 E. BRABEN (ed.), *The Best of Morecambe & Wise* (1974)  
 T. BROOKE-TAYLOR *et al.*, *I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue* (1980)  
 C. BRUNSDON and D. MORLEY, *Everyday Television: Nationwide* (1979)  
 B. BUTLER (ed.), *Sports Report: 40 Years of the Best* (1987)  
 G. CHAPMAN *et al.*, *Monty Python's Flying Circus: Just the Words* (1989)  
 A. DRAPER *et al.*, *The Story of the Goons* (1976)  
 J. FREEMAN, *Face to Face with John Freeman* (1989)  
 D. FROST and N. SHERRIN (eds.), *That Was the Week That Was* (1963)  
 R. GALTON and A. SIMPSON, *The Best of Hancock* (1986)  
 ——— *Hancock's Half Hour* (1987)  
 ——— *The Best of Steptoe & Son* (1988)  
 P. HAINING, *Dr. Who: A Celebration* (1983)  
 ——— *Dr. Who, The Time Traveller's Guide* (1987)

- P. HAINING, *Dr. Who, 25 Glorious Years* (1988)  
 M. HARRIS, *The Dr. Who Technical Manual* (1983)  
 R. HEWISON, *Monty Python: The Case Against* (1981)  
 M. HOWARD, *Margaret Howard's Pick of the Week* (1981)  
 R. LAZAR (ed.), *From Our Own Correspondent* (1980)  
 J. LICHTENBERG et al., *Star Trek Lives!* (1975)  
 M. MARLAND (ed.), *Z Cars: Four Television Scripts* (1968)  
 L. MASTERMAN, *Television Mythologies* (1984)  
 S. MILLIGAN, *The Book of the Goons* (1974)  
 — *The Last Goon Show* (1987)  
 J. MORRIS, *Around the World in 25 Years* (1983)  
 J. NATHAN-TURNER, *Dr. Who: The Tardis Inside Out* (1985)  
 — *Dr. Who: The Companions* (1986)  
 N. PAINTING, *Forever Ambridge: Twenty-Five Years of The Archers* (1975)  
 M. PARKINSON, *The Best of Parkinson* (1982)  
 G. PERRY, *Life of Python* (1983)  
 J. PERRY and D. CROFT, *Dad's Army* (1975)  
 B. PERTWEE, *Dad's Army: The Making of a Television Legend* (1989)  
 R. PLOMLEY, *Desert Island Discs* (1975)  
 S. RACE, *My Music!* (1979)  
 R. SILVERSTONE, *Framing Science: The Making of a BBC Documentary (Horizon)* (1985)  
 W. SMETHURST, *The Archers: The First Thirty Years* (1980)  
 — *The Archers: The Official Companion* (1985)  
 — *The Archers: The New Official Companion* (1987)  
 B. TOOK, *The Best of Round the Horne* (1989)  
 J. TULLOCH and M. ALVARADO, *Dr. Who: The Unfolding Text* (1983)  
 G. WATKINS (ed.), *Tonight: BFI Dossier 15* (1982)  
 H. WHELDON (ed.), *Monitor: An Anthology* (1962)  
 R. WILMUT and J. GRAFTON, *The Goon Show Companion: A History and Goonography* (1976)  
 J. WILSON, *Roger Cooke's Checkpoint* (1983)

## (iii) Comedy is described and discussed in:

- B. COOKE, *Writing Comedy for Television* (1983)  
 B. CROWTHER and M. PINFOLD, *Bring Me Laughter: Four Decades of TV Comedy* (1987)  
 E. MIDWINTER, *Make 'Em Laugh: Famous Comedians and their Worlds* (1979)  
 D. NATHAN, *The Laughtermakers: A Quest for Comedy* (1971)  
 S. NEALE and F. KRUTNIK, *Popular Film and Television Comedy* (1990)  
 L. SCHWARTZ, *The Craft of Writing TV Comedy* (1989)  
 B. TOOK, *Laughter in the Air: An Informal History of British Radio Comedy* (rev. edn., 1981)  
 R. WILMUT, *From Fringe to Flying Circus: Celebrating a Unique Generation of Comedy, 1960-80* (1980)

## (iv) For drama see:

- G. W. BRANDT (ed.), *British Television Drama* (1981)  
 H. BURTON, *Acting in the Sixties* (1970)  
 J. DRAKAKIS (ed.), *British Radio Drama* (1981)  
 H. KINGSLEY, *Soap Opera* (1988)

- P. F. LEWIS (ed.), *Radio Drama* (1981)  
 D. PAGET, *True Stories? Documentary Drama on Radio, Screen and Stage* (1990)  
 I. RODGER, *Radio Drama* (1982)  
 D. SELF, *Television Drama: An Introduction* (1984)  
 I. SHUBIK, *Play for Today: The Evolution of Television Drama* (1975)  
 S. SUTTON, *The Largest Theatre in the World: Thirty Years of Television Drama* (1982)  
 D. TAYLOR, *Days of Vision: Working with David Mercer, Television Drama Then and Now* (1990)

## (v) For music see:

- S. BARNARD, *On the Radio: Music Radio in Britain* (1989)  
 M. CABLE, *The Pop Industry Inside out* (1977)  
 I. CHAMBERS, *Urban Rhythms: Pop Music and Popular Culture* (1985)  
 D. COX, *The Henry Wood Proms* (1980)  
 S. FRITH, *Music for Pleasure* (1988)  
 B. HALL, *The Proms and the Men Who Made Them* (1981)  
 K. HOWLETT, *The Beatles at the Beeb: The Story of their Radio Career, 1962–65* (1982)  
 N. KENYON, *The BBC Symphony Orchestra: The First Fifty Years, 1930–80* (1981)  
 R. SHEPPARD, *The DJ's Handbook* (1986)  
 I. WHITCOMBE, *After the Ball: Pop Music from Rag to Rock* (1973)  
 I. WICKE, *Rock Music: Culture, Aesthetics and Sociology* (Eng. trans., 1990)

## (vi) For news, documentaries, talks, and current affairs see:

- P. BEHARREL *et al.*, *Bad News* (1976)  
 J. G. BLUMLER and D. MCQUAIL, *Television in Politics: Its Uses and Influence* (1969)  
 A. DAVIS, *Television: Here is the News* (1976)  
 C. ELLIOTT (ed.), *The BBC Book of Royal Memories* (1991)  
 B. FERGUSON, *Television on History: Representations of Northern Ireland* (1985)  
 The Glasgow Media Group, *More Bad News* (1983)  
 G. W. GOLDIE, *Facing the Nation: Television and Politics, 1936–76* (1977)  
 A. KARPE, *Doctoring the Media: The Reporting of Health and Medicine* (1988)  
 P. SCHLESINGER, *Putting Reality Together: BBC News* (1978)  
 J. SUCHET, *TV News: The Inside Story* (1989)  
 J. TRENAMAN and D. MCQUAIL, *Television and the Political Image* (1961)  
*Voices Out of the Air: The Royal Christmas Broadcasts 1932–80* (1981)  
 R. WALLIS and S. BARAN, *The Known World of Broadcast News* (1990)  
 J. WHALE, *The Half-Shut Eye: Television and Politics in Britain and America* (1969)

## (vii) On religion see:

- M. DINWIDDIE, *Religion by Radio* (1968)  
 T. DOWLEY (ed.), *Songs of Praise* (1984)  
 W. F. FORE, *Television and Religion: The Shaping of Faith, Values and Culture* (1987)  
 R. MCKAY, *Reflections on Religious Broadcasting* (1964)  
 M. MUGGERIDGE, *Christ and the Media* (1977)

- M. SVENNEVIG *et al.*, *Godwatching: Viewers, Religion and Television* (1988)  
 K. WOLFE, *The Churches and the British Broadcasting Corporation, 1922–56* (1984)

(viii) Education:

- E. CHOAT *et al.*, *Teachers and Television* (1987)  
 K. FAWDRY, *Everything but Alf Garnett: A Personal View of BBC School Broadcasting* (1974)  
 A. HANCOCK, *Planning for Educational Mass Media* (1977)  
 C. G. HAYTER, *Using Broadcasts in Schools: A Study and Evaluation* (1974)  
 M. HOWE, *Learning from Television* (1983)  
 J. LANGHAM, *Teachers and Television: History of IBA Educational Fellowship Scheme* (1990)  
 L. MASTERMAN, *Teaching about Television* (1980)  
 R. MOSS, *Video, the Educational Image* (1983)  
 W. PERRY, *The Open University* (1976)  
 J. ROBINSON, *Learning Over the Air: 60 Years of Partnership in Adult Learning* (1982)  
 R. SHERRINGTON, *Television and Language Skills* (1973)  
 J. TUNSTALL, *The Open University Opens* (1973)

(ix) Sport:

- D. R. ALLEN, *Cricket in the Air* (1985)  
 ——— *More Cricket in the Air* (1988)  
 S. BARNETT, *Games and Sets: The Changing Face of Sport on Television* (1990)  
 E. BUSCOMBE (ed.), *Football on Television* (1975)  
 C. MARTIN-JENKINS, *Ball by Ball: The Story of Cricket Broadcasting* (1990)  
 M. NAPIER, *The Racing Men of TV* (1978)  
 S. ROUS, *The Coverage of Sport on BBC Television: A Study for the BBC General Advisory Council* (1975)

(x) For trade unions and industrial relations see:

- P. BEHARREL and G. PHILO (eds.), *Trade Unions and the Media* (1971)  
 P. SEGLOW, *Trade Unionism and Television* (1978)

(xi) For audience and other research see:

- M. ANWAR, *Who Tunes into What? A Report on Ethnic Minority Broadcasting* (1978)  
 ——— and A. SHANG, *Television in a Multi-Racial Society* (1982)  
 G. BARLOW and A. HILL (eds.), *Video Violence and Children* (1985)  
 T. BATES and J. ROBINSON, *Evaluating Educational Television and Radio* (1977)  
 W. A. BELSON, *Television and the Family* (1959)  
 ——— *The Impact of Television* (1967)  
 ——— *Television Violence and the Adolescent Boy* (1978)  
 J. G. BLUMLER *et al.*, *The Challenge of Election Broadcasting* (1978)  
 S. R. BRODY, *Screen Violence and Film Censorship* (1977)  
 R. BROWN (ed.), *Children and Television* (1977)  
 J. BRYANT and D. R. ANDERSON (eds.), *Children's Understanding of Television* (1983)  
 M. COLLINS, *Perception and Bias in Television News* (1984)

- C. CULLINGFORD, *Children and Television* (1984)  
 H. EYSENCK and D. NIAS, *Sex, Violence and the Media* (1978)  
 C. GERAGHTY, *Women and Soap Opera* (1991)  
 G. J. GOODHARDT et al., *The Television Audience: Patterns of Viewing* (1975)  
 B. GUNTER, *Dimensions of Television Violence* (1985)  
 ——— *Television and Sex Role Stereotyping* (1986)  
 ——— *Television and the Fear of Crime* (1987)  
 ——— and J. MCALEER, *Children and Television: The One-Eyed Monster?* (1990)  
 ——— and M. SVENNEVIG, *Behind and in Front of the Screen* (1987)  
 ——— and ——— *Attitudes to Broadcasting over the Years* (1988)  
 ——— and M. WOBER, *Violence on Television: What the Viewers Think* (1988)  
 H. HIMMELWEIT et al., *Television and the Child* (1958)  
 B. HODGE and D. TRIPP, *Children and Television* (1986)  
 M. J. A. HOWE, *Television and Children* (1977)  
 E. KATZ, *Social Research in Britain* (1977)  
 M. MASHEDA, *Family Viewing: A Study of Early Evening Television* (1960)  
 M. MESSENGER DAVIES, *Television is Good for Your Kids* (1989)  
 M. MEYER (ed.), *Children and the Formal Features of Television* (1983)  
 G. NOBLE, *Children in Front of the Small Screen* (1975)  
 R. SILVEY, *Who's Listening? The Story of BBC Audience Research* (1974)  
 D. TAYLOR and B. MULLER, *Uninvited Guests* (1986)  
 J. M. TRENAMAN, *Communication and Comprehension* (1967)
- (xii) On communications and media theory see:
- J. BAGGALEY and S. DUCK, *Dynamics of Television* (1976)  
 ——— et al., *Psychology of the TV Image* (1980)  
 C. CHERRY, *On Human Communication* (1968; 3rd edn., 1978)  
 D. DAYAN and L. KATZ, *Media Events* (1992)  
 M. DE FLEUR, *Themes of Mass Communication* (1966; 2nd edn., 1970)  
 M. GUREVITCH et al., *Culture, Society and the Media* (1982)  
 D. HIRST and G. CUMBERBATCH, *Mass Media and Society* (1975)  
 G. LEALAND, *American Television Programmes on British Screens* (1984)  
 C. MACCABE (ed.), *High Theory, Low Culture: Analysing Popular Television and Film* (1986)  
 M. McLUHAN, *Understanding Media* (1964)  
 ——— and B. R. POWERS, *The Global village: Transformation in World Life and Media in the 21st Century* (1989)  
 D. McQUAIL, *Mass Communications Theory* (1987)  
 ——— *The Sociology of Mass Communications* (1972);  
 R. P. MADSEN, *The Impact of Film: How Ideas are Communicated through Cinema and Television* (1973)  
 L. MASTERMAN, *Talking about Television* (1980)  
 M. MOLINARO, C. McLUHAN, and W. TOYE, *Letters of Marshall McLuhan* (1987)  
 A. O'CONNOR (ed.), *Raymond Williams on Television* (1989)  
 T. O'SULLIVAN et al., *Key Concepts in Communication* (1983)  
 O. V. PACKARD, *The Hidden Persuaders* (1957)  
 B. PARKER and N. FARRELL, *TV and Radio: Everybody's Soapbox* (1983)  
 J. ROOT, *Open the Box* (1986)  
 R. SILVERSTONE, *The Message of Television: Myth and Narrative in Contemporary Culture* (1981)

- P. SIMPSON (ed.), *Parents Talking Television: Television in the Home* (1987)  
 R. WILLIAMS, *Communications* (1976)  
 ——— *Television, Technology and Cultural Form* (1974)

Independent broadcasting is the subject of several studies, among them:

- M. BARON, *Independent Radio: The Story of Independent Radio in the United Kingdom* (1975)  
 A. BROWN, *Tyne Tees Television: The First Twenty Years* (1978)  
 G. COX, *See It Happen: The Making of ITN* (1983)  
 D. DOCHERTY, *Running the Show: 21 Years of LWT* (1990)  
 J. GABLE, *The Tuppenny Punch and Judy Show* (1980)  
 L. HAWKINS, *Emmerdale Farm: 10th Anniversary* (1982)  
 B. HENRY (ed.), *British Television Advertising: The First 30 Years* (1986)  
 S. HENRY and M. VAN JOEL, *Pirate Radio: Then and Now* (1984)  
 J. HIND and S. MOSCO, *Rebel Radio: The Full Story of British Pirate Radio* (1985)  
 ITV and TV Times, *25 Years on ITV, 1955–80* (1980)  
 C. JENKIN, *Power Behind the Screen* (1961)  
 Local Radio Workshop, *Capital: Local Radio and Private Profit* (1983)  
 C. MOOREHEAD, *Sidney Bernstein: A Biography* (1984)  
 R. NICHOLS, *Radio Luxembourg, the Station of the Stars* (1983)  
 B. NOAKES, *Last of the Pirates* (1984) (Radio Caroline)  
 G. NOWN (ed.), *Coronation Street: 25 Years* (1985)  
 J. POTTER, *Independent Television in Britain*, Vol. 3 (1989), Vol. 4 (1990)  
 D. ROGERS, *The Complete Avengers* (1989)  
 ——— *The Complete Professionals* (1986)  
 P. A. RUSLING, *The Lid Off Laser 558* (1984) (about pirate radio)  
 B. SENDALL, *Independent Television in Britain*, Vol. 1 (1982), Vol. 2 (1983)  
 E. D. TAYLOR, *The Great TV Book: 21 Years of LWT* (1989)  
 H. THOMAS, *With an Independent Air* (1977)  
 J. TINKER, *The Television Barons* (1982)  
 M. TRACEY, *In the Culture of the Eye: 10 Years of Weekend World* (1983)  
 H. H. WILSON, *Pressure Group: The Campaign for Commercial Television* (1961)  
 Yorkshire Television, *The First 10 Years* (1978)

For the general social, economic, and cultural history of the period covered in the volume, out of an enormous mass of writing I have found the following particularly illuminating:

- N. ANNAN, *Our Age* (1990)  
 C. BARR (ed.), *All Our Yesterdays* (1986)  
 D. BELL, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1973)  
 ——— *Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (1976)  
 C. W. BIGSBY (ed.), *Approaches to Popular Culture* (1976)  
 C. BOOKER, *The Neophiliacs* (1969)  
 D. BOORSTIN, *The Image* (1961)  
 K. BOULDING, *The Image* (1956)  
 C. DAVIES, *Permissive Britain: Social Change in the 60s and 70s* (1975)  
 G. FELDMAN and M. GARTENBERG, *The Beat Generation and the Angry Young Men* (1958)  
 H. GANS, *Popular Culture and High Culture* (1975)  
 S. HALL and P. WHANNEL, *The Popular Arts* (1964)

- K. KUMAR, *Prophecy and Progress: The Sociology of Industrial and Post-Industrial Society* (1978);  
 K. LEECH, *Youthquake: The Growth of a Counter Culture through Two Decades* (1973)  
 B. LEVIN, *Pendulum Years* (1970)  
 A. MARWICK, *Culture in Britain since 1945* (1990)  
 B. MASTERS, *The Swinging Sixties* (1985)  
 G. MELLY, *Revolt into Style* (1970, 1989)  
 J. NUTTALL, *Bomb Culture* (1968)  
 B. ROSENBERG and D. M. WHITE, *Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America* (1957)  
 A. SAMPSON, *Anatomy of Britain* (1962)  
 ——— *Anatomy of Britain Today* (1965)  
 ——— *A New Anatomy of Britain* (1971)  
 N. SHRAPNEL, *The Seventies: Britain's Inward March* (1980)  
 G. E. STEAN (ed.), *McLuhan: Hot and Cool* (1968)  
 H. THOMAS (ed.), *The Establishment* (1959)  
 A. TOFFLER, *Future Shock* (1970)  
 ——— *The Third Wave* (1980)  
 B. WAITES et al. (eds.), *Popular Culture: Past and Present* (1982)  
 M. YOUNG, *The Rise of the Meritocracy* (1958)

Broadcasting abroad is dealt with patchily, but often with insight, in a number of books, some of them textbooks:

- E. BARNOUW, *Broadcasting in the United States, Vol. 3: The Image Empire* (1970)  
 D. BROWNE, *International Radio Broadcasting* (1982)  
 G. CODDING, *Broadcasting without Barriers* (1959)  
 P. DOUGLAS, *Television Today* (1975)  
 K. DYSON and P. HUMPHREYS, *Broadcasting and New Media Policies in Western Europe* (1988)  
 D. ELLIS, *Evolution of the Canadian Broadcasting System* (1969)  
 W. B. EMERY, *National and International Systems of Broadcasting* (1969)  
 F. GAYLE DURHAM, *Radio and Television in the Soviet Union* (1965)  
 M. GORHAM, *Forty Years of Irish Broadcasting* (1964)  
 T. GREEN, *The Universal Eye* (1972)  
 J. A. S. HALE, *Radio Power: Propaganda and International Broadcasting* (1975)  
 S. W. HEAD (ed.), *Broadcasting in Africa* (1974)  
 ——— *World Broadcasting Systems, a Comparative Analysis* (1985)  
 K. INGLIS, *This is the ABC* (1983)  
 D. LERNER and W. SCHRAMM, *Communications and Change in the Developing Countries* (1967)  
 E. NOAM, *Television in Europe* (1991)  
 B. PAULL, *Radio and Television Broadcasting on the European Continent* (1967)  
 ——— *Radio and Television Broadcasting in Eastern Europe* (1974)  
 E. PLOMAN, *Broadcasting in Sweden* (1976)  
 H. SCHILLER, *Mass Communications and the American Empire* (1969; 2nd edn., 1992)  
 H. J. SKORNIA, *Television and Society* (1965)  
 M. TEHERANIAN et al., *Communications Policy for Development* (1977)



# Index

- A for Andromeda* 424  
Aaron, Professor Richard 460  
ABC (US network) 453  
ABC 24, 174, 187-8, 190, 192, 195, 205  
    later Thames TV 601  
Aberfan colliery disaster 536 n.  
*About Religion* 26  
Abrams, Mark 25 n., 70, 240, 384  
access programmes 960-1  
Adair, Hazel 336, 337  
Adam, Kenneth 15, 16, 163, 168, 336, 393, 967  
    and BBC-2 403, 406, 409  
    and children's programmes 179  
    Director of Television Broadcasting 384-5, 386, 389  
    educational broadcasting 458, 473, 480-1, 486, 495  
    and party political broadcasting 550  
    and Pilkington Committee 286, 288, 300  
    and regions 656, 659, 663, 664, 666  
    retirement 393  
    *Six-Five Special* 203, 204, 205  
    sports programmes 218, 219-20  
    *That Was the Week That Was* 357-8, 359, 366-7, 373-4  
    and *This Is Your Life* 172-3, 174  
Adam, Ruth 237  
*Adam Adamant Lives* 425  
Adamson, (Sir) Campbell 584  
Aden 706  
Adie, Kate 643  
'Admass' 6  
Adorian, Paul 26, 180-1, 188  
adult education 182, 473-4, 480, 483-4  
Adult Education Liaison Committees, ITA/BBC 473-4  
*Advertisers' Weekly* 273  
advertising:  
    and ITV 5-6, 11, 30, 159, 186, 273, 293  
    possibility for BBC 291, 518, 537, 541-4, 562, 738, 743, 746, 767, 974  
    Pilkington recommendations 294  
    White Papers 1962 305  
advisory committees, BBC 51  
Africa, overseas services 134  
African languages, external broadcasting 680  
African Service 692, 693, 694, 704  
*After Seven* 926  
Agricultural Advisory Council 341  
Aide-mémoire on political broadcasting 92, 870, 1009  
Albania, external broadcasting from 680  
Albanian Service 680 n., 707  
Albemarle Report (1960) 470  
Albery, John 357  
Alderton, John 931  
Aldington, Toby Low, Lord 914  
Alexander, Sir William 569  
Alexandra Palace 32, 67, 68, 410, 411, 935  
    colour television 848, 853  
Algeria 689  
*All Gas and Gaiters* 930 n.  
*All Our Yesterdays* 804  
Allan, Robert (Lord Allan of Kilmaheow) 910  
Allbeury, Ted 512  
Allen, Louis 659-60  
Allen, Sir Philip (Lord Allen) 909  
Allen, Rod (*Television Mail*) 918, 1004  
Allen, Walter 225  
Alloway, Sidney, Professor 492 n.  
Allsop, Kenneth 163, 238, 344 n., 368  
Alport, Cuthbert, MP (Lord Allport) 108, 111  
alternative culture 461  
Altrincham, John Grigg, Lord 146  
America, see United States of America  
Americanization in television 28  
Amery, Julian, MP (Lord Amery) 447  
Amis, (Sir) Kingsley 457  
Ammonds, John 659  
Amoore, Derrick 894 n., 983  
Ampex telerecording machines 212-13, 217, 250, 836, 837, 838  
*An Age of Kings* 144  
ANCHOR 882  
Anderson, Lindsay 958  
Andrews, Eamonn 173, 219 n., 220  
    children's programmes 175, 176  
    *This Is Your Life* 172-5  
*Andy Pandy* 176  
Anglia Television 282, 476  
*Animal Magic* 931  
animal programmes 180  
*Animal, Vegetable, Mineral* 169  
Annan, Noel (Lord Annan) 479, 496, 800, 809, 867, 884, 995

- Annan Committee 829, 847, 867, 884, 995, 1000  
 terms of reference 996
- Anne, Princess 806
- Annual Register* 988
- Answering Service 934 n.
- anti-Establishment, *TW3* 360, 361–2
- 'Anton', cartoon 352
- Any Questions?* 35, 48, 114, 221–2, 245, 444, 584, 804, 984
- Appleton, Michael 932 n.
- Arab/Israeli War (1973) 978, 1001
- Arabic Services, BBC 80, 99–100, 127, 134, 692, 711, 1001
- Archaeologist, The* 49
- 'Archer, Grace', death 28–9
- Archers, The* 29 n., 36, 37, 222, 226 n., 335, 578, 625 n., 805, 929
- Ariel* 311, 322, 407, 568, 669, 802 n., 822, 839, 933, 952  
 on *Broadcasting in the Seventies* 721, 722
- Arkill, J. H. 379–80, 383, 387, 791 n.  
 and computers 823  
 defends changes 793–4  
 General Election (1970) 881  
 and Musicians' Union 761  
 and the radicals 797  
 and *The War Game* 533
- Arlott, John 220–1, 584
- Armchair Theatre* 192
- Armstrong, Neil 715, 846
- Armstrong, Sir William (Lord Armstrong) 984 n.
- Arnold, Matthew 469, 781
- artists, leaving BBC for ITV 18
- Arts Council 770, 771, 775, 780
- Ascension Island transmitter 681, 711
- Ascent of Man, The* 613
- Ashby, Sir Eric 569, 789
- Ashcroft, Dame Peggy 789
- Ashley, Jack, MP (Lord Ashley) 900
- Ask Pickles* 21
- Aspel, Michael 157
- Associated Rediffusion (A-R) 9 n., 69, 188, 837
- Association of Broadcasting Staff (ABS) 381–2, 642, 761, 762, 889  
*ABS Bulletin* 594, 782–3, 796  
 and changes in radio 777–8, 782, 794  
 first official strike 789–92
- Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians (ACCT) 762
- Association of Municipal Corporations 631
- At Home and Abroad* 48, 62, 69–70, 149, 240, 326
- Athens, broadcasting jammed by BBC 132
- Atkins, Ian 152, 729, 759, 859
- Atkinson, Rowan 335 n.
- Attenborough, (Sir) David 97 n., 410 n.  
 and access programmes 961  
 Controller BBC-2 394, 587  
 and *Civilisation* 613  
 and colour television 858  
 Director of Programmes, Television 727  
 on General Election 1970 883  
 and Lord Hill 601, 603, 921  
*Late Night Line Up* 585, 586  
*The Money Programme* 583  
 Open University 500  
 possible Director General 727  
 on repeats 954  
 on scheduling 954
- Attlee, Clement, Earl Attlee 446
- Attwood, Bedford 21 n.
- ATV 9 n., 11 n., 26, 282–3
- Auden, W. H. 401
- audience measurement, BBC and ITV 21 n.
- Audience Research, BBC 7, 21  
 BBC-2 awareness survey 405–6  
 children's programmes 176  
 external broadcasting 701  
 local radio 644  
 survey of news 70–2, 153  
 television sports 219  
*TW3* 363–4  
 use of computers 823  
 violence study 801
- audiences 16, 46–7, 152  
 BBC/ITV 20, 21–2, 313, 952–3, 960  
 BBC-2 (1964) 413  
 General Election results (1964) 451–2  
 Light, Home, and Third Programmes 39  
 radio increases 314
- audiovisuals in schools 482
- Avengers, The* 374, 447
- Avonside, Janet, Lady 960–1
- Axon, Dr P. E. 835
- Ayers, Rowan 585, 586, 961
- Aylestone, Lord, *see* Bowden, Herbert
- Bachman, Lawrence 525 n.
- 'bad language', complaints 529
- Baghdad Pact 1955 80
- Bagrit, Sir Leon 818
- Baillie, Robin 905, 906
- Baily, Kenneth 152, 174, 857
- Baird, May, Lady 675, 764, 766
- Baker, Francis Noel, MP 115
- Baker, Richard 157, 868, 927
- Baker, Tom 417, 418
- Bakewell, Joan 586, 931
- 'balance' 8, 244, 280–1, 389

- Bacon, Jill 930  
 Balfour, Honor 70  
 Bancroft, Sir Ian (Lord Bancroft) 120 n.  
 Bangladesh 940  
*Baptist World* 269  
 Barber, Anthony (Lord Barber) 797  
 Barber, Frank 695  
 Bardot, Brigitte 164  
 Bark, Conrad Voss 790 n.  
 Barker, Arthur 547 n., 687  
 Barker, Elizabeth 704  
 Barker, Peggy 225  
 Barker, Ronnie 949  
 Barkley, William 529  
 Barlow, Frank, MP 491 n.  
 Barnes, Edward 178  
 Barnes, Sir George xvii, 3, 15, 16, 18, 24, 56  
 Barnett, Correlli 415  
 Barnett, Joel, MP (Lord Barnett) 589  
 Barratt, Michael 930  
 Barry, Michael 190, 191, 192, 287, 521  
 Barton, Michael 638 n.  
 'Basil Brush' 180  
 Baverstock, Donald 152, 161, 164, 340, 346, 385, 386, 389, 390  
   cartoon of 423  
   character 387  
   and children's programmes 179  
   *Dr Who* 418, 419–20  
   drops *This Is Your Life* 174  
   educational broadcasting 480  
   and Harold Wilson 448  
   leaves BBC 391–2  
   and Pilkington 288  
   and *That Was the Week That Was* 358, 363 n.  
   at Yorkshire Television 966  
 Bax, (Sir) Arnold 234  
 Baxter, Biddy 178, 179  
 Baxter, Raymond 219 n.  
 Baxter, Stanley 521 n., 676  
 Baylis, F. J. 492  
 BBC-1 408–9, 412, 413, 583, 861, 930–1  
 BBC-2 389, 402–16  
   and BBC-1 408–9, 412, 413  
   David Attenborough as Controller 394, 587  
   and drama 396–7  
   engineering 831  
   Jubilee Day 931–2  
   kangaroo symbol 411  
   and music 397  
   objectives and planning 408–10  
   opening night 20 April 1964, 410–12  
   opportunities 402–4  
   programmes cut (1975) 1003  
   regional output 663  
   religion on 583  
   science programmes 467  
   Scotland 677  
   slow start, then success 412–13, 413–14, 587  
 BBC-3 376  
 BBC Concert Orchestra 759  
*BBC Engineering* 925  
 BBC Enterprises 712–13  
*BBC Handbook*:  
   (1955) 186  
   (1957) 1, 18  
   (1958) 18, 23, 59  
   (1959) 204 n.  
   (1962) 182  
   (1965) 822  
   (1966) 397  
   (1968) 593, 594  
   (1969) 594, 724  
   (1970) 827, 828, 847, 858  
   (1972) 923  
   (1973) 923–4  
   (1974) 712  
   (1975) 808 n.  
   (1976) 1003  
*BBC Hustings* 248–9  
 BBC International, proposed 713  
 BBC Lunch-Time Lectures 404 n.  
 BBC Northern Ireland Advisory Council 671  
 BBC Northern Ireland Orchestra 759  
 BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra 764  
 BBC orchestras 43, 44, 228, 771  
   defended 764, 765  
   disbandment of some proposed 230, 756, 759, 771, 779  
*BBC Quarterly* on news 64  
 BBC Radiophonic Workshop 420–1, 830, 925, 942  
*BBC Record* 406, 593  
 BBC Representatives 325, 716–17  
 BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra 759, 764, 765  
 BBC Symphony Orchestra 228, 229–31, 399–401, 804, 927  
 BBC Training Orchestra 759, 771  
 BBC Wales 678  
 BBC Welsh Orchestra 759, 764  
 Beadle, Sir Gerald 15, 31, 152, 227–8, 851  
   and audience 16, 17, 30  
   and regional television 651–2, 676  
   retirement 384  
 Bean, Ernest 230  
 Beatles, The 209, 463, 464, 504  
 Beaumont, Hugh 'Binkie' 195  
 Beech, Patrick 523 n., 591, 642, 654, 660, 669  
   Controller, English Regions 800, 806–7

- Beeley, Sir Harold 705, 708–9  
 Beethoven, Ludwig van 804  
 Behan, Brendan 175  
 Belafonte, Harry 197  
*Belfast Telegraph* 906 n., 910, 913  
 Belgium, and radio pirates 516  
 Bell, Martin 980 n.  
 Bellinger, Sir Robert 605, 729 n., 731, 760, 781  
 Beloff, Max (Lord Beloff) 373, 785  
 Belson, William 25 n.  
 Benn, Eric 790 n.  
 Benn, Tony (Anthony Wedgwood Benn, MP) 54, 79 n., 127, 255 n., 259 n., 550, 558, 855  
     and BBC 598, 889  
     and BBC finance 538, 543, 544, 545  
     and education 458, 539  
     General Election (1959) 249–50, 251  
     General Election (1964) 445, 446  
     General Election (1970) 877  
     and immigrants 590, 879  
     Labour Party policy on media 994  
     new ideas for broadcasting 537, 538–9, 545  
     and pirates 458, 515, 516–17, 540–1  
     Postmaster General 515, 531, 562  
     and public service broadcasting 517–18, 537  
     quoted on broadcasting 455, 787  
     raises licence fee (1965–66) 502, 536–7  
 Bennett, Alan 354  
 Bennett, Richard Rodney 399  
 Benny, Jack 197  
 Benthall, Sir Edward 30, 160  
 Bentine, Michael 436, 437 n.  
 Benzie, Isa 222–3  
 Bergin, J. A., Working Party 682–3  
 Berkeley, Lennox 399  
 Bernhard, Prince, 926  
 Bernstein, Sidney (Lord Bernstein) 12, 185, 238, 443–4  
 Bessborough, Frederick Ponsonby, Earl of 150  
 Bethell, Hal 634  
 Betjeman, Sir John 930  
 Bevan, Aneurin 98, 589  
 Beveridge, William, Lord Beveridge 56, 147–8, 299  
 Beveridge Committee Report (1951) 43, 262, 620 n., 670  
 Bevins, Reginald, Postmaster General:  
     on BBC Charter 259  
     and children's programmes 345  
     and colour television 851  
     finance post-Pilkington 306, 307  
     and Pilkington Committee 268  
     and Pilkington Report 257, 268, 300–1, 302  
     and pirate radio 504  
     and *TW3* 360–1  
 Bewes, Rodney 436  
*Bewildered Giant, The* 939  
*Beyond Our Ken* 224  
*Beyond the Fringe* 255, 353–5  
 Bezençon, Marcel 917  
 Biafra 696  
 Bidault, Georges 365  
 Biffen, John, MP 885 n.  
 Big Ben 329–31  
 big screen television displays 304  
*Bill and Ben the Flowerpot Men* 176  
 Billington, Kevin 535  
*Billy Cotton Band Show, The* 143, 287  
 Birch, Philip 515  
 Bird, John 356, 358, 376  
 Bird, Kenneth 334  
 Birdsall, Timothy 357  
 Birkett, Norman, Lord Birkett 171  
 Birmingham:  
     agriculture and farming speciality 653  
     Pebble Mill 729, 806–7, 998–9  
     and radio 769  
*Birmingham Evening Mail* 773  
*Birmingham Mail* 360  
*Birmingham Post* 14, 342  
 Bishop, Sir Harold 387, 477 n., 657–8, 836, 851  
 Black family 195  
 Black, Leo 232  
 Black, Peter 353 n., 392  
     on election broadcasting 252, 253, 450  
     on Greene 309  
     on *Monitor* 167  
     on opera 397, 957  
     on *Our World* 716  
     on Pilkington Report 299  
     on Radios 1/2/3/4 577  
 Black, Dr Stephen 169 n.  
*Black and White Minstrel Show, The* 198, 287, 431, 433, 860  
 Blackburn, Tony 513, 574, 803  
 Blackman, Honor 447  
 Blakely, Denis 224  
 Blanchflower, Danny 172  
 Blessed, Brian 433 n.  
 Blishen, Edward 424  
 Bliss, Sir Arthur 144  
*Blue Lamp, The* 431  
*Blue Peter* 178, 179–80  
 Board of Management 727, 967  
     and *Broadcasting in the Seventies* 728, 773, 779  
     and General Election (1970) 881–3

- under Greene 387  
and *Our World* 716  
and Policy Study Group 754, 761  
and Working Party on Sound  
Broadcasting report 48–50
- Bolam, James 436
- Bolton Evening News* 428
- Bonarjee, Stephen 62, 68, 156, 223–4,  
330–1, 440, 556, 745
- Bond, Michael 180
- Bonham Carter, Mark 239 n.
- Bonham-Carter, Philip 962
- Bonham Carter, Lady Violet 99 n., 292
- Bonner, Paul 550
- Book at Bedtime*, A 929
- Booker, Christopher 357, 370
- Booth, Anthony 527
- Boothby, Robert, Lord Boothby 451, 585
- Boston, Richard (*New Society*) 646 n.
- Bottomley, Sir Norman 94, 95, 111, 128
- Bough, Frank 580
- Boulez, Pierre 927
- Boult, Sir Adrian 56, 785, 789, 927
- Bowden, Herbert (Lord Aylestone) 97,  
487, 542, 559, 694, 971  
Chairman, ITA 598
- Bowden, Vivian (Lord Bowden) 447
- Bowen, John 933–4
- Bowen, Michael 222
- Bowra, Sir Maurice 147
- boxing, on radio 221
- Boyden, James, MP 345, 487
- Boyle, Andrew 578
- Boyle, Sir Edward 445, 472, 485, 487
- Braben, Eddie 948
- Braden, Bernard 877, 964
- Bradley, Clive 445
- Brady, Joseph 433 n.
- Bragg, Melvyn 383
- Brahms, Caryl 356
- Braine, John 189, 357, 883
- Braithwaite, Sir John 299
- Brambell, Wilfred 215, 434–6
- Brasher, Christopher 153
- Braybon, John 422
- 'breakfast television' 952  
for election results 253
- BREMA 817  
and colour television receivers 852,  
861, 862
- Briault, Dr Eric 569
- Bridgewater, Tony 831, 859
- Bridson, D. G. 61, 348, 349 n., 745
- Briggs, Professor Asa (later Lord Briggs)  
141, 316 n., 473 n., 493 n., 569 n.  
*Governing the BBC* 973 n.  
*Brighton Evening Argus* 360
- Briscoe, Desmond 830
- Bristol 653, 769, 772, 795  
Network Production Centre 806
- Bristol, Bishop of 52
- British Association for the Advancement  
of Science 466–7
- British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)  
257, 260  
anniversary, *see subheading* Golden  
Jubilee  
Charter 259, 365 n., 465, 888  
chronology (1955–74) 1113–75  
commercial revenue 291  
correspondents 44, 71, 104, 755, 1001  
educational aim, in Charter 465  
film on, *see This Is the BBC*  
films on television 187–8  
finance 660, 728–9, 1002–3, 1004;  
commercial revenue 291; economies  
(1966) 543; income criticized by  
Public Accounts Committee 90–1;  
operating expenditure, table 1007  
Golden Jubilee (1972) 828, 867, 916,  
917, 925, 926–32  
image 9, 118, 290, 598  
independence 120–1, 922–3  
and ITA 3–4, 25–7, 596–7; *see also*  
competition  
and ITV 217, 278–9  
industrial disputes 789–92, 989–90  
industrial relations 381–2, 789–92, 808  
left-wing bias, accusations of 118  
licence fee, *see separate heading*  
local radio, *see local radio*  
and Open University 493, 499, 500–1,  
539  
paternalism 290  
patronage by 741, 775, 777, 779–80  
and Pilkington Inquiry 280–2, 283,  
284–90, 290–2, 314  
programmes on anniversary day 14  
November 1972 926–32  
quality a watchword 289  
rivalry with ITV over sports coverage  
18–19, 217  
self-consciousness 338–9  
staff employment 379, 970; table 1006  
staff lost to ITV 18  
Staff Redeployment Committee 806  
standards 266  
study by Tom Burns 380–1  
and Suez 73–137; Parliamentary  
debate 107–11; role 102–16;  
wartime controls 95  
television criticized 958–9  
threats in the late 1950s 75  
truth, reputation for 1001

- British Broadcasting Corporation (*cont.*)  
 unionization 381–2  
 unity of 314  
 and White Papers 1962 305  
*British Empire, The* 938–41  
 British Film Fund Agency 186  
 British Film Institute 183  
 British Institute of Public Opinion, poll  
 on Suez 100, 101  
 British Lion 953  
 British Radio Engineering Manufacturers'  
 Association, *see* BREMA  
 Britten, Benjamin (Lord Britten) 397,  
 401, 789, 956–7  
*Broadcast* 986, 987, 992, 996  
 broadcasting:  
 effects of 23, 25–6, 175–6, 276–7  
 finance, *see* finance of broadcasting  
 hours 737, 952  
 Broadcasting and Television Committee  
 (Cabinet) 303, 778  
 Broadcasting Council, proposed 889,  
 891, 901  
 Broadcasting Council for Scotland 366,  
 670, 675  
 and Policy Study Group proposals 762,  
 764  
 Broadcasting Council for Wales 617, 671,  
 673, 764  
 Broadcasting House change in function  
 31–2  
*Broadcasting in the Seventies* 349, 611,  
 638, 649, 721–810  
 attacks on 783–99  
 final document 762, 766–75  
 and finance 723, 729  
 implementation 799–810  
 and radio 721  
 and regions 664, 667  
 staff criticisms 772, 781, 792–3  
 summary 766–9  
 broadcasting research, *see* research  
 Broadcasting Support Services 934 n.  
 Bron, Eleanor 354, 376  
 Bronowski, Jacob 613, 1002  
 Brook, Norman, *see* Normanbrook, Lord  
 Brooke, Sir Basil (Lord Brookeborough)  
 671  
 Brooke–Taylor, Tim 805, 951  
 Brooking, Dorothea 179  
 Brougher Mountain transmitter 902–3  
 Brown [of Post Office] 568  
 Brown, George (Lord George–Brown)  
 549, 553, 559, 664–5, 689  
 loss of Parliamentary seat 884  
 Brown, Ivor 225  
 Brown, Kenneth 249  
 Brown, (Sir) Leslie Farrer 51  
 Brownrigg, Captain Tom 1, 217  
 Bruce, Lenny 359 n.  
 Brunner, John 141  
 Bryan, Paul, MP 543, 566, 589, 619, 775  
 Bryant, Peter 425  
 Brynmor Jones Report (1965) 489  
 Buchanan, Richard, MP 494 n.  
 Buckland, Norah 332, 333  
 Buckley, Leonard (*The Times*) 965 n.  
 Bukht, Michael 904, 909  
 Bulganin, Nikolai 78, 82, 130, 687  
 Bull, Donald 421, 422  
 Bullock, Alan (Lord Bullock) 52, 58, 242  
 Bunce, Michael 484, 550, 983  
 Burgess, Alan 348, 349  
 Burgess, Anthony 412  
 Burnet, Alastair 394, 449, 557, 875, 881,  
 883, 947, 987, 992  
 Burnett, Hugh, *Face to Face* 169–70, 171,  
 213  
 Burns, Professor Tom 24 n., 383  
*The BBC* 380–1, 973  
 Burton, Humphrey 168, 169, 612, 523 n.  
 Burton, Ron 1002  
 Bush House 67–8, 679, 1002  
*see mainly* External Services  
 Butler, David 242, 250, 254, 445, 554,  
 556, 558, 983–4, 989 n., 992  
 Butler, R. A. (Lord Butler) 84, 92, 268,  
 303, 305, 588 n.  
 Committee on overseas broadcasting  
 122–3, 124–5  
 and political broadcasting 242, 252, 445  
 Butterfield, Professor (Sir) Herbert 594  
 cable television 304, 814, 994  
 Caccia, Sir Harold (Lord Caccia) 120  
 Cadbury, Peter 297–8, 373 n.  
 Cadogan, Sir Alexander 3, 13, 145–6, 309  
 and external broadcasting 117, 125  
 and Marriott Working Party 51, 52, 56,  
 57  
 retirement as Chairman of Governors  
 136  
 and Suez 81–2, 85, 87, 88, 96, 98, 128,  
 129  
 Cain, David 942  
 Cain, John 934, 935  
 Caine, Sir Sydney 600  
 Cairo Radio 80  
 Callaghan, James (Lord Callaghan) 453,  
 878, 893  
 Calvert, Reginald 567  
 Camacho, George 332, 341, 746  
 Camacho, J. A. 322, 467, 585 n.  
*Cambridge Review* 61

- Cameron, James 135, 785  
 Campaign for Better Broadcasting 783–5, 788, 794  
*Campaign Report* (1970) 875  
*Campaign Special* (1974) 991  
 Campbell, Sir Jock (Lord Campbell of Eskan) 271  
 Campey, George 30 n., 783 n., 793, 850, 900 n.  
 Camus, Albert 56  
*Candid Camera* 264  
 Cannon, Geoffrey 802  
 Capital Radio 887, 888  
 car radio licences 751, 753  
 car radio listeners 760  
 Caradon, Hugh Foot, Lord 904, 912, 913–14  
 Caribbean immigrants, *see* West Indians  
 Carr, Guy 713 n.  
 Carr–Saunders, Sir Alexander 240  
 Carrington, Peter Carrington, Lord 982 n.  
 Carstairs, Professor G. M. 339, 340, 785  
 Carter, (Sir) Charles 474  
 cartoon films 180  
 Cary, Sir Robert, MP 301, 303  
 Cary, (Sir) Roger 301 n., 383, 384 n.  
 Casey, Albert 432  
 'Cassandra' (*Daily Mirror*) 44 n.  
 Casson, (Sir) Hugh 293  
 Castle, Barbara (Lady Castle) 127 n, 790, 877, 893  
*Cathy Come Home* 522–3  
 Catling, Patrick Skene (*Spectator*) 848  
 Cave, William 714  
 Caversham Park, *see* Monitoring Service  
 Cawston, Richard 169, 523 n., 532, 581  
*Royal Family* 861–2, 917  
*This is the BBC* 234–6, 851, 926  
 Cazalet–Keir, Mrs Thelma 26, 160, 327, 582  
 CBS network 453, 713  
 CCIR, *see* International Radio Consultative Committee  
 Ceefax 814–15  
 Central Establishment Office 822, 823  
 Central European Service 692  
 Central Music Advisory Committee 227–8, 232–3  
 and *Broadcasting in the Seventies* 722, 763, 765  
 Central News Department, recommended 755  
 Central Office of Information 123, 705, 706  
 Central Programme Board, television 390  
 Central Religious Advisory Committee 26–7  
 Centre for Cultural Studies, Birmingham University 461 n., 796  
 Chafer, Peter 965 n.  
 Chairman of Governors, BBC, role 921  
 Chalfont, Alun Gwynne–Jones, Lord 451  
 Chalmers, Tom 39 n., 658 n.  
 Chamberlain, Frederick, poem 750–1  
 Chamberlain, Richard 336  
 Chancellor, Christopher 97 n.  
 Channel Four 795  
*see also* Fourth channel  
 Channels (fourth, fifth, sixth) 925  
 Chapman, Graham 949, 950  
 Charles, Prince of Wales 678  
 Charman, Colin 956  
 'chat shows' 337  
 Chataway, (Sir) Christopher 65, 111, 158–9, 165, 216, 240, 251, 439, 876  
 Minister of Posts and Telecommunications 885–6, 887, 952  
 Chekhov, Anton, *Uncle Vanya* 193  
 Chelsfield, John 426 n.  
 Cherry, Colin 717, 811  
 Chesham, John Cavendish, Lord 150, 840, 842  
 Chester, Sir Norman 242  
 child centredness, educational broadcasting 482–3  
 Childers, Erskine 583  
 children:  
 and *Dr Who* 422–3  
 effect of television programmes 25–6, 175–6  
 television viewing 159–60, 959  
 Children's Department 179  
*Children's Favourites* 225–6, 342  
*Children's Hour* 226, 342–3  
 children's programmes, television 175–80, 341, 346, 347  
 China:  
 broadcasting to 135  
 external broadcasting 679  
 Choicevision Ltd 272  
*Choral Evensong* 800  
*Christian World*, on Pilkington 269  
 Christmas broadcasts, royal 144  
*Church of England Newspaper* 237, 333  
 Churchill, Randolph 86 n., 172  
 Churchill, Sir Winston, funeral 453  
*Cimarron City* 265  
 cinema, decline 184–6  
 cinema, *see also* films  
 Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association 187, 953  
 civil rights movement, rise 672–3  
*Civilisation*, *see* Clark, Sir Kenneth  
 Clark, Fife 132



- Clark, J. B. (Sir Beresford) 76, 387, 687, 688, 696  
retirement 707
- Clark, Sir Kenneth (Lord Clark) 283  
Chairman, ITA 3, 10–11, 12, 66, 263  
*Civilisation* series 3 n., 612–14, 713, 860  
and Suez 108–9
- Clark, Petula 790
- Clark, William 70, 85, 88, 93, 95, 97,  
99–100, 127, 128, 166, 283
- Clarke, Arthur C. 844
- Clarke, Sir Ashley 364, 377, 535, 559 n
- Clayton, Sylvia (*Daily Telegraph*) 944
- Clean Up TV Campaign 332–3
- Cleese, John 357, 805, 949, 950
- Cleverdon, Douglas 348, 792, 830, 926
- Clitheroe Kid, The* 804
- Closed circuit television, local 627, 630
- Clough, Gordon 686–7
- Coady, Matthew 546–7
- Cockerell, Michael 446, 448
- Cocteau, Jean 233
- Cogan, Alma 207
- Coke, Gerald 371, 377
- Colditz* 944, 984
- 'Cole', cartoon by 890
- Coleman, David 218–19, 580
- Coleman, W. R. H. 631–2
- Collingwood, Charles 241
- Collins, Norman 1, 8, 19, 251, 282, 300,  
312, 445, 836
- Collison, Harold (Lord Collison) 271
- Colossus computer 816
- colour supplements, newspaper 184, 352
- colour television 305, 352, 405, 569, 639,  
848–63  
in BBC-1 programmes, Jubilee day 930  
differential licence fee 545  
General Election (1970) 878  
launch (1967) 857  
and Pilkington 286, 630  
schools broadcasting 933  
in *This is the BBC* 236  
varied systems 853–5
- Come Dancing* 592, 625 n.
- comedy 196–7, 210–16, 947–52, 804–5
- Comedy Playhouse 527
- Comedy Review Parade* 804
- Comfort, Dr Alex 332, 339, 368
- Commercial Broadcasting Consultants 888
- commercial radio, local 628–9, 630–1,  
644, 738, 752, 776, 787, 797  
and Conservative Party 565, 776  
and Government 648, 885–6  
and Labour Party 994
- Committee on Broadcasting 496–8, 563,  
564
- Committee on Broadcasting, General  
Synod, Church of England 891
- Commons, House of, debates, *see*  
Parliamentary debates
- Commonwealth Broadcasting  
Conference 716
- 'communication', catchword (1967) 716,  
717
- communications, new technologies  
813–63
- Communications Council, proposed 994
- communications industry, world  
comparisons 832
- communications research 25
- Communist countries, external  
broadcasting 679, 680
- Communist Party, and political  
broadcasting 554, 871–2
- community broadcasting 626
- Community Programmes Unit 961
- Como, Perry 197
- Compact* 335, 336–7
- competition 3–14, 18–19, 23, 45, 266,  
286–9  
local radio 886  
Lords debate 150–1  
Pilkington view 262, 295  
in television news 72, 156–7
- Competitor, The* 7, 8
- complaints procedures 293  
*see also* Programmes Complaints  
Commission, BBC
- Compton, Sir Edmund 900
- 'compunications' 813
- computers 815–16, 821, 823–4  
BBC's first 823  
Computer Literacy Project 822  
development 816, 817–18, 820–5  
General Election (1964) 451  
General Election (1966) 557–8  
General Election (1970) 882  
hardware and software 825–6
- 'Comsat' 814
- Conner, Cyril 293 n., 716
- Connery, Sean 144
- 'consensus' 924
- Conservative Broadcasting Committee  
797
- Conservative Governments:  
and 1960s scandals 360  
and Pilkington Report 303  
and Suez 93
- Conservative Government (1970–4)  
978–81
- Conservative Party 240  
and BBC 107  
and commercial radio 565, 638

- General Election (1964) 442–3, 444–5, 451  
 General Election (1966) 546, 554  
 General Election (1970) 871, 873, 874, 876, 877, 884  
 General Election February (1974) 986, 987  
 General Election October (1974) 991  
 and Pilkington Report 300–1, 303  
 political broadcasting 250–1  
 Constantine, Leary (Lord Constantine) 589–90, 605  
 ‘consumer electronics’ 825  
 consumer movement 361 n.  
 continuing education 474  
 continuous news and topicality network, radio 740  
 contracting companies, ITV 5, 8–9, 11, 13–14, 70, 312  
 and ITA 265, 291  
 and Pilkington 291, 294, 300  
 ‘control revolution’ 817–18  
 Controller, English Regions, new post 668, 669  
 Cook, Peter 354, 357, 358, 883  
 Cooke, Alastair 111, 453–4, 713  
*America* 613, 614  
*Letter from America* 226 n.  
 ‘Cookson’, cartoon by 915  
 ‘Cooper’, cartoon by 774  
 Cooper, Derek 929  
 Cooper, Giles 193  
 Cooper, Martin 957 n.  
 Copenhagen Convention 540, 734, 735, 840  
 Copyright Act (1956) 509–10  
 Corbett, Harry, and Sooty 180  
 Corbett, Harry H. 215, 434–6, 445 n.  
 Corbett, Ronnie 949  
 Cordeaux, J. K. 240  
 Cordle, John, MP 566  
*Coronation Street* 337, 429, 653  
 Cotton, Billy 143, 287  
 Cotton, William 204, 287, 955–6  
 Council of the Big Ben Silent Minute 329  
 Council for Children’s Welfare 175  
 Council of Europe, and pirate radio 540, 566  
 County Councils Association, and local broadcasting 631  
 Cousins, Frank 451, 542, 558  
 Coward, (Sir) Noël 193, 455  
 Cowgill, Bryan 287–8, 441, 450, 966–7, 969  
 Cox, Constance 525 n.  
 Cox, (Sir) Geoffrey 67, 68, 69, 70, 108, 157, 242, 557 n.  
*Crackerjack* 175  
 Craig, Wendy 436  
 Craven, John 931  
 Crawford, Allan 506  
 Crawford Committee on Broadcasting Coverage 808, 997–8, 999–1000  
 Crawford, Sir Stewart 997  
 Crawley, Aidan 65, 66, 88, 111  
 Crawley, John 731, 881, 883, 894–5, 898 n., 980  
 creativity 347–9  
 Crewe, Quentin 393  
*Crisis in Broadcasting* 783–4  
 Critchley, Julian, MP 857, 886 n., 887  
*Critics, The* 225  
 Croasdel, Gerald 782, 792  
 Croft, David 943–4  
 Cromer, George Baring, Earl of 874  
 Crosbie, Annette 937  
 Crosland, Anthony, MP 141, 261, 542, 827, 893  
*Cross-Section 1922*, 927  
 Crossman, Richard, MP 540, 561, 563, 695, 802–3  
 General Election (1964) 446  
 General Election (1966) 556  
 and televising of Parliament 588, 589  
 and *Yesterday’s Men* 893, 899  
*Crossroads* 337  
 Crowther, Sir Geoffrey (Lord Crowther) 470 n., 594  
 Crowther Report (1959) 470–1  
 Crozier, Eric 287  
 Crozier, Mary 167  
 Cruikshank, Stuart 195  
 Crutchley, Rosalie 937  
 Cuba 685  
 Cudlipp, Hugh (Lord Cudlipp) 93  
*Culloden* 531, 532 n.  
 culture 275–7, 290  
 1960s 461  
 see also improvement  
 Cunningham, John, MP 889  
 Curran, (Sir) Charles 380, 381, 914–15, 920–1, 941, 953, 969  
 and BBC’s future 923–5, 1003  
 and *Broadcasting in the Seventies* 769–70, 772, 782, 793, 798  
 colour television 858  
 and crisis (1973) 980  
 Director-General, BBC 387, 610, 727  
 economics of development 831–2  
 and educational broadcasting 932  
 and European Broadcasting Union 686, 705, 975  
 and external broadcasting 622, 683, 690, 703, 704–5, 708, 710–11

- Curran, (Sir) Charles (*cont.*)  
 General Election (1970) 880, 882  
 and Governors 975  
 and Lord Hill 973, 974–5  
 and licence fee 776, 778, 781  
 local educational broadcasting 477 n.  
 and political broadcasting 873  
*The Question of Ulster* 905, 906, 907,  
 908–9  
 and radicals 796, 797  
 and radio 745, 760  
 and Lord Reith 797  
 religious affiliation 914  
 retirement 974 n.  
 Secretary, BBC 323, 387  
 and sports broadcasting 953  
 and staff discontent 796, 797–8  
 and Michael Swann 973–4, 976  
 and technical developments 827,  
 828–9, 830, 831, 847  
 and television 953, 967  
 and unions 761, 790  
 and *The War Game* 532–3  
 and Huw Wheldon 967, 969, 970  
 and Harold Wilson 611, 880, 881  
 and *Yesterday's Men* 895–6
- Curran, James 993  
 current affairs 63, 69–70, 579  
 Current Affairs Department (Sound) 322,  
 328  
 Current Affairs Talks Department 341  
*Curtain Up* 48  
 Curteis, Ian, *Suez* 1956, 136–7  
 Cusick, Raymond 422  
 Cutforth, René 103  
 Cyprus 105, 132, 1001  
 Cyprus relay station 118, 127, 682  
 Czechoslovakia 690–1
- Dad's Army* 197, 943–4, 954  
*Daily Express* 13, 100, 101, 377, 857, 896,  
 913  
*Daily Herald* 14, 267, 292, 369, 435  
*Daily Mail* 38–9, 238, 252, 298, 396, 457,  
 505–6, 844, 987  
*Daily Mirror* 29, 100, 113, 251, 686, 908,  
 913, 964  
 Daily Service, Radio 4 928  
*Daily Sketch* 257–8  
*Daily Telegraph* 160, 161, 214, 230, 261,  
 761, 896–7, 908–9, 913, 964  
*Daily Worker* 554  
 Dale, Jim 201, 204, 216  
 'Daleks' 422  
*Dales (Mrs Dale's Diary), The* 37, 335,  
 580, 927  
 Daly, Philip 467
- Dance, James, MP 519, 531, 582  
 Dankworth, Johnny 445  
 D'Arcy, Jean 846  
 Darlow, Michael 787 n.  
 Davies, Andrew 536 n.  
 Davies, Bernard 586  
 Davies, Clement, MP 51  
 Davies, Dr Elwyn 270  
 Davies, Hywel 270, 386, 617  
   on regional broadcasting 650, 665, 678  
 Davies, Peter Maxwell 399  
 Davies, Rupert 192–3  
 Davies, Russell 225 n.  
 Davis, (Sir) Colin 400  
 Davis, David 343, 344, 346, 792  
 Davis, Gerry 946  
 Davis, John 187  
 Davis, William 583  
 Dawbarn, Graham 31 n.  
 'Dawn University' 476  
 Dawson, Les 804  
 Day, Barry 877  
 Day, (Sir) Robin 65, 66–7, 103 n., 241,  
 845, 905, 908, 929, 991 n.  
   General Election (1964) 442, 451  
   General Election (1966) 556  
   General Election (1970) 869, 873,  
   880–1, 883  
   General Election (February 1974) 985–6  
   General Election (October 1974) 991,  
   992  
   *Panorama* 166, 439, 947  
 Day-Lewis, Cecil 789  
 Day-Lewis, Sean (*Daily Telegraph*) 722 n.,  
 925, 943, 958  
 de Jongh, Nicholas (*Spectator*) 918  
 de Manio, Jack 42 n., 223  
 Dean, Michael 586  
*Dechrau Canmol* 677  
*Dechrau Canu* 677  
 Dee, Simon 511, 515, 574, 790  
 Deedes, William F., MP (Lord Deedes)  
   301, 373 n., 543, 775, 776, 787  
 delegation, a BBC problem 376, 379  
 Delgado, Roger 417–18  
 Dell, Alan 830, 926  
 Denmark, and World Service 701  
 DEORGA 724  
 Department of Education and Science  
   485, 568  
 Deputy Director-General, BBC, proposed  
   975–6  
 Derby, The 216–17  
*Desert Island Discs* 224–5, 805–6  
 Designs Department 838, 856  
 Deutsche Welle 685  
 Devlin, Bernadette 906

- Devlin, Patrick, Lord Devlin 904, 905  
 Dewar, Mungo 39  
 Dick Barton, *Special Agent* 927  
*Dig This!* 206  
*Dig This Rhubarb* 376  
 dignity, lacking in *TW3* 376  
 Dimbleby, David:  
   *Panorama* 896, 947  
   *Yesterday's Men* 893, 895, 896, 899  
 Dimbleby, Richard 9, 105, 164–5, 362, 451, 547  
 Dimitrievitch, Mrs 687  
 Dimmock, Peter 19, 218–19, 287, 386, 390, 713, 714  
 Dinwiddie, Melville 581 n.  
 direct broadcasting by satellite (DBS) 827  
 Director General:  
   appointment of Charles Curran 610–11  
   responsibilities 726–7  
 Director of Engineering 731, 732  
 Director of Finance 727  
 Director of Programmes, Television 727  
 Director, Public Affairs 727  
 disc jockeys:  
   BBC 508, 509, 574–5, 804  
   pirate radio 513, 574  
 Dixon, E. M. and R. Bowers 811  
 Dixon, Sir Pierson 101, 102  
*Dixon of Dock Green* 143, 273, 426, 430–2, 433, 434, 526–7  
*Do Not Adjust Your Set* 950  
*Dr Finlay's Case Book* 434, 525  
*Dr Kildare* 335, 336  
*Dr Who* 416–26, 525, 946  
   problems 418–20  
 Dodd, Ken 804, 930  
 Dodds–Parker, (Sir) Douglas, MP 107, 118, 119–20, 125  
*Does the Team Think?* 224  
 Donat, John 783–5  
 Donegan, Lonnie 203  
 Donnellan, Philip 349 n., 796  
*Doom Watch* 946  
 Doonican, Val 955  
 Dorati, Antal 400  
 Dorté, Philip 65  
*Double Your Money* 11  
*Doubts and Certainties* 583  
 Dougall, Robert 63 n., 157, 790 n., 930  
 Douglas, Josephine 201, 202–3, 204  
 Douglas–Home, Sir Alec *see* Home, Alec Douglas  
 Dove, Catherine 168, 169, 172  
*Down Your Way* 224, 926  
 Downing Street (no. 10), broadcasting facilities 89  
 Drake, Charlie 143, 196  
 Drama Department 286–7  
 Drama Documentaries (department) 191  
 Drama Group, television 346, 421–2, 431  
 drama programmes 190–8, 395–7, 398, 758, 771  
 Drew, David 232  
 Driberg, Tom (Lord Bradwell) 60, 69, 147, 177 n., 186 n., 261–2, 589  
 Drogheda Committee report on external broadcasting (1954) 117, 123, 133–4, 710  
 Dromgoole, Patrick 664 n.  
*Drumbeat* 206  
 Drummond, John 383  
 Duff, Sir James 327, 359, 364, 365, 366, 372, 377, 537, 658  
 Duguid, Peter 519  
 Dulles, John Foster 81, 84, 105  
 Duncan, Sir Val 709–12, 714  
 Dunkerley, H. J. 657, 658, 660  
 Dunkley, Chris 876 n., 889  
 Dunleath, Charles Mulholland, Lord 605, 725, 908, 910 n., 911, 913  
 Dunn, Clive 436, 943  
 Dunn, Mrs Gwen 914  
 Dunn, Nell, *Up the Junction* 519, 522, 523–4, 525  
 duopoly 5  
 Ealing South by-election (1958) 239  
 Early Bird satellite 814, 845, 858  
*Early Show, The* 926  
 Eason, Ursula 177, 346  
 East European Service 685, 686, 692  
 East–West relations, late 1950s 77–8  
 Eastern bloc, external broadcasting 679, 680  
 Eastern Europe, and BBC 75  
 Eastern Service 692  
*Easy Beat* 508, 509  
 Eccles, Sir David (Viscount Eccles) 465  
*Economist, The* 11, 54, 60, 90, 114, 134, 263, 477, 719, 803, 811, 813, 897, 984 n., 989, 1002  
   and Pilkington 260–1, 298  
   on political broadcasting 237, 245, 444, 447, 554, 878  
 Ede, J. Chuter, MP 51, 52, 58  
 Eden, Sir Anthony (Earl of Avon) 75, 78  
   and BBC 85, 87–8, 90, 108, 116  
   broadcasts 82–3, 96, 99  
   and Suez 80, 81, 83, 89, 94–7, 101, 102, 130  
 Eden, Sir John (Lord Eden) 888, 974, 997  
 Edinburgh, Philip, Prince, Duke of 144, 675, 917  
 editing, manual to electronic 835

- Edmonds, Noel 804, 926 n.  
 education, 1960s 457–60  
*see also* further education
- educational broadcasting 480, 932–6  
*Education in Broadcasting* (1961) 463–7, 470  
 hours extended 473  
 separate network 292, 296–7, 403, 485–6, 488, 753  
 television 475, 485–6, 488  
 Third Network 49  
 World Service 706  
*see also* Open University; Schools  
 broadcasting
- educational centres, foreseen 485  
 educational technology 826
- Edwards, Donald 155, 321, 322, 624 n.  
 Edwards, Jimmy 143, 196  
 Edwards, Ralph 173  
 Egton House 67  
 Egypt 80  
 external broadcasting by 680, 693
- Eisenhower, President Dwight D. 83–4, 106, 324
- Election* 64, 449  
*Election* 66, 556
- election broadcasts 237–9, 246–55, 447  
*see also* General Elections; political  
 broadcasting
- Election Call* 985  
*Election Forum*:  
 (1964) 441–2  
 (1966) 555  
 (1970) 875
- Election Gallery* (1964) 440  
*Election Platform* (1974) 991
- elections, United States 1968, by satellite 847
- Electrical Trades Union 382
- electronic media in education 826–7
- Eliot, Kenneth 104
- Eliot, T. S. 56, 57, 60, 223, 292, 299, 525 n.
- Elizabeth II, Queen 144, 867, 916
- Elliot, John 424, 772
- Elstein, David 383
- Emergency Ward 10*, 265, 336, 337, 420
- Emery, Dick 436 n., 956
- 'Emmwood', cartoons 131, 901
- Encounter* 264, 272
- Engelmann, Francklin 224
- engineering, responsibilities 731, 732
- Engineering Division 820, 830–1
- Englander, A. A. 614
- English-by-Radio Unit 592
- English-by-Radio and TV 693
- English language, dominance 697–8
- English Language Services, to Europe, cut 679
- English Talks and English Service 693
- ENIAC 816
- Ennals, Maurice 640
- entertainment, *see* light entertainment
- Equity, and third channel 292
- Essex, Francis 206
- Essex, Tony 162, 415
- Esslin, Martin 398, 802
- Establishment:  
 attacked by *TW3* 360, 361–2  
 BBC seen as part of 54
- Establishment Club, London 354
- ethnic violence, Nottingham and Nottingham Hill 239–40
- European Broadcasting Union 142, 388, 714, 716, 817, 833  
 and BBC Directors-General 686, 705  
 and colour television 854, 855  
 and pirates 516  
*Thank You BBC* 926
- European Common Market 700, 978–9, 982, 988
- European Community 135, 558, 700
- European Services, BBC 692, 693, 700  
 cuts 117, 119, 123, 135, 679
- Eurovision 142, 284
- Eurovision Song Contest 143
- Evans, Gwynfor 673 n.
- Evening News* 299
- Evening Standard* 87, 269, 299, 435, 444, 602, 1002
- Everett, Kenny 574
- Explorer I satellite 844
- Expresso Bongo* 209
- external broadcasting, by other countries 133, 679
- external broadcasting, BBC 73, 114, 133, 679–66  
 not covered by Annan Committee 1000  
 in Bush House 679  
 financial problems 117–18, 123, 124, 133–4, 681, 682, 1001–2  
 and Greene 314–15, 685–6, 700  
 income and expenditure, table 1008  
 language increase 680  
 under Mansell 969–70, 1002  
 microcomputers 821  
 news links with Radio News 755  
 radio not television 683  
 reviews of 133, 621–3, 691–3, 699  
 and Suez 116  
 World Service 697–717
- External Services Liaison 716
- Eye on Research* 288

- Fabian Society 620 n.  
*Face to Face* 169–72, 213  
 'faction' in *Z Cars* 430  
 Fairlie, Henry 54, 115, 323  
 Faith, Adam 206  
 Falk, Bernard 907  
 Fame, Georgie 506  
*Family The*, 961–4  
*Family Favourites* 225, 226, 508, 804  
 Family Programmes (department,  
     Television) 341, 346  
 Farjeon, Eleanor 343  
 Farouk, King 80  
 Farquharson, Maurice 283, 387  
 Faulds, Andrew, MP 889  
 Faulkner, Brian (Lord Faulkner) 902 n.,  
     906, 909, 910, 911, 914, 982  
 Fawdry, Kenneth 934  
*Fawly Towers* 951 n.  
 Feather, Vic (Lord Feather) 794, 993  
 Features Department, closure (1965) 341,  
     347–50  
 Features Group, Television 350  
 Federal Communications Commission 325  
 Federation of Broadcasting Unions 777  
 Feldman, Marty 883  
 Fenton, Hazel 606  
 Ferman, James 519  
 Ferris, Paul (*Observer*) 577 n.  
 Ffitch, George 449, 869 n  
 fforde, Sir Arthur 145, 294, 307, 316–17,  
     366, 368–9, 1004 n.  
     on Jacob 322  
     and TW3 369–71  
 Fiddick, Peter (*Guardian*) 889, 918, 924,  
     984  
 FIDO 188  
*Fifty Years of Music* 926  
 film industry 186–9  
 films and television 186, 953–4  
 finance of broadcasting 30, 292, 305–6,  
     307–8  
     *see also* licence fee  
 Finance Division, computer 822  
*Financial Times* 260, 269, 696, 886, 918,  
     921  
 Findlay, Paul 660–2, 664  
 Finer, Sir Morris 996 n.  
 Finland, VHF 752  
 Fisher, Geoffrey, Archbishop of  
     Canterbury 327  
 Fisher, Norman 51, 459 n  
 Fitt, Gerard, MP (Lord Fitt) 889, 906  
 Fleming, Tom 144  
 Flinn, Peter 104  
 Flood, Mary 592  
 Floud, Bernard, MP 543  
 FM radio, development 817, 840, 841  
 Foley, Maurice, MP 590–1  
 Foot, Michael, MP 115 n., 502 n., 589,  
     989  
 football broadcasting 580–1, 593, 838,  
     858–9, 875, 953  
 Footlights 354, 355  
*For the Young* 344  
 Forbes, Bryan 876  
 Ford, Carole Ann 424  
 Foreign Office 166  
     and BBC 87, 119, 689–90, 732, 1001–2  
     Beeley inquiry 705, 708–9  
     Duncan Report 709–12  
     liaison officer 126–9, 133  
     radio versus television 706  
     Rapp Committee on external services  
         707–8  
     and Suez 109, 128  
 Forman, (Sir) Denis 185 n.  
 Forrester, John, MP 588  
 Forster, E. M. 525 n.  
 Forster, Peter 385  
*Forsyte Saga, The* 525, 587–8  
 Forsyth, Bruce 955–6  
 Foster, Sir John, QC, MP 904  
 Fourteen-Day rule 84, 114, 115–16  
 Fourth Channel 539, 889, 891  
     not in Crawford Committee remit 997,  
         1000  
     possibility for Open University 498  
     Channel Four 795  
 Fox, Christine 787 n.  
 Fox, (Sir) Paul 218, 288, 521, 847, 951  
     and General Elections 441, 450, 451,  
         556  
     Head, Public Affairs Programmes 390,  
         450  
     leaves BBC for Yorkshire Television  
         966  
     *Panorama* 166, 386, 441  
 Fox, Roland 108, 111  
 France 701  
     colour television 857, 858  
     and Suez 84, 93, 95, 102  
 franchises, ITV 5  
     *see also* companies  
 Francis, J. G. L. 494 n., 541 n., 656  
 Francis, (Sir) Richard 287, 717, 882,  
     988–9  
     and *The Question of Ulster* 902, 903, 904  
 Francistown transmitter 695  
 'Franklin', cartoons by 552, 777  
 Franklin, Gretchen 528  
 Franks, Alan 315 n.  
 Franks, Sir Oliver (Lord Franks) 274  
 Fraser, Lady Antonia 54 n.

- Fraser, Sir Robert 9–10, 20, 159–60,  
241–2, 277, 313  
and colour television 852, 855  
and Hill's appointment 600  
and ITN 65, 70  
retirement 971
- Free Communications Group (FCG)  
787–8, 794–5
- Free Hungarian Radio 73, 107
- Free Speech* 282
- Freeman, Alan 509, 575, 804
- Freeman, John 165, 172, 318 n., 594  
*Face to Face* 169–72, 213
- Freeman, Sue 962 n.
- French, Philip 744
- French Language Services 692, 694, 711  
frequencies, *see* wavelengths
- Freud, (Sir) Clement 929
- Frick, Alice 421, 422
- Fricke, Racine 229
- Friday Night Is Music Night* 222
- From Our Own Correspondent* 62 n., 928
- Frost, Sir David 374–5, 883, 949  
*That Was the Week That Was* 355,  
356–7, 364, 370, 373
- Frost Report, The* 949
- Fry, C. B. 173
- Fry, Christopher 931
- Fry, Tam 903
- Fuller, Roy 910, 992  
poem on Lord Hill 970–1
- Fulton, John (Lord Fulton) 473–4, 545,  
559 n, 563, 594, 725, 781, 795, 972  
against advertising 541–2, 544  
and Open University 500, 569  
and Policy Study Group 732, 760
- Furlong, Monica 343, 344
- further education 467, 483–4, 571, 934
- Further Education Advisory Council 501
- Further Education Department,  
Television 479
- Further Education Unit (Radio) 49–50,  
182, 467, 469, 479
- Future Events Unit 755
- Gagarin, Yuri 142
- Gaitskill, Hugh 78, 79, 254–5  
broadcasting 90, 98–9, 108  
broadcasting on BBC 89, 91, 92, 97, 98  
death 370
- General Election (1959) 250  
image 241  
and Pilkington Report 302  
and political broadcasting 242  
and Suez 81, 83, 89–90
- Gallery* 440, 549–50, 553
- Gallup Polls 240, 241, 546
- Galsworthy, John *Forsythe Saga* 525, 587–8
- Galton, Ray 210, 211, 215, 434–5
- Gambell, Doris 344 n.
- Gammon, Clive (*Spectator*) 985
- Gander, Marsland (*Daily Telegraph*) 414,  
958–9
- Garden, Graeme 805, 951
- Gardeners' Question Time* 224, 697, 929
- Gardiner, Gerald, Lord Gardiner 904
- 'Garland', cartoon 524
- Garnham, Nicholas (*Observer*) 787 n.,  
918, 993
- Garrett, James 877
- Geddes, Sir Reay 725
- gender, and *Dr Who* 424
- General Advisory Council, BBC 606,  
800–1  
and *Broadcasting in the Seventies* 782  
and immigrant programmes 589–90  
and industrial programmes 584  
on Marriott Report changes 51–2, 54, 58  
and news 62  
and Policy Study Group 754, 760,  
762–3, 764  
*A Question of Ulster* 914  
and regions 652, 667, 999  
and repeats 954  
and *That Was the Week That Was* 362,  
365, 370–1
- General Election (1959) 247–8
- General Election (1964) 373, 451  
results programme 440–1, 450, 451–2  
and television 437–54
- General Election (1966) 501, 546–58  
results 457, 557  
results programme 556, 557–8
- General Election (1970) 868–84  
newspaper strike 878  
results 884  
results programme 881–3
- General Election (February 1974) 977,  
981–8  
elector reaction 984–5  
results programme 987
- General Election (October 1974) 977,  
990–3  
results programme 992
- General Overseas Service 691–2, 693  
*see also* World Service
- General Trainee Scheme 383
- Generation Game, The* 955–6
- generic networks, radio 750, 756
- Geneva Plan (1975) 734
- George VI 916
- German, Sir Ronald 297, 541 n.
- German Service 692, 701
- Germany 324, 858



- Gielgud, Val 35–6, 37 n., 190, 192  
retirement 398
- Gifford, Charles, Lord Gifford 149–50
- Gill, Michael 614
- Gillard, Frank 3 n., 620 n., 779, 798  
Central Music Advisory Committee 765  
chairman, Sound Co-ordinating  
Committee 35  
children's programmes 344  
Director of Sound Broadcasting 387  
and Features Department 341, 348  
and Charles Hill 604  
local radio 632, 634, 636, 639, 640,  
646, 770, 771  
Managing Director Radio, 727  
naming of Radios 1/2/3/4 577  
and Open University 495  
pirate radio 512, 514, 515  
Policy Study Group 753  
and Radio 1 571  
and regions 624–7, 650, 651, 656, 662,  
667  
to Soviet Union 687  
and wavelengths 736  
Working Party on Sound Broadcasting 39  
retirement 669
- Gillett, Roland 9
- Gilliam, Laurence 44, 348
- Gilliam, Terry 950
- Gilmore, Peter 945
- Gilmour, Ian, MP 776
- Gishford, Anthony 195
- Giulini, Carlo Maria 399
- Gladwyn, H. M. Gladwyn Jebb, Lord 801
- Glaister, Gerald 944
- Glasgow Herald* 677
- Glasgow studios 677
- Glendenning, Raymond 219 n., 221
- Glenn, Colonel John H. 844
- 'Global village' 862
- globalization, and BBC 683
- Glock, (Sir) William 231–4, 395,  
398–401, 760, 771  
and cuts in music 760
- Glubb, General Sir John Bagot 80
- Godwin, Dame Anne 366, 377, 524,  
525 n., 544, 725, 730 n.
- Goehr, Alexander 232
- Going for a Song* 931
- Goldberg, Anatol 687–8
- Goldie, Grace Wyndham 16–17, 31, 390  
and Richard Dimpleby 165  
and Eden's broadcast 82  
educational broadcasting 480, 484–5  
on General Election 1959 broadcasting  
252–3  
and General Election (1964) 441  
and General Election (1966) 555  
on Greene 319 n.  
and *Monitor* 168  
and Pilkington 288–9  
retirement 393  
science programmes 467  
and Suez 82, 88, 103–4  
and *Tonight* 161, 163  
and TW3 350, 368, 375, 376  
and Harold Wilson 446
- Goldsmid, Sir Henry D'Avigdor, MP 885 n.
- Gollan, John 554
- Gollancz, (Sir) Victor 56
- Gomulka, Wladyslaw 105, 135
- Good, Jack 201–2, 203, 204, 205
- Good Morning, Scotland* 808
- Good Old Days, The* 224, 659
- Goodies, The* 951
- Goodman, Arnold, Lord Goodman 594  
and Open University 499–500, 501,  
569, 570  
and *Yesterday's Men* 896, 899
- Goold-Adams, Richard 224
- Goons, The* 917 n., 950
- Gordon, Lord Archie 246, 745, 748 n.
- Gordon, Noele 337
- Gorer, Geoffrey 339
- Gorst, John 638
- Goschen, John, Viscount Goschen 151
- Gough, Michael 137
- Government:  
and BBC/ITA 291  
and crisis (1973) 980  
and Deputy Director-General post 975–6  
General Election broadcast (October  
1974) 992  
grant sought by BBC for programmes 10  
Grant-in-Aid for 'Transcription Service'  
693  
prices and incomes policy (from 1968)  
789–90, 791
- Governors, BBC:  
and appointment of Director of  
Television 15  
and BBC crisis (1973) 980  
and BBC unity 314  
*Broadcasting in the Seventies* changes  
779–81  
changes in the 1960s 377  
changes in size and composition 604–5  
colour television 851  
on competition 13  
controversial plays 523–4  
and Deputy Director-General post  
975–6  
external broadcasting 125  
finance of BBC 536–9

## Governors, (cont.)

- Finance Committee 730
- General Election (October 1974) 992
- and Greene 326, 327, 377–8
- and Hill's appointment 603
- and Hill's financial report 725
- local radio 760–1
- and McKinsey's work 726
- and Marriott Report 50
- Matador* 535
- and moral standards 366, 368
- and Malcolm Muggeridge 145
- national governors 670
- and news broadcasting 326, 327
- Open University 500
- Pilkington Committee questions 293–4
- and Pilkington Report 297
- policy outlined by Normanbrook 378
- and Policy Study Group 754, 759–60, 764–5
- A Question of Ulster* 908, 910–11, 913–14
- and radio 32–3, 50
- role, and Pilkington, 293–4
- role, and Swann 973
- and school broadcasting 26
- staff changes in TV, and lack of consultation 392
- and Suez 91–2, 111–12
- and technical developments 839–40
- and *That Was the Week That Was* 350–1, 359, 362–3, 364–5, 366, 369, 372
- and Third Programme 56
- letter to *The Times* 799
- The War Game* 533–5
- Yesterday's Men* 896, 897, 898, 900
- Grade, Lew (Lord Grade) 195, 374 n.
- Grade brothers 195
- Graef, Roger 787 n.
- Graham, Billy 581–2
- Grainer, Ron 420
- Granada Television 12, 185, 920
- The Army Game* 197
- and by-election Rochdale (1958) 238
- Coronation Street* 337, 429, 653
- General Election (1959) 248
- Granada Guildhall Lectures 457
- and Pilkington 282
- programmes praised 24, 263
- on radio 295
- strike 1970 878
- University Challenge* 457
- Grandstand* 22, 199, 216, 218, 219–20
- Grant, Cy 163
- Grant, John, MP 976 n., 994 n.
- Grattan, Donald 288, 479, 481, 484, 934, 935
- Graves, Sir Cecil 914 n.
- Great War, The* 414–15, 613
- Greek Service, BBC 132
- Green, Harry 946
- Green, Hughie 11
- Green, John 45–6, 67, 69, 222
- closure of Talks Division 341
- and Suez 85, 88
- Green, Dame Mary 605, 795, 910
- Greene, Herbert 330
- Greene (Sir) Hugh Carleton 308, 311, 312–13, 317, 322–4, 387, 530, 914 n., 1004
- and advertising 6, 518
- and Baverstock 392
- and Benn 518, 545
- and BBC-2 403, 406
- and Board of Management 387–8
- and controversy 331–2
- and Curran 608, 609, 610
- Director-General 311–25, 376–7
- divorce 606, 607–8, 609
- and educational broadcasting 403, 455, 458, 464, 473, 475, 481
- and external broadcasting 685–6, 700
- and finance 544, 545, 725, 781
- as Governor 608, 611
- and Governors 311, 377–8
- Kenneth Harris interview 376–7, 379, 402
- and Edward Heath 561
- and Lord Hill 594, 601, 602, 604, 607, 608–9, 611, 725
- and Tahu Hole 68
- and immigrants 590
- and ITV 4, 312, 612
- It's a Square World* 437
- and Labour Party television 440
- and Kenneth Lamb 975
- and local broadcasting 627, 629, 633
- and merchandising 416–17
- and news 152, 154, 156–7, 321, 327, 328–31, 700, 731
- and Normanbrook 378, 974
- and Open University 493, 495, 499, 500, 570–1, 827
- and Pilkington 283, 284, 311, 312
- Policy Study Group 731
- and political broadcasting 246, 247, 561
- private life 315–16, 606, 607–8, 609
- and programmes 335–40
- Programmes Complaints Commission 901
- and regions 654–5, 658, 660, 662
- and Reith 316–18
- retirement as Director-General 570, 594
- retirement as Governor 611

- and sensationalism 365  
 staff training 383  
 and Andrew Stewart 675  
 and Suez 121  
 and technical changes 827  
 and *The Times* 799  
 and *TW3* 351, 352–3, 358, 359, 362, 367, 370, 371–2  
 and unions 382  
 and USSR 688, 689, 715  
 Vietnam War 536  
*The War Game* 418, 532–3, 534  
 and Mrs Whitehouse 333  
 and Harold Wilson 448, 559–60  
 Greenwich time signal 329  
 Gregory, Victor 687  
 Gregory, Lionel 732  
 Gregson, R. E. 697, 698, 699–700, 701, 702, 704, 705  
   quoted 617  
 Grenfell, Joyce, on Pilkington Committee 270  
 Gretton, David 591, 592  
 Grey, Paul 117–18, 119, 120–1  
 Grierson, John 234 n.  
 Grieve, Christopher 443  
 Griffiths, Sir David 187 n.  
 Griffiths, (Sir) Eldon, MP 776 n.  
 Grigson, Geoffrey 789  
 Grime, Sir Harold 365  
 Grimond, Jo (Lord Grimond) 242, 442, 449, 555  
 Grimston, Sir Robert, MP 107  
 Grint, E. T. C. 'Ted' 790–1, 808  
 Grisewood, Freddie 114–15, 221, 584  
 Grisewood, Harman:  
   and Conservative criticism of BBC 107, 108  
   external broadcasting 119  
   and Gaitskell 79, 89  
   and Greene 384, 387  
   and New York Office 683  
   and news 64  
   political broadcasting 242, 246, 444  
   and Suez 76, 84, 85, 86, 94–5, 98, 100  
   and Mrs Whitehouse 332  
   and Harold Wilson 447–8  
   retirement 388  
 Grist, John 438, 440, 549, 553, 872 n., 875, 883  
   Controller, English Regions 808, 880, 899  
   and *Yesterday's Men* 893, 894, 899  
 Groombridge, Brian 462 n., 493 n., 569, 889  
 Grubb, Derek 807  
*Guardian* (formerly *Manchester Guardian*)  
   13, 14, 57–8, 114, 230, 241, 245, 269, 610, 729, 910, 918, 923  
   on *Broadcasting in the Seventies* 774, 775  
   and Suez 100, 103, 127–8  
   'guidance' 389  
 Gulbenkian, Nubar 170  
 Gunnell, Bob, quoted 617  
 Guthrie, Sir Tyrone 785  
 Guyler, Deryck 436  
 Gwynne-Jones, Alun (Lord Chalfont) 451  
 Haacke, Kathleen 985 n.  
 Hailsham, Quintin Hogg, Lord 447, 550, 875, 985  
 Haines, Joe 894–5, 896, 897  
 Hale, Elvi 937  
 Haley, Sir William 16, 320–1, 703 n.  
   article in *The Times* 920  
   and financing of television 831–2  
   and news 327  
   on Pilkington Report 297  
   and radio 33, 39, 40 n., 44, 56 n., 71  
   and television 147, 831–2  
   on truth 128–9  
 Hall, Henry 926  
 Hall, (Sir) Peter 268  
 Hall, Stuart 796  
 Hall, W. Glenvil, MP 51  
 Halsbury, John Giffard, Earl of 377  
 Hamilton, William, MP 551–2  
 Hammarskjold, Dag, and Suez 83  
 Hancock, Dame Florence 377  
 Hancock, Tony 196, 199, 209 n., 210, 211–14, 434  
   death 215  
   *Face to Face* interview 170–1  
   *Hancock's Half-Hour* 143, 210–14  
 Hannan, William, MP 494 n.  
 Hardcastle, William 578, 928  
 Harding, David 643  
 Harding, Gilbert 7, 209  
   *Face to Face* interview 170, 171  
 Hardman, David 476 n.  
 Hardy, Robert 916–17  
 Harewood, George Lascelles, Earl of 763, 765, 927  
 Hargreaves, David 934  
 Harington, Joy 179  
 Harris, John, Lord of Greenwich 990  
 Harris, Bob 930 n.  
 Harris, Kenneth 248, 439, 442  
   interview of Hugh Greene 376–7, 379, 402  
 Harris, Rolf 436  
 Harrison, Godfrey 215 n.  
 Harrison, Martin 441 n., 448, 873

- Hart, Captain Basil Liddell 415  
 Hart, Derek 163, 248  
 Hart, Elizabeth 525 n.  
 Hart, Tony 180  
 Hartnell, William 417  
 Hasan, Aley 592  
 Hatch, David 805  
*Have a Go* 224  
 Hawkins, Desmond 653–4, 665–6, 734  
 Hayes, Patricia 957  
 Haynes, Arthur 265, 527  
 Hayward, Ron 993  
 Healey, Denis (Lord Healey) 442 n., 875, 880, 893  
 Hearn, D. A. 'Tony' 382, 642 n., 777–8, 790  
 Hearst, Stephen 865, 927–8, 930 n.  
 Heath, (Sir) Edward 522, 786, 790, 897  
   appoints Swann as Chairman of Governors 972  
   and BBC 88, 97, 888  
   against broadcasting inquiry (Annan) 884–5, 892  
   elected Conservative Party leader 550–1 and EEC 982  
   General Election (1970) 869, 874, 884  
   General Election (February 1974) 988  
   General Election (October 1974) 992 and Greene 561  
   at Hill's retirement 922  
   immigration issue 879  
   and political broadcasting 242, 445, 555, 560  
   and Programmes Complaints Commission 901  
   *A Question of Ulster* 892, 902, 911  
   and television 551  
 Hebrew Service 707, 708, 1001  
 Hedley, Jack 944  
 Henderson, R. B. 475  
 Henig, Sir Mark 640–1  
 Hennessy, Peter, quoted on Suez 73  
*Henry VIII and his Six Wives* 937  
 Hepburn, Neil 746–7  
 Heppenstall, Rayner 348  
 Hepton, Bernard 937, 944  
 Herbert, Sir Alan 507  
 Hereford, Bishop of 293  
 Hetherington, Alastair 100  
 Hewitt, Slim 184  
 Hibberd, Stuart 173  
*Highlight* 29, 103, 104, 161  
*Highway in the Sky* 677–8  
 Hill, Benny 216 n.  
 Hill, C. P. 938  
 Hill, Charles, Lord Hill 42, 86, 719, 794 and BBC 922–3, 925  
 BBC finance 607, 648, 724, 730, 776, 778, 781  
 and BBC Jubilee 921  
 and *Broadcasting in the Seventies* 722, 723, 770–2, 781  
 Chairman of Governors, BBC 308, 594, 599  
 Chairman ITA 308, 315, 595, 601–2 and Chataway 887  
 and Curran 973, 974  
 and external broadcasting 132–3, 134, 691, 705, 706  
 and Free Communications Groups 795 and General Advisory Council 764  
 and Greene 602, 604, 607, 608–9, 611 and hours of broadcasting 160  
 and ITV 10 n.  
*Into the Seventies* 809–10  
 and licence fee 648, 776, 778, 781  
 and local radio 644  
 on *The People and the Media* 994  
 and Policy Study Group 753–4, 759, 760  
 and political broadcasting 673  
*The Question of Ulster* 902, 907, 908, 910, 911, 913  
 quoted on BBC 865  
 retirement and tributes 921–2, 970–1, 974  
 and technical development 809–10  
 and Mrs Thatcher 936  
 and third channel 23  
 and Mrs Whitehouse 582 n., 602, 606–7  
 and Harold Wilson 595–6, 599–600, 880  
*Yesterday's Men* 896, 898, 899, 900  
 Hill, Trevor 342–3  
 Himmelweit, Hilde 25, 148, 176–7, 569, 885, 889  
 Hinchcliffe, Philip 418  
 Hindell, Keith 744, 746, 748  
*Hiroshima Mon Amour* 366  
 Hirst, Geoffrey, MP 301  
*History Not So Long Ago* 933  
 history programmes 1970s 937–46  
*Hit Parade* 200  
 Hobbs, Carleton 927, 930  
 Hoddinott, Alun 229  
 Hodson, Donald 700, 702, 703, 868 n.  
 Hogg, Quintin, see Hailsham, Lord  
 Hoggart, Richard 384  
   and culture 461 n.  
   and ITV 283–4  
   on licence fee 763  
   *Observer* article 302  
   on Pilkington Committee 267, 271–3  
   on programming 290  
   on race 590  
   and regional broadcasting 655

- Uses of Literacy* xv, 264, 271  
 'The Uses of Television' 272  
 Hole, Tahu 63, 68–9, 70, 152, 222, 246,  
     311, 312, 548  
 Holme, Christopher 42–3, 44, 349 n.  
 Holmes, Robert 418  
 Holmstrom, J. 345 n.  
 Home, Sir Alec Douglas-(Lord Home)  
     370, 439, 550  
     appointment of Lord Normanbrook 378  
     and General Election (1964) 442, 445  
     *Panorama* 459 n.  
 Home Correspondents, BBC 755  
 home electronics 825  
 Home Secretary, new powers on  
     broadcasting 995  
 Home Service, BBC 33, 39, 41, 42, 48  
     election broadcasting 253  
     and news 62, 220, 325–7  
     opt-outs 651  
     later Radio Four 577–8  
 Hood, Stuart 156, 346, 356, 367, 387,  
     787 n., 889, 891 n.  
     Controller, Programmes, Television  
         385–6, 389, 409 n.  
     educational broadcasting 479–80, 493  
     General Election (1966) 555–6  
     joins Associated Rediffusion 391  
     and Open University 568–9  
     science programmes 467  
     and 76 Group 796  
     on Harold Wilson 547  
     *Z Cars* 427, 429, 430  
 Hope, A. D. B. 'Sandy' 224, 983  
 Hope, Bob 197  
 Hope, Francis (*New Statesman*) 430,  
     872 n., 879  
 Hopkins, John 427, 433  
 Hopkinson, Tom 63 n., 184  
 Horne, Alistair 415  
 Horne, Kenneth 224  
 horse-racing 216–17, 221  
 Hoskins, Hubert 582  
 Houghton, Douglas (Lord Houghton) 542  
 House of Commons Broadcasting Unit  
     588  
 House of Commons debates, *see*  
     Parliamentary debates  
 House of Lords, and television 589  
 House of Lords debates,  
     *see* Parliamentary debates  
*Housewife's Choice* 225, 508  
 Howard, Anthony 451  
     on political broadcasting 443–4, 446 n.,  
     449, 546 n.  
 Howard, G. 406 n.  
 Howard, George, Governor 975 n.  
 Howard, Michael 613 n.  
 Howerd, Frankie 215–16, 527  
 Howgill, R. J. F. 229, 231  
 Hoyle, Sir Fred 424, 476  
*Huddersfield Daily Examiner* 113, 259 n.  
 Hudson, E. P. (Sir Edmund) 270  
 Hughes, C. J. Pennethorne 383  
 Hughes, Dr Glyn Tegai 808 n.  
 Hughes, Paul 541 n., 953–4  
 Hughes, Richard 830  
 Hughes, Terry 583  
*Hull Daily Mail* 269  
 Humphrey, Senator Hubert 374  
*Huna London* 712 n.  
 Hungarian Section, BBC 107  
 Hungary 77, 105, 106, 107  
     and BBC 73, 75  
 Hunn, David 420  
 Hunter-Blair, John 178  
*Hurt Mind, The* 466  
*Hustings* (1959) 440  
 Hutchinson, Arthur L. 224, 982–3  
 Hutton, Graham 70  
 Huxley, Sir Julian 293  
 Hyams, Phillip and Syd 195  
 Hyland, Stanley 438, 546–7, 550, 557, 876  
 hymn singing, dropped from Radio Four  
     800  
 Hytch, John 142  
  
*I Love Lucy* 21  
 Ibert, Jacques 229  
 Iddesleigh, Henry Northcote, Earl of 148  
 Idle, Eric 950  
 illiterates, programmes for 934  
*I'm Sorry I'll Read That Again* 805, 950  
 image, new word in politics 247–8  
 immigrants, programmes for 589–92  
 Immigrants Programme Unit,  
     Birmingham 592  
 immigration 240, 879  
 improvement, *see* taste  
*In the News* 282  
*In Your Garden* 929  
 incomes policy (1974) 989  
 Independent Broadcasting Authority  
     (IBA) 649, 887–8  
 independent film companies 189–90  
 Independent Film Distributors Ltd 188  
 independent production companies 795,  
     994  
 independent television (ITV) 4, 8  
     broadcasting area, expansion 240–1  
     children's programmes 178  
     colour 861  
     contracting companies, *see separate*  
     *heading*

- independent television (ITV) (*cont.*)  
 coverage (1956–60) 30  
 Light Entertainment rivalry 195  
 Lords discussion (23 January 1957) 150–1  
 and news 64–5  
 opening night (22 September 1955) 3  
 and Pilkington 277–8, 283  
 Pilkington proposals 294–5  
 Pilkington proposals rejected by  
 Government 304  
 programmes popular (September 1960)  
 265  
 and regions 624  
 second channel, campaign against 882  
 schools television 180  
 shares Ministerial broadcast 83  
 sports rivalry 217  
 and Suez 105
- Independent Television Act 888
- Independent Television Authority (ITA)  
 3, 4, 5, 265  
 Adult Education Liaison Committees 473  
 and advertising 293, 294  
 broadcasting hours 159–60  
 Children's Advisory Committee 26  
 and colour systems 855  
 and commercial local radio 644  
 and contractors 265  
 Education Committee 490  
 educational broadcasting 475  
 and Eurovision 142  
 Hugh Greene's work against 312–13  
 philosophy questioned by Pilkington  
 290–1  
 and Pilkington 290–3, 294, 300, 301  
 political balance enforced 243, 244  
 not programme maker 5  
 as programme authority, not accepted  
 by Government 300, 304  
 remit changed, re-named Independent  
 Broadcasting Authority 648–9, 887–8  
 School Committee 483  
 Select Committee on Nationalized  
 Industries 885  
 Edward Short's criticism 598–9  
*Spectator* criticism 263  
 ten-year life 259
- Independent Television Companies  
 Association (ITCA) 4, 142
- Independent Television News (ITN) 14,  
 65–6, 70, 152, 157  
 General Election (1964) 448–9  
 and Suez 105  
 Harold Wilson interview (1966) 557
- India:  
 and BBC programmes 939–40  
 broadcasting to 135
- Indian/Pakistani communities' need for  
 programmes 590–1
- Industrial Advisory Committee,  
 proposed 584
- industrial programmes, rarity 584, 653
- information technology 822
- Ingrams, Richard 357
- Inheritors, The* 465
- Innes, Christopher 216
- Innes, Sheila 484
- Inns, George 198, 287
- Inquiry, demands for (1970–1) 889–92
- instant replay, television tapes 834, 835,  
 838
- Institute of Educational Television,  
 suggested 476 n.
- Institute of Race Relations 590
- Instone, Anna 511
- Intelstat 814, 845
- International Broadcasting Institute  
 (Institute of International  
 Communications, IIC) 846
- International Common Frequencies (ICFs,  
 later Low-power Channels) 752
- International Radio Consultative  
 Committee, ITU (CCIR) 817, 854
- International Relations Division 717
- International Telecommunications Union  
 (ITU) 814, 817, 846
- interviewers, television 551–2
- interviews 166
- Iremonger, T. L., MP 566 n.
- Irish Press* 911
- Irish Republican Army (IRA) 673, 903,  
 907
- Irving, Peter (*Ariel*) 802 n.
- Isaacs, Jeremy 613 n., 881
- Israel, and Suez 94, 95–6
- Italian Service, BBC 708
- It's a Square World* 436, 447
- It's Your Line* 929
- Jackanory* 931
- Jacks and Knives* 431–2
- Jackson, Brian 467, 491
- Jackson, Glenda 917, 948
- Jackson, Jack 575
- Jackson, Martin (*Daily Express*) 770
- Jackson, Tom 583–4, 605, 780, 795, 910,  
 975 n.
- Jacob, Sir Ian 15, 319  
 and audiences 16, 21–2  
 BBC finance 90, 91, 832  
 Director-General 76, 322  
 European Broadcasting Union 686  
 external broadcasting 118, 120, 121–2,  
 124, 133

- and Greene 320  
and ITV 3, 13, 27  
and Malcolm Muggeridge 145, 319  
and news 62, 63–4, 68, 321  
on Pilkington Report 298, 630  
political broadcasting 242, 247  
and programmes 7  
and radio changes 34, 44 n., 50, 52, 54,  
57, 58–9  
and regions 652–3  
and Lord Reith 319–20  
science programmes 466  
and sports programmes 19  
and Suez 85, 90, 94  
and television 321, 832  
ten-year plan 320–1  
and Harold Wilson 548
- Jacobs, David 207–8, 585, 926
- 'Jak', cartoon 423
- James, Clive 938 n.
- James, Sidney 210, 214
- jamming:  
of BBC services 130–2, 135, 680, 684–5,  
691  
by BBC 132  
stopped (1973) 1000
- Japan:  
computers 816, 821  
telecommunications 813
- Japanese language services 679, 708, 709
- Jay, (Sir) Antony 359, 714, 949, 995  
leaves BBC for independent company  
391
- Jay, Peggy 763, 900 n.
- JBM Ltd 795 n.
- Jenkins, Clive 552–3
- Jenkins, David 897–8
- Jenkins, Hugh, MP (Lord Jenkins of  
Putney) 562, 786, 787, 889
- Jenkins, Roy, MP (later Lord Jenkins of  
Hillhead) 876, 877, 893, 995
- Jennings, T. R. 793 n.
- Jessel, David 991
- jingles, Radios One and Two 573
- Johns, Stratford 433
- Johnson, L. B. 453
- Johnson, Noel 927
- Johnson, Paul 414
- Johnson Smith, Geoffrey 163, 876
- Johnston, Brian 220–1, 224 n.
- Johnstone, Maurice 43, 233
- Jones, Aubrey, MP 892
- Jones, (Sir) Brynmor 489 n., 496, 569
- Jones, Dr Daniel 232
- Jones, David 821, 824
- Jones, Elwyn 191, 946  
*Z Cars* 427, 430, 526
- Jones, Glyn 714
- Jones, Peter 929
- Jones, Mrs Rachel 337, 366, 377, 672 n.
- Jones, Terry 949, 950
- Joseph, Sir Keith 252, 442, 445
- journalism and journalists 152  
arrogance on television 551–2  
suspicion of, in BBC 64  
and *Yesterday's Men* 898–9
- Journalist* 686
- Journey into Space* 421
- de Jouvenal, Bertrand 56 n.
- Judah, Cynthia 184
- Judge for Yourself* 181
- Juke Box Jury* 206–8, 265
- Junior Choice* 464, 804
- Junior Time* 342, 343
- Just a Minute* 929
- Kaberry, Sir Donald, MP 566 n.
- Kark, Austen 703 n.
- Katz, Elihu 25 n.
- Kaufman, Gerald, MP 355, 553–4
- Kearton, Christopher, Lord 874
- Kee, Robert 165, 172, 449, 879 n., 897
- Keller, Hans 232, 580, 748 n., 792
- Kelvingrove (Glasgow) by-election  
(1958) 239
- Kemp, Jeremy 433
- Kempe, Audrey 400
- Kendall, Jo 805
- Kendall, Kenneth 157
- Kendrew, Dr (later Sir) John 785
- Kennedy, President John F. 324, 325, 503  
TW3 tribute 374
- Kennedy, Ludovic 165, 172, 238, 394,  
931  
General Election (1959) 251, 252  
General Election (1964) 449  
General Election (1970) 872 n.  
*The Question of Ireland* 905, 913–14  
and Suez 109
- Kenya 706
- Kenyon, Nicholas 228
- Kermode, (Sir) Frank 785, 889
- Kerr, Russell, MP 885 n., 892
- Kharlamov, Mikhail 685, 688
- Khrushchev, Nikita 78, 82, 105, 130,  
453, 681, 684 n., 687
- Kilmuir, David Maxwell Fyfe, Lord 95
- King, Anthony 556
- King's College, Cambridge 788
- Kipping, Sir Norman 584
- Kirkpatrick, Sir Ivone 118, 121–2, 312  
Chairman, ITA 122, 136, 277
- Kitchen Front* 42
- Klein, Rudolf (*Observer*) 446 n.



- Kneale, Nigel, *see* *Quatermass*  
 Knight, Peter 214  
*Krokodil* 688  
 Kyle, Keith 451
- Labour Government (1964–6) 307, 694–6  
 Labour Government (1966–70) 558, 598  
 Labour Party:  
   and advertising on BBC 543  
   and BBC 79, 249–50, 251, 440, 552–3  
   General Election (1959) 249  
   General Election (1964) 442–3, 445–6, 447–8, 451  
   General Election (1966) 546, 554  
   General Election (1970) 871, 873–4, 876, 877, 879–80, 884  
   General Election (February 1974) 981, 985, 986, 987  
   General Election (October 1974) 991, 993  
   and ITV 249  
   *The People and the Media* 993–5  
   Pilkington Report 302  
   and Suez 81, 83, 89, 96, 101  
   and *Yesterday's Men* 892
- Laing, R. D. 466  
 Laird, John 730 n.  
 Laity, Mark, quoted on Suez 73  
 Lakeland, Ray 659  
 Lamb, Kenneth 323, 441, 727, 785, 974–5  
 Lambert, Verity 420, 421, 425  
 Lancashire Police and *Z Cars* 427–8, 429  
 Lancaster, Osbert, cartoons by 306, 345  
 Lane, Margaret 912  
 Langdon, David, cartoon by 978  
 languages, distribution 707  
 Laski, Marghanita 995  
 Laslett, Peter 53, 56, 60–1, 292, 299, 496  
   'Dawn University' 476  
   and local broadcasting 638  
 Last, Richard (*Daily Telegraph*) 947  
*Late Night Extra* 575  
*Late Night Line Up* 585–6, 857, 960  
*Late Show, The* 376  
 Latey, Maurice 686, 690, 703, 978 n.  
 Latin American Services 135, 692, 709, 711  
 Laughton, Roger 451  
 Lavender, Ian 943  
 Laver, F. J. M. 822  
 Lawrence, Dennis 274–5, 299, 538–9, 885 n.  
 Lawson, Nigel (Lord Lawson) 439, 550  
 LBC 887  
 Le Mesurier, John 214 n., 943  
 Leach, Edmund 339 n., 801  
 Lean, Tangye 124, 128 n., 322, 707, 708  
   Director, External Broadcasting 387, 696, 700, 704, 706  
*Learn while you Listen and Look* 471  
 Leavis, F. R. 466 n.  
 Lee, Asher 701  
 Lee, Jennie, MP (Baroness Lee) 493–6, 497–8, 501, 568–9, 775, 935 n.  
   loses seat (1970) 884  
 Lee, Laurie 957  
 Lefebvre, Rolf 927  
 Legge, Walter 231  
 Leighton, Kenneth 229  
 Lennox Boyd, Alan (Lord Lennox Boyd) 88, 122, 123–4  
 'Lenny the Lion' 180  
 Lestor, Joan, MP 889, 898  
*Let Me Speak* 414  
 Letts, Barry 418  
 Levin, Bernard 13–14, 163, 392, 451, 556  
   and *TW3* 355, 357, 366, 374  
 Levin, Richard 419  
 Lewin, Ronald 45–6, 343, 401, 792 n.  
 Lewis, Professor Antony 228  
 Lewis, Derek 983  
 Lewis, Sir Edward 511  
 Lewis, Peter 191  
 Liberal Party 239  
   General Election (1964) 443, 449, 451  
   General Election (1970) 871, 876, 877, 884  
   General Election (February 1974) 981, 986, 987, 988  
   General Election (October 1974) 991  
   and Suez 89  
 Libyan Television Service 706  
 licence fee 286, 306–8, 501, 737, 759, 763, 773–4  
   colour, differential fee 545, 860  
   evasion 751, 753  
   increase (1971) 648, 778  
   increase (1975) 1003  
   radio only, abolished 648, 759, 778  
 licences 29, 30, 848, 1005  
 Lieven, Alexander 686, 969 n.  
*Life with the Lyons* 222  
*Lift Up Your Hearts* 223, 226, 581 n., 582  
 light entertainment 40, 143, 195, 200, 287  
 light music, Radio Two 576–7  
 Light Programme 33, 36, 39, 41, 42, 45, 47  
   after changes 54  
   and news 62, 220  
   possibility of advertising 537, 541  
   wavelength allocated to Radio One 565, 567  
*Likely Lads, The* 436, 955

- Lilley, Roy (*Belfast Telegraph*) 906  
 Lillcrap, Peter 515, 516, 642  
 Lime Grove 14–15, 31, 411, 858  
 Lindsay, John 876  
*Line-Up* 410  
 Ling, Peter 336, 337  
 Lingstrom, Freda 176, 178  
 Lipton, Marcus, MP 475  
 Lisemore, Martin 946  
*Listen with Mother* 929  
*Listener, The* 212, 215, 327, 328, 453–4, 484–5, 582, 898–9  
 listeners, estimate for (1962) 30  
   *see also* audiences  
 literacy and BBC 934  
 Little Richard 202  
 Littlewood, Lesie 381  
*Liver Birds, The* 955, 984  
 Llandrindod Wells station 842  
 Lloyd, Hugh 211  
 Lloyd, Innes 425  
 Lloyd, Selwyn 73, 80, 93, 94, 262, 504–5, 589  
   and external broadcasting 119, 120  
 Lloyd George, Lady Megan, MP 51  
 Lloyd-Hughes, Trevor 560  
 Lloyd James, David 665, 666, 734  
 Loach, Kenneth 519, 522  
 local authorities, and local broadcasting 640, 641–2, 648  
 local radio 266, 284, 285, 461, 515, 619, 628, 999  
   BBC expansion 647, 778–9, 886–7  
   and *Broadcasting in the Seventies* 767, 769, 770, 771, 773, 775  
   commercial local radio agreed 648, 886–7  
   Commons debate 619  
   competition expected 638  
   Conservative Party liking for commercial local radio 797  
   and Crawford Report 998  
   and education 571, 633–4, 643  
   finance 641–2, 648, 756  
   and Government 304, 634, 641, 643, 760–1, 778–9  
   local radio councils 637  
   options 620–39  
   and Pilkington 296  
   and Policy Study Group 749, 752–3, 756, 760–1  
   pop music 538  
   Radio Leicester first station 634, 639  
   Station Manager's Charter 636  
   survey of 644–6  
   voluntarism 642  
   wavebands 842–3, 887  
 Local Radio Association 638  
 local radio councils 642–3  
*Local Radio in the Public Interest* 634–6  
 local radio stations, and new Regional structure 668–9  
 local relay services 645  
 Lockhart, Sir Robert Bruce 116 n.  
 Lockley, Venerable Harold 642  
 Lockwood, Sir Joseph 511  
 London:  
   broadcasting area 627 n.  
   setting for *Till Death Us Do Part* 528  
*London Calling* 702–3  
 London Palladium 195  
 London Studio Players 759  
 London Weekend Television (LWT) 347, 794  
*Long March of Everyman, The* 941–3  
 Longford, Francis Pakenham, Earl of 537 n.  
*Look* 180  
 Lords, House of, *see* Parliamentary debates on broadcasting  
 de Lotbinière, S. J. 845  
 Lotis, Denis 209  
 Love, Enid 181, 182  
 Lowe, Arthur 943  
 Lucan, George Bingham, Earl of 149–50  
 Lucas, George, Lord Lucas 148, 150  
 Lulu 926  
*Lunch Box* 337  
 Lustgarten, Edgar 172  
 Lusty, (Sir) Robert 372, 377, 537 n., 594, 596 n., 606, 607, 660, 725, 799, 901  
   and Lord Hill's appointment 600–1, 602, 604  
   and *The War Game* 533–4  
 Lynn, Dame Vera 226, 790, 917, 926  
 Lyttelton, Humphrey 208 n., 445 n., 926  
 'Mac', cartoon by 912  
 MacArthur, Brian 491 n.  
 MacBeth, George 738, 739, 744, 747, 930  
 McCadden, Stephen, MP 115  
 McCall, Robert 15 n., 672, 677, 678–9  
 McCallum, David 944  
 McCloy, James 182, 467, 484  
 McColl, Ewan 349 n.  
 McCullough, Derek ('Uncle Mac') 225–6, 344  
 MacDonald, Aimi 929  
 Macdonald, Gordon, Lord Macdonald of Gwaenysgor, Lord 13, 312 n., 671–2  
 MacDonald, Norman 104  
 MacEwan, Duncan 730  
 McEwen, Rory 163

- McGivern, Cecil 7, 15–16, 60, 152, 214, 829  
 and competition 19–20  
 leaves for Granada 24, 25  
 on programmes 24–5, 161, 163  
 and *Six-Five Special* 204, 205, 206  
 and Suez 103
- McGrath, John 427
- McGregor, Oliver Ross (Lord McGregor) 996 n.
- McGregor, Sue 927
- McIntyre, Colin 104, 815
- McIntyre, Ian 384 n.
- McKay, Revd Roy 45
- Mackenzie, Norman 496 n., 569
- McKenzie, R. T. 'Bob' 224, 242, 247, 248, 447  
 and General Elections 451, 556, 992  
 and Harold Wilson 446–7, 547
- McKinsey and Company 517 n., 730, 732 n., 759  
 and *Broadcasting in the Seventies* 666, 728–9
- 'Improving the Management of Resources' 723–4, 725, 726
- McKnight, John 495–6
- McLachlan, Donald 365, 371, 530, 589, 594
- McLean, F. C. (Sir Francis) 388, 736 n., 823, 831, 836, 840 n.
- McLean, Roderick 569
- Macleod, Iain 303, 547 n., 549
- McLuhhan, Marshall 461 n., 862
- Macmillan, Harold (Earl of Stockton) 79 n., 102, 117, 130  
 on Africa 694  
 and BBC 119  
 and pay-TV 304, 305  
 and Pilkington 268  
 political broadcasting 250–1  
 and psephology 254  
 and television 240, 241  
*TW3* 360  
 resignation 370 n.
- McMillan, John 374 n.
- Macmillan, Kenneth 614
- MacNeice, Louis 45 n., 348
- MacNeil, Robert 875 n.
- Macrae, Professor Donald 141
- MacTaggart, James 519
- Madden, Cecil 199 n.
- Maderna, Bruno 234
- Madgwick, Sir Robert 917
- magazine programmes, current affairs 328
- Maginnis, Jack, MP 910, 911
- magnetic tape, sound recording 832
- Maguire, Waldo 156, 390 n., 450 n., 902 n., 913, 988 n.
- Maigret* series 192–3, 497 n.
- Mair, John 419
- Make Yourself at Home* 591, 592
- Makins, Sir Roger (Lord Sherfield) 84 n.
- Malay Service 709
- Malle, Louis 939
- Malraux, André 56
- Man Alive* 857, 965
- management, and BBC 966
- Management Services Group 732–3
- Managing Directors, External Services, Radio and Television 727
- Manchester:  
 Network Production Centre 769, 772, 806–7  
 Regional headquarters 667, 729  
*Manchester Evening News* 773  
*Manchester Guardian*, see *Guardian*
- Mandell, Barbara 65
- Mander, Jerry 149
- Manduell, John 401
- Mankowitz, Wolf 209
- Mansell, Gerard 578, 689, 721, 734, 765, 784, 798, 802, 883, 967  
 and *Broadcasting in the Seventies* 772, 773  
 chairman, Policy Study Group 729, 735, 751, 753, 756, 759, 763, 765  
 Director of Programmes, Radio 800  
 Director, External Services 969–70  
 and external services cuts 1002  
 and Music Programme 740, 757
- Mansfield, Jayne 164
- Margaret, Princess, wedding on television 145
- Margerison, Tom 889
- Marine etc. Broadcasting (Offences) Bill 562, 565, 566, 573
- Maritain, Jacques 56
- Marker, Tom (*Daily Sketch*) 771
- Marplan survey 1974 987
- Marriott, R. D'A 38, 39, 45, 59, 222, 389, 467, 511, 572  
*Broadcasting in the Seventies* 721  
 and Hill 921–2  
 and regions 629, 650–1  
 report 39–48  
 Staff Redeployment Committee 806  
 views on Policy Study Group proposals 756–7, 758
- Working Group 733–44  
 Working Party on the Future of Sound Broadcasting 650
- Marsh, Arthur 370, 371
- Marsh, Ronald 434, 526 n.

- Martin, Kingsley 321  
 Martin, Millicent 357, 410  
 Martin, Troy Kennedy 427  
 Martinu, Bohuslav 229  
 Marwick, Arthur xx  
 Maschler, Tom, *Declaration* xviii  
 Maschwitz, Eric 196–8, 200, 206, 207, 336  
   and Pilkington 287  
*MASH* 197  
 Masirah relay station 682  
 Maskell, Dan 221  
 Mason, Michael 744, 747, 942–3  
 Mason, Philip 591, 938, 999  
 Mason, Roy (Lord Mason) 345, 646 n.  
   mass audience, and taste 266, 275–6  
 Massingham, Hugh (*Sunday Telegraph*)  
   450 n.  
 Masterman, Sir John 383 n.  
*Masterpiece Theater* 713  
*Mataador* 535–6  
*Match of the Day* 580, 952  
   mathematics, and Open Univesity 936  
 Mathis, Johnny 209  
*Matters of Moment* 240  
 Matthew, Brian 508  
 Matthews, Jessie 335  
 Matthews, (Sir) Stanley 173  
 Maudling, Reginald 305, 364, 797  
   and *The Question of Ireland* 906–7,  
   908–9, 911  
 Maugham, W. Somerset 930  
 Maurois, André 56  
 Mawby, Ray, MP 378 n.  
 May, Cyril 70  
 Maybray–King, Cecil King, Lord 900  
 Mayhew, Christopher, MP 250, 252, 293,  
   302, 787  
 MCA International 944  
   media, the 29, 268, 351–2  
   media research 183–90  
*Medicine Today* 932  
   medium-waveband 647, 887  
 Meeting on Party Political Broadcasting  
   443–4, 554, 561, 673, 870, 872, 880  
*Meeting Point* 582  
 Megaw, Sir John 271  
 Mehta, Val 222  
 Melly, George 359 n., 575, 576, 715–16,  
   785, 863  
*Melodies for You* 804  
*Men from the Ministry, The* 930 n.  
 Menuhin, Yehudi (Lord Menuhin) 580  
 Menzies, Robert, Suez broadcast 85–6  
   merchandising, BBC 416  
 Merchant, Moelwyn 931  
 Merriman, Eric 224 n.  
 Metcalfe, Jean 225  
 Miall, Leonard 16, 93, 166, 386, 390,  
   687, 717  
   and Tony Benn 249–50  
   and General Election (1959) 246  
   and General Election (1964) 441  
   and Pilkington 288, 289  
   Television Extension Committee 404,  
   405  
   Working Party on BBC-2 663  
 Michell, Keith 937  
 Michelmores, Cliff 162, 164, 175, 208  
   and General Elections 451, 556, 557  
   microchips 818  
   microprocessors 820  
*Mid-Week Theatre* 398  
*Middle East Specials* 1001  
 Middleton, Harry 390  
 Midland Region 623, 625, 652  
 Midland Regional Council 668, 762  
*Midland Newsroom* 926  
*Midland Oil* 475  
*Midweek* 931  
 Miles, Dame Margaret 590, 763, 801, 929  
 Milhaud, Darius 56  
 Millan, Bruce, MP 345  
 Millar, Ronald 877  
 Miller, Bruce 240  
 Miller, Grahame 662, 772, 789 n.  
 Miller, Jonathan 164 n., 354, 521 n., 705  
 Miller, Karl 603 n.  
 Milligan, Spike 882, 917 n.  
 Mills, Freddie 199  
 Mills, Michael 951  
 Mills, Stratton 776  
 Milne, Alasdair 383, 952  
   Controller Scotland 393–4, 675–6  
   Director of Programmes 966, 967  
   General Election (1959) 250  
   General Election (1964) 441, 450–1  
   *The Great War* 414  
   independent company 391  
   *That's Life* 965  
   *Tonight* 162, 385, 390  
   TW3 359, 368  
   and Huw Wheldon 969  
 Milne, Sir David 377, 672 n.  
 Miners' Strike (1974) 979, 988  
 ministerial broadcasts 82–3, 91–2, 96–7,  
   548–9, 870  
 Ministerial Committee on Broadcasting,  
   Cabinet Committee 496, 537–8, 541  
 Ministry of Communications 517  
 Ministry of Defence 94–5, 105  
 Ministry of Education 181, 485  
 Ministry of Technology 816  
 minorities, and broadcasting 48, 49, 275,  
   404

- Minow, Newton 325  
 Mitchell, Derek 559  
 Mitchell, George 198  
 Mitchell, Warren 436, 527, 882  
 Moir, Jim 956  
 Molony, Eileen, 669  
 Monahan, James 700–1, 703  
 monarchy (1972) 916  
   *see also* royal family  
 Monckton, Sir Walter (Lord Monckton)  
   93–4, 103, 128, 129  
*Monday Night Play* 191  
*Money Programme, The* 583, 875, 896  
*Monitor* 167–9, 272, 429, 466  
 Monitoring Service, BBC 690–1, 1001  
 Monkhouse, Bob 208 n.  
 monopoly on broadcasting, BBC, broken  
   3  
 Monson, A. P. 734  
 Montagnon, Peter 614, 935  
*Monty Python's Flying Circus* 949–51  
 Moodie, Douglas 434 n.  
 moon landing (1969) 622, 715, 717, 846,  
   860  
 Moore, Charles 315 n.  
 Moore, Dudley 354  
 Moore, Henry 785  
 Moore, Jasper, MP 332  
 Moore, Patrick 169  
 Moorson, Sasha 348  
 Moral Rearmament 333  
 moral standards, and broadcasting 332,  
   366  
   *see also* Whitehouse, Mrs Mary  
 morality, and Scotland 670  
 Morecambe, Eric and Wise, Ernie 527,  
   948–9, 952  
 Morgan, Cliff 953 n.  
 Morgan, General Frederick 330  
 Morgan, Tom 766  
 Morley, Peter 795  
 Morley, Sheridan 586  
 Morris, Alfred, MP 900 n.  
 Morris, Sir Charles (later Lord Morris) 182  
 Morris, Colin 338, 432  
 Morris, Denis 36–7, 249, 572  
 Morris, James (later Jan) 939  
 Morris, John 33–4, 41, 59, 121  
 Morris, Johnny 931  
 Morris, Sir Philip 26, 57, 100–1, 293, 363  
 Morris, Stewart 206  
 Morrison, Herbert (Lord Morrison of  
   Lambeth) 81, 601 n.  
 Morrison, Roger 725, 726, 728, 729, 730,  
   731, 759  
 Morrison, Sara 995  
 Mortimer, John 191, 194  
 Mosley, Gordon 293  
 Mossman, James 165–6, 224  
 Mountbatten, Louis, Earl Mountbatten  
   93, 94 n., 102, 816  
*Mrs Dale's Diary* (later *The Dales*) 37, 335  
 Mudie, J. F. 419  
 Muggieridge, Douglas 704, 800, 802, 804 n.  
 Muggieridge, Malcolm 141, 145–6, 146–7,  
   318–19, 374, 414, 521 n., 547, 863,  
   875  
 Muir, Frank 210, 359, 612 n.  
 Mullard Company 819, 925  
 Mulley, Fred (Lord Mulley) 302  
 Mullins, Patrick 730  
 multicultural society 163  
 Munich crisis (1938) 90  
 Murray, Jenni 643  
 Murray, Pete 202–3, 207, 575, 926  
 Murphy, Sir Ralph 86 n., 605, 689, 732,  
   760, 781  
   *The Question of Ulster* 908, 910, 913  
 Murray, Stephen 927  
 Murrow, Ed 65, 141, 169, 235, 241, 317  
 Musgrave, Thea 765  
 music 43, 149, 284–5  
   and *Broadcasting in the Seventies* 771  
   cost 728–9  
   Home Service 48, 401  
   increase after Pilkington 401  
   Jubilee programme, Radio Three 927  
   Light Programme 47  
   and Marriott Working Group 740  
   new 228–9, 231–2, 399  
   patronage, by BBC 775, 777, 779–80  
   Policy Study Group 758–9  
   possible reductions in spending 751,  
   753, 756  
   programmes (1955–60) 227–34  
   Radio Four 757  
   Radio Three 756  
   stereo 829–30  
   on television 397  
   *see also* BBC orchestras; pop music  
 Music Department 757  
 Music Division, opera on radio 397  
*Music for You* 227  
*Music Magazine* 401  
*Music Maker* 462  
 Music Programme 579, 580, 740, 757  
 Musicians' Union 78, 203, 228, 230, 295,  
   575, 741, 749, 758–9, 761  
   and *Broadcasting in the Seventies* 779,  
   780, 782  
   and playing of pop records 510, 511,  
   514, 573  
*My Wife Next Door* 931  
*My Word!* 224

- Nabarro, Sir Gerald, MP 451  
 Nagy, Imry 106  
 Nairne, C. J. Campbell 802 n.  
 Nandy, Dipak 995  
 Nasser, Gamal Abdel 80, 81, 85, 96, 680  
 Nation, Terry 215 n., 418  
 National Adult Literacy Campaign 934  
 National Association of Theatrical and  
 Kine Employees (NATTKE) 382  
 National Broadcasting Commission,  
 rejected 562  
 National Broadcasting Company (NBC)  
 325, 453, 613  
 National Broadcasting Councils 670, 676  
*see also* Broadcasting Council for  
 Scotland; Broadcasting Council for  
 Wales  
 National Electronics Research Council  
 816  
 National Extension College 484, 487,  
 488, 492  
 national government, discussed (1974)  
 990, 992  
 National Institute of Adult Education  
 183  
 National Music Network 565 n.  
 National Plan, and BBC 549  
 National Regional Councils, and Policy  
 Study Group 754  
 National Regions 621, 807  
 National Television Foundation,  
 suggested 889  
 National Television System Committee  
 (NTSC) colour system 849–50, 852,  
 853–4, 855  
 National Union of Journalists 382  
 National Union of Miners 979, 983  
 National Union of Print, Bookbinding  
 and Allied Trades (later incorporated  
 in SOGAT) 382  
 National Union of Teachers 292, 462  
 National Viewers' and Listeners'  
 Association 519, 890  
*Nationwide* 790, 930  
*Naturalist's Notebook* 49  
*Nature* 139  
 Naughton, John, on technology 811  
*Navy Lark, The* 804  
 NBC 325, 453, 613  
 Needham, Dr Joseph 789  
 'needletime' 509–11, 513, 514, 572, 573,  
 728, 761, 768, 780  
 Needs, Peter 54  
 Negus, Arthur 931  
 Netherlands Government, and pirate  
 radio 505–6  
 Network Production Centres 668, 998–9  
 network radio 767–8  
 Network Three (Third Network) 49, 51,  
 59–60  
 and music 229, 401  
 networking:  
 commercial television 12–13  
 local radio 628–9  
 'New Cinema' 189  
*New Ideas* 712  
 'new morality', in BBC 332  
*New Statesman* 44, 60, 147, 236–7, 393,  
 430, 516, 546, 910, 967  
 and political broadcasting 238–9, 449  
 new technology 825–6  
 New York Office, BBC 682, 683  
*New York Times* 110, 686  
 Newark, Professor F. H. 271  
 Newby, P. Howard 42, 59, 734, 758,  
 919 n.  
 Newcastle, praised 999  
*Newcastle Evening Chronicle* 202  
*Newcomers, The* 338  
 Newington, Peter 168  
 Newman, Sydney 190, 192, 287, 337,  
 374, 390, 395–6, 402  
 head of Drama Group 346, 395, 396–7,  
 526–7  
*Dr Who* 418–19  
 and *Our World* 716  
*Wednesday Play* 519–20  
 news 111–13, 158  
 not American 157–8  
 BBC style of news reading 71  
 and *Broadcasting in the Seventies* 768  
 changes 156–7  
 continuous, rejected by Marriott  
 Working Group 740  
 and current affairs 61–72, 327, 755  
 External Services 731, 732  
 Home Service changes 325–7  
 Jacob and Greene in favour of 321  
 and Policy Study Group 731, 754–5  
 radio 72, 220, 578–9, 805  
 regional aspect 625–6, 661  
 regional television 652, 653  
 study group (1958–9) 152–5  
 television beats radio 72  
 World Service 700  
*see also* Independent Television News  
*News and Newsreel* 62–3, 69  
*News at Ten* (ITN) 157, 602, 875, 884  
*News Chronicle* 29, 113, 135, 238  
 News Division 111, 156, 158  
*News of the World* 269  
 news programmes 152–60  
 'news values' 154  
 newscasters 65

- Newsday* 991  
*Newsdesk* 928 n.  
 Newsom, Sir John 471 n., 483  
 Newsom Report (1963) 471, 478  
 Newspaper Proprietors' Association 186  
 Newspaper Society, and local  
     broadcasting 631  
 newspapers:  
     declining sales (1953–60) 183–4  
     and local radio 631, 637  
     relationship to TW3 351–2  
 newsreaders 63, 65, 154, 157  
*Newsreel* 65  
*Newsweek* 958  
 Nicholas, H. G. 242  
 Nicholas, Harry 872, 877  
 Nicholls, Peter 664 n.  
 Nichols, Dandy 528  
 Nicolls, Sir Basil 297 n., 316 n.  
 Nicolson, (Sir) Harold 56  
 Nicolson, Nigel, MP 98–9  
 Nielsen audience figures 21  
 Nigeria 696  
*Night Ride* 739, 926  
*Night Sky Month by Month* 49  
 Nimmo, (Sir) Derek 930 n.  
 9 pm News 72, 326, 330, 930  
 Nine o'clock news 930  
 Nixon, President Richard M., resignation  
     990  
*No Hiding Place* 265  
 Noble, John 765  
 'non-metropolitan radio' 749  
 Norden, Denis 359  
 Normanbrook, Lord 86–7, 89, 122, 392,  
     518, 536, 583  
     becomes Chairman of Governors 378  
     death 593  
     and Greene 597  
     and ITA 596–7  
     and political broadcasting 549  
     and television staff changes 392  
     and *The War Game* ban 418, 532–5  
     and *Wednesday Play* 524–5  
     and Mrs Whitehouse 334  
     and Harold Wilson 559–60  
 North Advisory Council 999  
 North American Service, closed 682–3, 692  
 North-East, local radio 627  
 North Region 623, 652, 653, 654–5,  
     658–9, 660, 661 n., 664, 729  
 North Regional Advisory Council 658–9,  
     662–3, 762  
 Northern culture 625  
 Northern Dance Orchestra 759  
 Northern Ireland 902–15, 931, 982, 988–9  
     General Election (1959) 249  
     nationhood 625  
     region 34, 671, 672  
     Standing Instructions on Coverage of  
         Events in Northern Ireland 1110–12  
     television 677  
 Northern Ireland Regional Council 762  
 Norton, Harry 791  
 Norway, and World Service 701  
*Not in Front of the Children* 436  
*Not So Much a Programme, More a Way of  
 Life* 375  
 Nottingham 240  
 Notting Hill 240  
 Nuffield College, conference on political  
     broadcasting 242–6  
 Nuffield Foundation 25–6, 474  
 Nuttall, Jeff 464  
 Nuttgens, Patrick 999  
 Nutting (Sir) Anthony 93 n., 103, 117,  
     118, 120, 126  
     external broadcasting 122, 124–5  
  
 Oban relay station 842  
 O'Brien, Gerald 108  
 O'Brien, (Sir) Tom 382 n.  
*Observer* 184  
     on Pilkington 264, 265, 275, 302  
 O'Connor, May 25  
 Oddie, Bill 805, 951  
*Oedipus Rex* 233–4  
*Off the Record* 200  
*Offer, The* 434, 435  
*Oh Boy!* 205, 206  
 oil crisis (1973–74) 978–80  
 O'Keefe, Meryl 928 n.  
*Old Grey Whistle-Test, The* 931–2  
 Oldfield-Davies, Alun 676 n.  
 Olivier, Laurence (Lord Olivier) 57, 889  
 Olympic Games 452, 846, 856, 953  
 O'Malley, Brian, MP 545 n.  
*Onedin Line, The* 944–5  
 Open Door programmes 961  
 Open Learning 826  
*Open Persuaders, The* 931  
 Open University:  
     academic sub-committee 569 n.  
     arrangements for 500–1, 502  
     broadcasting for 935–6  
     and *Broadcasting in the Seventies* 768  
     funding 568, 758  
     and Marriott Working Group 735, 740  
     movement towards 490–502  
     1970s 932  
     planning 567–71  
     Production Centre 935  
     radio allotment 567, 570  
     and technology 826–7



- 'University of the Air' 460, 476, 488, 490-1, 498
- opera 397, 399, 956-7
- opinion polls 254
- opt-outs:
- regional 651, 656, 666, 668, 735, 843
  - radio, to cease 758
  - television 758
- ORACLE 814 n.
- O'Rahilly, Ronan 506
- orchestras, *see* BBC orchestras
- Organisation Internationale de Radiodiffusion et Télévision (OIRT) 715
- Orr-Ewing, Captain Ian (Lord Orr-Ewing) 107, 109, 840
- Orthicon camera 218
- Osborn, Andrew 193, 286-7, 586
- Osborne, Cyril, MP 135-6, 301, 373 n.
- Osborne, John 190, 192, 193, 209
- Osipof, Vladimir 686
- Our Present Discontents* 141
- Our World* 713-15
- outside broadcasting 287
- Overseas and Foreign Relations 716
- overseas broadcasting, criticized over Suez 109-10
- Overseas Information Services Committee 133, 704
- White Paper *Overseas Information Services* 134-5, 706
- overseas offices, BBC 683
- Overseas Regional Services 693
- Overseas Services, BBC 122, 692, 693
- finance 307
- Overseas Talks and Features 693
- Oxbridge, and satire 353, 355
- Pacific Services 694
- 'Paddington Bear' 180
- Page, Cyril 105
- Paget, R. T., MP 81
- Pain, Nesta 792
- Pair of Ears*, A 830
- Paisley, Revd Ian 905, 906
- Pakistan, and BBC 940-1
- PAL colour system 853-4, 855
- Palin, Michael 949, 950
- Pallisers, The* 945-6
- Panorama* 67, 69, 93, 141, 145, 164-7, 177, 195, 272, 365, 439, 465, 755, 836, 947
- on EEC 982
  - General Election (1959) 248
  - General Election (1964) 440
  - General Election (1970) 874, 875, 879-80
- on immigration 240
  - scheduling 954
  - and Suez 103-4, 105, 111
  - and Vietnam 536
- Panufnik, Andrzej 229
- Parker, Brian 6, 519
- Parker, Charles 349
- Parker, Hubert, Lord Parker of Waddington 900
- Parliament:
- televising proceedings 588
  - televising State opening 241
- Parliamentary debates on broadcasting:
- Commons (1957) 53-5
  - Commons (13 May 1965) 536
  - Commons (22 July 1969) 775-6
  - Commons (3 December 1969) 786-8
  - Lords (23 January 1957) 148-51
  - Lords (25 February 1970) 801
- Parliamo Italiano* 935
- Parnell, Val 195
- Parsons, Nicholas 929
- party political broadcasts 62, 92, 243, 549-50, 870-1
- General Election (1959) 249
  - General Election (1964) 438, 442-3, 443-4, 450
  - General Election (1966) 554
  - General Election (1970) 870-2, 876-84
  - General Election (February 1974) 983
- Paulu, Burton 196
- Pawley, Edward 831 n.
- pay-TV 189, 263, 284
- and Government 304, 305
- Peach, L. du Garde 346 n.
- Peacock, Professor Alan 780
- Peacock, Michael 65, 67, 103, 146, 152, 390
- and BBC-1 391, 523
  - and BBC-2 389, 407-10
  - Editor, Television News 386
  - and educational broadcasting 480, 488-9
  - General Election (1964) 440-1, 450
  - General Election (1966) 556
  - to London Weekend Television 612
  - and *Panorama* 166-7, 407
- 'peak programmes' 7
- 'peak viewing time' 8
- Pearson, Lester 111
- Pearson, Niel 663
- Pebble Mill, *see* Birmingham
- Pebble Mill at One* 930, 998
- Pedler, Dr Kit 946
- Peel, John 512 n., 574, 739
- Pelletier, Rooney 33-4, 37 n., 45, 59, 712
- Penmon station 841

- Penrose, Sir Roland 785  
*People and the Media, The* 993–5  
*People Are Funny* 264  
*People's Service, The* 581  
*People Talking The, A Question of Confidence* 977 n.  
 Percival, Lance 357, 370 n.  
 Performing Right Tribunal 513–14  
 permissiveness 339, 530  
 Perry, Jimmy 943–4  
 Perry, Walter (Lord Perry) 488  
*Perry Mason* 334  
 Persian Language Service, cut 679  
*Personal Call* 169  
 Pertwee, John 417, 425  
 Philips, Philip 599  
 Philips (company), colour cameras 859  
 Phillips, Morgan 79, 238  
 phone-in programmes 984  
 Phonographic Performance Ltd (PPL) 401, 510, 511  
 Picard, Laurent 917  
*Pick of the Pops* 509, 804  
 Pickles, Wilfred 221, 224  
*Picture Post* 184  
 Pierce, J. R. 819  
 Pilkington, Sir Harry 255, 261–2, 270, 274, 283, 297, 303  
 Pilkington Committee 237, 267, 272, 282  
   appointed 255  
   and colour television 852, 853  
   comparative tables of programmes 278–80  
   and ITA/ITV 3, 283  
   and local radio 628, 629–30, 631  
   membership 264, 267–72  
   questions to BBC/ITA 290–4  
   recommendations and reactions 294–303  
   and regions 655  
   relation to Robbins Report 477  
   report published (1962) 297  
   and second channel 404, 488  
   terms of review 259  
   views 273–8  
 Pim, Sir Richard 366, 377, 525 n., 535  
 'Pinky and Perky' 180  
 Pinter, (Sir) Harold 192, 789  
 pirate radio 458, 459, 461, 502–15, 516, 540, 567  
   broadcasters join BBC 567, 574  
   legislation against 562, 566  
 Pitt, Barrie 415  
 Pitt, Edith 252  
 Pitt, Tim 746  
 Pizey, Sir Mark 371  
 Plaid Cymru 554, 673, 674 n. 871  
 Plaskow, Maurice 495–6  
 Plater, Alan 526  
*Play for Today* 520  
*Play of the Month* 525  
*Play School* 860, 931  
*Playbox* 175  
 plays, *see* drama  
*Playtime* 342, 344–5, 933  
 Pleasance, Angela 937  
 Ploman, Eddi 714  
 Plomley, Roy 224–5, 507 n., 805  
 Plowden, Bridget, Lady 483, 605  
   Chairwoman, IBA 483, 605  
   and 1973 crisis 981  
   *The Question of Ulster* 908, 910  
   Right to Read Committee 934  
 Plowden Report (1967) 483  
 Plowden Report on Representational Services Overseas 707  
 Plugge, Captain Leonard, MP 507 n.  
 Plumb, Professor J. H. (later Sir John) 614  
 Plumbicon cameras 859  
 PM 805  
*PM Reports* 928  
 poetry on Radio Three 930 n.  
*Poetry Prom* 930  
 Poland, and Gomulka 105, 106  
 Policy Study Group:  
   and *Broadcasting in the Seventies* 721, 729  
   final presentation 754, 756  
   and finance 751–2, 756  
   first progress report 748–9  
   and local radio 749  
   and regions 667  
   relationship to Marriott Working Group 743–8  
   second report 749–50  
 Polish Service, BBC 130–1  
 political broadcasting 237–55  
   Aide-Mémoire 92, 1009  
   confrontation of leaders issue 555  
   General Election (1964) 438  
   General Election (February 1974) 983–6  
   Wales 673  
   and Harold Wilson 548  
   *see also* General Elections  
 politics (1955–60) 237–55  
 polls, *see* public opinion polls  
 Poniatoff, Alexander M. 836  
 pop music, 1960s 457–8, 459, 461–4, 508  
   and BBC 508–15  
   local radio 538, 634  
   and Marriott Working Group 739  
   and pirate radio 503–4

- programmes 200-9  
 Radio One 461  
 restrictions on needletime 509-11, 513,  
     514, 572, 573, 728, 761, 768, 780  
 and television 508  
 World Service 699  
 Pop Music Department, Light  
     Programme 398  
*Pop Score* 426  
 Pop Service 563, 565, 567  
     *see mainly* Radio One  
 Pope, Angela 893, 895, 896  
 Popular Music Department 508  
 Popular Television Committee 13 n., 91  
 Port of London Authority 940  
 Porter, Sheila 225  
*Portraits of Power* 465  
 Post Office:  
     and BBC after *Broadcasting in the*  
         *Seventies* 776  
     and educational broadcasting 485-6  
     and hours of television 159  
     Pilkington Report 297  
     and pirate radio 515-16  
     and Television Advisory Committee 850  
     and transmitters 404  
     and wavebands 285  
 Postgate, Richmond 8, 39, 459, 642,  
     933 n.  
     and Open University 501, 568, 570  
 Postmaster-General 643, 817  
 Potter, Dennis 344, 357, 519, 521, 983  
 Powell, Dilys 209, 225  
 Powell, Ellis 335 n.  
 Powell, Enoch, MP 239, 333, 585  
     and General Elections 878-9, 981-2  
 Powell, Robert 946  
*Power Game, The* 896  
 Pragnell, Anthony 601  
 'Prague Spring' 690  
 Prentice, Reg (Lord Prentice) 487, 932  
 Presley, Elvis 462  
*Press Conference* 92-3  
 Preston, D. M. 822-3  
 Previn, André 948  
 Price, Dennis 521 n.  
*Price of Violence, The* 931  
 Priestland, Gerald 410, 411, 928 n.  
 Priestley, J. B. 6 n., 9  
 Prior, Allan 427  
*Private Eye* 354  
 productivity, improvement 753  
 professionalism 24-5, 156, 289, 380-1,  
     686  
 Programme Board, BBC Television 7-8  
 Programme Correspondence group 985 n.  
 programme planning, by computer 821  
 programme polls, rare 331  
 programmed learning 826  
 programmes 141-255  
     costs 18  
 Programmes Complaints Commission,  
     BBC 900-1  
 programming, contract BBC/ITV 290  
 promenade concerts 227, 398-9  
*Prospero* 679 n.  
 Proudfoot, Wilfred, MP 952 n.  
 psephology 254, 882  
 Public Accounts Committee, and BBC 90  
 Public Broadcasting Commission,  
     proposed 994  
 'public' broadcasting service 5, 290, 517,  
     596  
 public broadcasting system, United  
     States 713, 961  
 public opinion on public's requirements  
     266  
 public opinion polls, General Elections:  
     (1970) 878  
     (February 1974) 986-7  
     (October 1974) 992  
 publicity, BBC 966  
*Punch* cartoons 55  
 puppets 180  
 'pure radio', and Features Department  
     348  
 Purser, Philip 298-9, 523 n., 532, 916,  
     959  
 Pye Radio 630-1, 638, 852  
 Pym, Francis (Lord Pym) 345  
  
 quality of programmes 22  
*Quatermass* 192 n., 423  
*Quatermass II* 423  
*Quatermass and the Pit* 143, 423  
*Queen* 338  
*Question of Ulster, The* 892, 902, 903-14  
*Question Time* 440, 876  
*Question Why, The* 875  
*Quiet Revolution* 897, 899  
 Quinton, Anthony (Lord Quinton) 1,  
     466 n.  
  
 race relations 198  
 Race, Steve 462  
 Race Relations Board 590 n.  
 racing 216-17, 221  
 Radcliffe, Cyril, Viscount Radcliffe 594  
 radical groups, versus BBC 787-96  
 radio:  
     audiences 1950s-60s 737  
     changes post-Marriott 59-60  
     commercial, *see* commercial radio  
     competition possible 32-3, 35-6, 45

- radio (*cont.*)
- economies 44, 742–3
  - external broadcasting 683–4
  - finance 30, 749, 767
  - listening patterns 767
  - and Marriott Working Group 736–7, 738–41
  - a monopoly 28–43
  - new schedules (April 1970) 800–6
  - and Open University 499–500
  - and Pilkington 295–6
  - programmes after Suez 141
  - reorganization into Radios 1/2/3/4 576–9
  - reorganization (after 1967) 460–1
  - staff numbers (1960–4) 507
  - streaming attacked 798
  - technical improvements 507
  - three network reduction rejected 753
- Radio One 460–1, 464
- and *Broadcasting in the Seventies* 767–8
  - commercialization 746
  - on Jubilee Day 926
  - and Marriott Working Group 739, 740, 742
  - news 578
  - opening and reaction 574, 575–6
  - origins 563, 565, 567
  - party political broadcast on 872–3
  - planning 572, 574
  - possible conjunction with Radio Two in the evening 756, 758
  - possibly under threat (1970) 886
  - Sunday amalgamation (1975) 1003
  - under new schedules 803, 804
- Radio 1 Club 575, 576
- Radio Two:
- and *Broadcasting in the Seventies* 768
  - on Jubilee day 926
  - light music 576–7, 758
  - Marriott Working Group 739, 740, 742
  - news 578
  - opening 576
  - planning 572
  - reception poor in Scotland and Wales 674
  - religion 581
  - sport on 580
  - under new schedules 803, 804
- Radio Three:
- and *Broadcasting in the Seventies* 768, 774
  - current affairs 579
  - introduction 576, 577
  - on Jubilee Day 927
  - and Marriott Working Group 740–1, 742
  - music on 740–1
  - new schedules 803, 804
  - news 578
  - Policy Study Group ideas 756
  - possibly on VHF 760, 766, 774, 779
  - sport 580
  - still music and speech 758, 803
- Radio Four:
- and *Broadcasting in the Seventies* 768
  - General Election (1970) 883
  - introduction 576, 577–8
  - on Jubilee Day (1972) 928–30
  - main spoken word channel 758
  - and Marriott Working Group 740, 742
  - music 740, 741
  - new schedules 804, 805
  - news 578, 755, 769, 928
  - successor to Home Service 928
- Radio 4 Reports* 755
- Radio Five 770
- Radio 270, 512
- Radio 390, 512, 574
- Radio Atlanta 506, 507, 511, 567
- Radio Birmingham (BBC) 887 n.
- Radio Blackburn (BBC) 887 n.
- Radio Brighton (BBC) 617, 643
- Radio Bristol (BBC) 887 n.
- Radio Caroline 458, 461, 502–3, 506, 507, 511–12, 513 n., 515, 574, 576
- Radio City 512, 513, 567
- Radio Clyde 887
- Radio Corporation of America (RCA) 286
- Radio Derby (BBC) 887 n.
- radio drama 398
- Radio Durham (BBC) 643, 645
- Radio England/Britain Radio 512
- Radio Enterprises 712
- Radio Essex 513, 515
- Radio Free Europe 75, 685
- Radio Humberside (BBC) 887 n.
- Radio Invicta 512
- Radio King 512
- Radio Leeds (BBC) 643
- Radio Leicester (BBC) 634, 639–41, 645–6
- Radio Liberty 685
- Radio London (BBC) 464, 512, 574, 887
- Radio Luxembourg 32, 35, 36, 507, 574
- Radio Manx 513
- Radio Merseyside (BBC) 642, 643, 644, 645
- radio news and current affairs, reviewed by Policy Study Group 754–5
- Radio News Features 755
- Radio Newsreel* 48, 62, 166, 220, 322, 578, 755
- Radio Nottingham (BBC) 643
- Radio Oxford (BBC) 887 n.
- radio programmes (1955–60) 141, 220–6
- influence on television programmes 7
- radio receivers 684, 737
- Radio Scotland 512, 574

- Radio Scotland (BBC), formerly Radio Four 807–8
- Radio Sheffield (BBC) 622, 642–3
- Radio Solent (BBC) 887 n.
- Radio Stoke-on-Trent (BBC) 642, 643, 645, 876
- Radio Sutch 512
- Radio Syd 506
- Radio Teesside (BBC) 887 n.
- Radio Times* 59, 78, 317, 329, 420, 508, 514, 802, 897, 906, 992
- Radio Veronica, ship 296, 458, 505–6
- Radio Writers' Association 792
- Radiophonic Workshop, BBC 420–1, 830, 925, 942
- radios, *see* radio receivers
- Radiovision 482, 826
- Rae, John 730
- Raikes, Raymond 830
- Rainbow City* 592
- Rainger, Peter 856
- Raison, (Sir) Timothy 550
- Ralphs, (Sir) Lincoln 460 n.
- Rank Organisation 187
- Rantzen, Esther 964–6
- Raphael, Frederick 931
- Rapp, Sir Thomas, Committee on External Services 707–8
- Ratcliffe, Hardie 545 n., 573, 575 n., 759 n., 761, 780 n., 782, 792
- ratings, *see* audiences
- Rattigan, (Sir) Terence 193
- Raven, Simon 945
- Rawlinson, Sir Peter (Lord Rawlinson) 53 n., 107, 108, 109, 112, 300, 538
- Ray, Ted 36
- Raybould, Sidney, Professor 52
- Read, Al 804
- receivers, *see* radio receivers; television receivers
- recorded programmes 833
- recording technology 832–9  
radio 507–8, 832–4  
video 834–9
- Redfern, Anthea 956
- Redgrave, Sir Michael 415
- Redgrave, Vanessa 447
- Redhead, Brian 355 n.
- Redhouse, Peter 224
- Redmond, (Sir) James 647, 731, 828, 831, 832  
on satellite broadcasting 847
- Reed, Owen 178–9, 346
- Rees, Merlyn (Lord Merlyn-Rees) 988
- Rees-Mogg, William (Lord Rees-Mogg) 790
- Reeves, Bishop Ambrose 447
- Reeves, Joseph, MP 468 n.
- refrigerators, advertised 6
- Regional Advisory Councils 654, 667, 668
- regional broadcasting 34, 621, 623  
costly 728
- regional councils, and *Broadcasting in the Seventies* 764
- regionalism 998–9  
in National Plan 664
- regions 649–69  
after 1970 806–8  
after Policy Study Group 758  
boundaries and transmission 657–8  
cost, radio 748–9  
culture 624–5  
finance 652, 653, 655, 656, 658, 661, 663  
and General Advisory Council 763  
gone, after (April 1970) 668  
network contribution 651  
new regions 668  
output 593  
radio, less in *Broadcasting in the Seventies* 769, 772  
savings needed, to fund local radio 756  
staff views 793  
and television 624
- regions and areas 621–2, 626, 663, 666
- regulators, BBC Governors as 314
- Reith, John (Lord Reith) 14, 147, 171, 299, 783  
and Charles Curran 797  
and Hugh Greene 316–18  
and Ian Jacob 319–20
- Reith Lectures 339, 928–9
- relay satellite 714
- relay stations 681–2  
improvement needed 708, 711
- religion 581–2  
and television 581–2, 583  
and TW3 361
- religious broadcasting 26–7, 45, 283
- Renwick, Sir Robert 300, 301
- repeated programmes, on television 953, 954
- Representation of the People Act (1949) 243, 291
- research:  
broadcasting 25–6, 996–7  
educational broadcasting 485
- Research Department, BBC Engineering 815, 925  
standards converter 856  
use of computer 823
- Restless Sphere, The* 144
- Reston, J. B. 147 n.

- Results Nationwide, The* (1970) 881  
 Reynolds, Stanley 529–30  
 Rhodesia 553–4, 694–5, 695–6  
 Rhys, Tom 382, 782, 789  
 Rhys Williams, Juliet, Lady 13 n.  
 Richard, Cliff 205, 209  
 Richards, Dr E. J. 763, 764  
 Richards, Keith, quoted 464  
 Richardson, Joanna 328, 329, 348  
 Richardson, Maurice 452–3  
 Richardson, Tony 190  
 Richmond, Dr A. J. 569  
 Ridley, Nicholas (Lord Ridley) 589  
 Right to Read Committee 934  
*Riverboat* 265  
 Riverside Studios, Hammersmith 31  
 RKO Film Library 187–8  
 Robbins, Edgar 379 n., 505 n., 766  
 Robbins Report (1963) 477, 478  
 Robens, Alfred (Lord Robens) 83, 536 n.  
 Roberts, Detective Chief Superintendent  
   Bill 427, 429  
 Roberts, Sir Frank 709  
 Roberts, Goronwy (Lord  
   Goronwy-Roberts) 690  
 Robertson, Fyfe 163, 184  
 Robertson, Max 248  
 Robinson, Eric 804  
 Robinson, John 50, 182 n., 484 n.  
 Robinson, John, Bishop of Woolwich  
   361, 362  
 Robinson, Kenneth, MP 53–4  
 Robson, Dame Flora 173, 789, 948  
 Rochdale, John Kemp, Viscount 57  
 Rochdale by-election (February 1958)  
   238–9  
 Rodgers, Sir John, MP 776  
 Rodgers, William (Lord Rodgers) 709 n.  
 Rolling Stones 209, 463, 464  
 Romania, end of jamming 685  
 Rose, David 430  
 Rosen, Martin 887 n.  
*Round Britain Quiz* 224, 687  
*Round Europe* 142  
 Rout, Eric 856  
*Roving Report* 70  
 Rowley, Betty 223  
 Rowley, J. H. 676 n.  
 Rowntree, Jean 49, 183, 467 n.  
 Royal Commission on Broadcasting,  
   proposed 796  
 Royal Family 916–17  
   and television 144, 145–7  
   and TW3 361–2  
*Royal Family* 861–2  
 Royal Society 466–7  
 royal wedding, on television 145  
 RTE, and *A Question of Ulster* 911  
 rugby football, on radio 221  
 Runcie, Robert (Lord Runcie),  
   Archbishop 891 n.  
 Rushton, William 357, 360, 370, 372 n.  
 Ruskin, John, quoted 614  
 Russell, Audrey 362  
 Russell, Bertrand (Earl Russell) 56, 293,  
   789  
 Russell, Derek 49  
 Russell, Ken 168, 801, 889  
 Russell Report, on adult education 934  
 Russian Section, External Services 686–7,  
   689  
 Russian Service 130  
 Rutherford, Norman 190  
  
 Sahl, Mort 359  
 Sainsbury, Alan, Lord Sainsbury 445  
 St Johnston, Colonel Eric 426, 427–8, 429  
 Salem, Major Salah 87, 88  
 Salisbury, Robert Gascoyne-Cecil,  
   Marquess of 166  
 Salter, Lionel 227  
 Salter, William (*New Statesman*) 44–5  
 Saltire Society 674  
 Sampson, Anthony 6, 375–6, 870 n., 879  
 Sandford, Jeremy 522, 957  
 Sapiets, Janis 687  
 Sapper, Alan 782, 993  
 Sargent, Sir Malcolm 230 n., 399  
 satellite television 714–16, 827, 830,  
   843–7, 925  
 satellites 814, 846  
 satire 350–1, 353–4, 376  
   see also *That Was the Week That Was*  
*Saturday Club* 508, 509, 574  
*Saturday Concert, The* 804  
*Saturday Night Theatre* 190–1, 222, 398  
 Savile, (Sir) Jimmy 508, 576, 868 n.  
 Savory, Gerald 959  
 Scaffold, The 895, 897  
 scheduling 735, 740, 954–5  
 Schlesinger, John 168, 428–9  
 School Broadcasting Council for the UK  
   182, 468, 474, 482, 932, 933  
 School Broadcasting Department  
   (Sound) 482  
 School Broadcasting Television  
   Department 479  
 schools broadcasting 474, 482, 571, 740  
   and *Broadcasting in the Seventies* 768  
   finance 758, 932–3  
   in the 1970s 932, 933–4, 935–6  
   Radio Four 928  
   schools radio 467–8  
   on VHF only 933

- see also educational broadcasting  
 Schools Council 469 n.  
 schools television:  
   BBC 180-3, 664  
   ITV 26, 180-1, 468  
   and Pilkington 288  
 Schumann, Maurice 926  
 Schwarz, Rudolf 230, 400  
 Science Consultative Group 467  
 science fiction, and BBC 421  
   see also *Dr Who*  
 science programmes 466-7  
*Science on Saturday* 182  
*Science Survey* 49  
 Scotland 353, 625, 670, 677, 807  
   BBC National Region 34, 652, 674  
*Scotsman* 766 n.  
 Scott, George 224  
 Scott, Peter Graham 944  
 Scott, Peter Hardiman 105, 224, 302,  
   506, 602, 790 n., 869  
 Scott, Robin 734, 800  
   Controller, BBC-2 587, 927-8, 937  
   Controller, Developments, Television  
   966  
   Head, Radio One 571-3, 574, 575,  
   576-7  
 Scottish Nationalist Party 554, 674, 871  
 Scottish Television 675, 677  
 script-writers 196  
 Scupham, John 45, 46, 49, 459, 468-9,  
   471-2, 473, 478, 479 n., 481, 484  
   memorandum 'Educational  
   Broadcasting, the Next Steps' 486-90  
   and Open University 493, 495, 496, 569  
   paper 'The Future of Educational  
   Broadcasting' 480  
 Scuse, Denis 525 n., 712  
 Sear, Richard (*Daily Mirror*) 529 n.  
*Search for the Nile, The* 955  
 SECAM colour system 853, 854, 855  
 Secombe, (Sir) Harry 917  
 second channel (BBC TV) 22, 151,  
   259-60, 286, 292, 305  
   recommended by Pilkington 295  
   and regions 656, 663  
   see also BBC-2  
*Second Sex, The* 414  
 Select Committee on Nationalized  
   Industries, report on ITA 885  
 Sellers, Peter 527  
 Selznick Corporation 187  
 Sendall, Bernard 475  
 sensationalism, BBC accused of 365  
 serials, drama 191  
 'serious' programmes, and Pilkington  
   280-1  
 Serpell, Christopher 684 n.  
 Seton-Watson, Mary 687  
 76 Group 795-6, 888-9  
*77 Sunset Strip* 265  
 Shaffer, Peter 357  
 Shakespeare, William 144, 520-1  
 Shanks, Michael 550  
 Sharp, Evelyn (Baroness Sharp) 600  
 Sharq-al-Adna 127  
 Shaw, Colin 153, 867 n., 910 n., 976  
 Shaw, (Sir) Roy 333 n., 890, 914  
 Shawcross, Hartley, Lord Shawcross,  
   Royal Commission on the press 291  
 Shawe-Taylor, Desmond 957  
 Shelley, Norman 346  
 Shelter, foundation 522-3  
 Shephard, Peter 785  
 Sherrin, Ned 158 n., 309, 360  
   *That Was the Week That Was* 355, 356,  
   363, 368, 369, 370, 375  
 Shields, J. S. 271, 630  
 Shields, John 764, 766  
 Shields, Michael 556  
 Shinwell, Emmanuel (Lord Shinwell) 246  
 Shirley, Rodney 725, 728  
 Shonfield, (Sir) Andrew 70, 451, 709,  
   928-9  
 Short, Edward (Lord Glenamara) 458,  
   549 n., 563, 861  
   and advertising 563, 564  
   and BBC finance 724, 725-6  
   and educational broadcasting 993 n.  
   General Election (February 1974) 985  
   and local broadcasting 619, 639, 640  
   and Lord Hill's appointment 595, 599,  
   604  
   and pirate radio 565-6, 573  
   Postmaster-General 558-9, 562  
   Secretary of State for Education 570  
   view of BBC 598  
 Shrapnel, Norman, on 1970s 865  
 Shubik, Irene *Play for Today* 397  
 Shulman, Milton (*Evening Standard*)  
   407 n., 412, 452, 771 n., 772, 958, 959  
 Siberry, J. M. W., Working Party 1000  
 Sidey, Phil 643-4  
 Sieveking, Lance 830  
*Silent Song* 582 n.  
 Sillitoe, Alan 189  
 Silvers, Phil 197  
 Silvey, Robert 7, 32, 39 n., 70, 360 n.  
 Simonon, Georges 192  
 Simmons, Professor Jack 642  
 Simon, John, Lord Simon of  
   Wythenshawe 148, 972  
 'Simple, Peter', quoted 455  
 Simpson, Alan 210, 211, 215, 434-5



- Simpson, N. F. 191  
 Sims, Monica 287, 347  
 Singer, Aubrey 152, 287–8, 350, 390,  
 467, 714, 966–7, 968–9  
 Single Side-Band (SSB) system of  
 transmission 843  
 Singleton, Valerie 179–80  
 Sinn Fein, outlawed 249  
 'sitcoms' 210  
*Six-Five Special* 22, 198–9, 200, 201–6, 509  
*Six Wives of Henry VIII, The* 713, 862,  
 937–8, 944  
 Skempton, Alan 223  
 Skinner, Dennis, MP 889  
 Skues, Keith 574  
*Sky at Night, The* 169  
 Sladen, Elisabeth 425 n.  
 Sloan, Tom 201 n., 203, 204, 390, 407,  
 434, 436, 437  
 Sloman, Albert 339 n.  
 Smedley, Major Oliver 567  
 Smith, A. Berkeley 19 n.  
 Smith, Anthony 442, 550, 889, 967 n.  
*Yesterday's Men* 893, 894  
 Smith, Brian 666  
 Smith, Charles 600 n.  
 Smith, Frank 947  
 Smith, Gordon 188 n., 336 n., 954 n.  
 Smith, Ian 553  
 Smith, (Dame) Maggie 355 n.  
 Smith, R. D. 793 n.  
 Smith-Rose, R. L. 271  
 Smithers, S. W. 156, 217  
 Snagge, John 63 n., 212, 346  
 Snow, C. P. (Lord Snow) 466, 813  
 Snowman, Daniel 942, 943  
 'social contract' 990, 991  
 social groups, consumers of radio 46  
 social trends, late 1950s 29–30  
*Social Trends* 29 n.  
 Society of Authors 792  
 Society of Film and Television Arts 880,  
 917  
 Society of Film and Television Teachers  
 183  
*Softly, Softly* 526  
 Solti, (Sir) Georg 399  
 Somerville, Mary 70 n.  
*Songs of Praise* 334  
 'Sooty' 180  
 sound broadcasting:  
 and Pilkington 284–6, 305  
*see also* radio  
 Sound Broadcasting Act (1972) 887  
 Sound Broadcasting Society (Third  
 Programme Defence Society) 57, 60  
 Sound Co-ordinating Committee 35  
*Sounds of the Seventies* 804  
 South African Service 694  
 South American Service 708  
 South European Service 692  
 South Regional Council 762  
 South-West, local broadcasting 627  
 Soviet Union:  
 broadcasting to 123, 684  
 external broadcasting from 679, 680,  
 685  
 and Hungary 105  
 jamming 136, 684–5, 691, 1000  
 and Poland 105  
 purchase of *The Forsythe Saga* 713  
 and Suez 93  
 television colour system 854  
 visit from BBC to 687–8  
 withdrawal from *Our World* 715  
 space, return from, televised 142  
 Spain, Nancy 208  
*Spectator* 13, 54, 91, 263–4, 385, 891  
 speech:  
 Radio Three 757, 758  
 Radio Four 758, 768  
 Speight, Johnny 191, 527–8, 612 n.,  
 948  
 Spicer, Joanna 388, 390, 393, 418–19,  
 821, 835 n.  
 'splintered modern society' 266–7  
*Sport on 2* 926  
 sport 27–8  
 audiences 952–3  
 on radio 58, 220–1, 579, 580, 741  
 rivalry between BBC and ITV 18–19,  
 217  
 television 143, 199, 216–20, 952  
*Sports Parade* 221  
 Sports Personality of the Year 216  
*Sports Report* (radio) 174, 221, 580  
*Sports Review* (radio) 174  
*Sportsview* 143, 195, 217, 218, 219  
*Spotlight* 560  
 'Sprod', cartoon 849  
 Sputnik 1 843  
 Staff Redeployment Committee 806  
 Stallybrass, Anne 937  
 standards, *see* taste, improvement of  
 standards converter, developed by BBC  
 855–7  
 Standing, Michael 39, 59, 735  
 Standing Conference on Broadcasting  
 889–90  
 Stanley, C. O., 631 n.  
*Star Trek* 417  
*Start the Week* 868  
 Stead, Robert 658, 660, 662  
 Stedford, I. A. R. 30 n.

- Steele, Tommy 201
- Stephens, Doreen 333 n., 346–7, 803 n.
- Stephens, Robert 128
- Stephenson, Donald 121, 683, 698, 716
- Steptoe and Son* 215, 434–6, 447, 527
- stereo broadcasting 829–30, 927
- Stevas, Norman St John (Lord St John of Fawsley) 898
- Stevens, Jocelyn 338, 512
- Stevenson, Adlai 106
- Stewart, Andrew 33–4, 45, 67, 366, 671, 675, 703
- Stewart, Ed 463–4, 804
- Stewart, Michael (Lord Stewart of Fulham) 442, 487, 879–80
- Stobart, J. C. 491 n.
- Stockholm, European Regional  
Convention on broadcasting bands  
639 n., 841
- Stocks, Mary (Lady Stocks) 51, 115, 159
- Stonehouse, John, Postmaster-General  
775, 780, 781, 785, 786, 787, 788, 800  
and licence fee 648, 776–8  
and local broadcasting 646–7  
and technical aspects 828, 842–3
- Stoppard, Tom 216, 927
- Strang, William, Lord Strang 149, 363
- Stravinsky, Igor 233, 580
- Streat, Sir Reginald 659, 663
- strikes (1958) 239
- Stubbs, Una 527
- studio audiences 202, 350
- Studio M 162
- studios, regional 653
- study session, incorporated in Radio  
Three 579
- STV 12
- subscription television 291, 296, 305
- Suez crisis 73–137  
Anglo-French operation 93, 95, 127,  
128  
cease-fire 102  
London Conference 84–5
- Sullivan, Ed, show 504
- Sun* 599, 774, 788, 910, 913
- Sunday Dispatch* 14
- Sunday Mirror* 857
- Sunday Night at the London Palladium* 143,  
265
- Sunday Observance, Scotland 670
- Sunday Telegraph* 184, 298, 437, 773
- Sunday Times* 63, 272, 301–2, 393, 435,  
464, 576, 775  
coloured supplements 184, 352 n.
- Sussex, University of 473, 474, 496 n.
- Sutton, Shaun 179, 520, 958 n.
- Swallow, Norman 168, 958
- Swann, Sir Michael (Lord Swann) 380,  
467, 801, 865, 932, 994, 998, 1003  
and Annan Committee 996–7  
and BBC finance 977, 990  
Chairman of Governors 972–7  
and 1973 crisis 980–1
- Sweden, and World Service 701
- swing indicator (swingometer), elections  
247, 252
- 'Swinging London' 353
- Swinton, Philip Cunliffe-Lister, Lord  
151
- Switzerland, tape recorders 833
- Sykes, Eric 208, 882
- Syncom II satellite 845
- Syrop, Konrad 704
- Take Your Pick* 265
- Talbot, Godfrey 917
- Tale of Two Cities, A* 525
- Talkback* 948
- Talking About Music* 401
- Talking of Books* 49
- Talks Department 64
- Talks Division 322, 341
- TAM (Television Audience Measurement)  
ratings 21, 264–5
- Tanganyika 706
- Tape Reclamation Service 833–4
- tape recorders 482, 833–4
- taste, improvement of 40, 41, 58, 266,  
275–6
- Tate, Phyllis 229
- Taverne, Dick, MP 985
- Tavistock Institute 380
- Taylor, A. J. P. 9, 938
- Taylor, Desmond 898, 899 n., 908
- Taylor, Don 191, 193, 194, 519
- Taylor, Gordon Rattray 467
- Taylor, Norman 451
- Taylor, Philip 903 n.
- Taylor, Stan 983
- Taylor, Stephen, Lord Taylor 491 n.
- teaching machines 826
- Tebrau relay station 681
- technical problems, BBC-2 404–6
- technology 839, 924–5, 831–2  
changing in 1970s 808, 813–63
- teleprompters 830
- telerecording 834, 837  
*see also* Ampex machines
- 'televangelism' 582
- television:  
BBC expenditure 30  
BBC staff changes 15, 385, 389–91  
and cinema's decline 185  
coverage, BBC/ITV 30

- television: (*cont.*)  
 criticized 147  
 drama training 194  
 an educational force 467, 471–2, 485  
 effects of 23, 25–6, 175–6, 213, 276–7  
 and elections 237–9  
 extension of channels 925; *see also*  
   BBC-2; fourth channel  
 and films 185–7  
 hours regulated 158–60, 959–60  
 line standards 285, 817, 839, 850, 853  
 and Pilkington Committee 285–9  
 and politics 241–55  
 regional aspects 651–2  
 reorganization (1963) 389  
 transcription service 133, 135  
 a world medium (1964) 453  
 Television Act (1954) 243, 259, 265  
 Television Act (1963) 478  
 Television Adult Education Committee 480  
 Television Advisory Committee 817, 839, 841  
   and colour 850–1, 852, 853  
*Television Annual for 1958*, 174  
*Television Annual for 1959*, 152  
 Television Centre 31, 236, 857  
 Television Computer Steering Group 824  
 television drama 395–7  
 Television Enterprises 712  
 Television Extension Committee (for BBC-2) 387, 404, 407  
 Television House (ITN) 65  
 television journalists 152  
*Television Mail* 892  
 Television Management Information Service (TMIS) 824–5  
 television news 62–3, 152–5, 156  
   links with radio news 755  
 television personalities 7 n.  
 Television Programme Contractors' Association (later ITCA) 4  
 television programmes 141 ff.  
   influence of radio programmes on 7  
 television receivers 5, 23, 181, 737  
   and BBC-2 405, 412–13  
   colour 848, 852, 857, 861, 977  
   ownership figures 438, 593  
 Television Script Department 194  
   and *TW3* 363  
 Television Talks Department 69, 288  
 Television Theatre, BBC 196  
*Television Today* 269  
 Television Toppers 198  
 television transmitting stations 185, 842  
 Television Unit for General Election 246  
 Telstar I 714, 845  
*Ten o'Clock* (radio) 223–4, 326, 330, 745  
 10 o'clock news 322, 330  
*Ten To Eight* 582  
 tennis:  
   first in colour television 857  
   on radio 221  
 Tennyson, Hallam 748 n.  
 Terraine, John 415, 939  
 Tesler, Brian 175, 374 n.  
 test matches (cricket) 413, 580  
 Thai Service, cuts 135, 679  
 Thames Television 601  
*That Was the Week That Was (TW3)* 163, 350–3, 355–7, 375, 688  
   audience 363–4  
   review 366–7  
   taken off by Greene 372  
 Thatcher, Margaret (Baroness Thatcher) 589, 933, 936  
*That's Life* 964–5  
 Theile, Professor R. 854  
 Third Channel (television) 259, 266, 292  
 'Third Network', radio 49  
   *see also* Network Three  
 Third Programme 33, 38–9, 41, 42, 44, 48–9, 61, 757  
   defended 52–3, 792  
   incorporated in Radio Three 579  
 Third Programme Defence Society 52–3, 56, 57  
 Thirkell, Lance 512  
*Thirties, The* 145, 146  
*This is the BBC* 234–7, 284, 851, 926  
*This Is Your Life* 139, 172–5, 344  
*This Nation Tomorrow* 332  
*This Nation Tomorrow: Sex and the Family* 368  
*This Week* (ITV) 69, 442  
*This Week's Composer* 927  
 Thomas, Dylan 193, 348, 926  
 Thomas, Howard 66, 139, 175, 186, 187, 601  
 Thomas, James (*Daily Express*) 529 n.  
 Thomas, Sir Leslie, MP 519  
 Thomas, Nancy 169, 484  
 Thompson, E. R. 222  
 Thompson, J. W. 442, 450  
 Thompson, John 224, 888  
 Thompson, Kenneth, MP 53, 55  
 Thomson, Roy (Lord Thomson) 11–12  
 Thorndike, (Dame) Sybil 374  
 Thorne, C. G. 467 n.  
 Thorne, Christopher 746 n.  
 Thorneycroft, Peter (Lord Thorneycroft) 119 n., 239, 442 n., 532 n.  
 Thornton, J. C. 70 n.  
 Thorpe, Jeremy 561, 869 n., 874, 876, 879

- and General Election (February 1974)  
981, 986, 988
- Thursday Play* 191
- Tiarks, Henrietta (Marchioness of Tavistock) 208
- Tidmarsh, John 104
- Till Death Us Do Part* 527-9, 947-8
- Tiller, Terence 792
- Time-Life co-production with BBC 938-9
- Times, The* 29, 230, 396, 435, 497,  
609-10, 790, 792, 798, 861, 918-19,  
996
- on *Broadcasting in the Seventies* 773,  
774, 775
- letter from King's College Cambridge  
788-9
- 'On the Air' supplement 919-21
- on Pilkington Report 257
- on political broadcasting 238, 251, 551
- and *The Question of Ulster* 913
- radio changes 54, 56, 57, 61
- radio news changes 327-8
- and Suez 83, 109
- and *Yesterday's Men* 896
- Times Educational Supplement* 235, 267,  
498-9
- Timpson, John 928
- Tinniswood, Maurice 898
- Tippett, (Sir) Michael 57, 229, 233, 293,  
398, 765
- Tisdall, John 894, 895
- Tit-bits* 420
- Titchener, Lanham 126, 129
- Today* 42, 222-3, 755, 928
- Today in Parliament* 244, 588, 929
- Today's Sport* 218
- Todd, D. E. 831 n.
- Toffler, Alvin 813
- Tolstoy, Count Leo, *War and Peace* 717,  
955
- Tom and Jerry* 931
- Tomalin, Nicholas 586
- Tonight* 141, 161-4, 199, 222, 272, 350,  
411, 465, 844
- and General Elections 248, 440
- and TW3 359
- Took, Barry 224 n.
- Tookey, Christopher (*Sunday Telegraph*)  
964
- Toomey, Ralph 494, 568
- Top of the Pops* 508
- 'Top Twenty' 508
- Topic for Tonight* 47, 70
- Topical Tapes Service 693
- topicality, avoidance in BBC 64
- TOPICS 816
- Torch, Sidney 765
- Towers, Harry Alan 8
- Townson, Michael 992
- Toynbee, Arnold 938
- Toytown* 342
- Trace, Christopher 178, 179
- trade unions and BBC 381-2, 545, 722,  
759-60, 782
- Trades Union Congress 292, 773
- training of staff 289, 383-4
- Trans Europe Television 572
- Transcription Service:  
External Services 693, 713, 1001  
television 133, 135
- Transcription Unit, Radio 833
- transistor radios 296, 507, 684, 819
- transistors 818-20
- transmitters, external broadcasting 681-2
- transmitters, television 185, 842
- for BBC-2 404
- ITV 20
- shared BBC/ITV 997
- siting 657
- Travers, Ronald 526, 938 n.
- Treasury, and BBC finance 90, 91, 119
- Trenaman, Joseph 49, 71 n., 183
- Trench, Peter 790
- Trend, Sir Burke (Lord Trend) 533
- Trethowan, (Sir) Ian 81, 722, 723, 793,  
796, 798, 800, 802, 829, 941-2, 967,  
980
- and Chataway 886, 887
- General Election (1964) 442, 451
- General Election (1966) 556
- General Election (1970) 883
- and news 768
- and radio 638, 719, 728, 756
- Tribune* 161
- Trilling, Lionel 56
- Trinder, Tommy 173 n.
- Trollope, Anthony, *The Pallisers* 945-6
- Troughton, Patrick 417, 937
- Trowell, Brian 792
- Tucker, Geoffrey 876
- Tucker, Rex 179
- Tudsbury, M. T. 31
- Tuesday Term* 489
- Tunstall, Jeremy 460, 567
- Tuohy, Denis 586
- Turkey 689
- Turnell, G. M. 780
- Turner, Ann 614
- Turner, David 334
- Turner, Russell 205, 207
- Tusa, John 383
- Tutin, Dorothy 937
- 24 Hours* 552, 556, 755, 790, 897, 928
- Yesterday's Men* 893, 894

- 24 Hours Campaign Report* (1970) 875  
*Twenty Questions* 805  
*Two Ronnies, The* 949  
*Two-Way Family Favourites* 225, 226  
 Tyerman, Donald 141  
 Tynan, Ken 192, 354, 529–30, 889, 948  
 Tyrer, Allan 614
- UHF 486, 657, 841, 853  
 Ulster Television 475, 677  
 Ulster Unionist Party 249  
 unions, *see* trade unions  
 United Nations 106  
   and Suez 83–4, 89, 93, 96, 101, 102, 126  
 United States of America 81, 106  
   and BBC 324–5  
   BBC North American Service cut 682–3  
   colour television 848, 855  
   and General Election 1964 453  
   imported programmes from 143  
   light entertainment 197  
   news 69  
   Presidential Elections, televised 847  
   programmes exported to 144  
   and Suez 77, 83, 102, 130  
   technical developments, sports  
     television 218  
   view of British television competition  
     20  
*University Challenge* 457  
 university education, and television 475,  
 477–8  
   *see also* Open University  
 University Grants Committee 469–70,  
 474  
 'University of the Air' 460, 476, 488,  
 490–1, 633–4  
   *see also* Open University  
 Uplands, training conferences 383–4  
 uplift, *see* taste  
 USSR, *see* Soviet Union  
 Ustinov, (Sir) Peter 926
- valves, outmoded by transistors 819  
 van Straubenzee, (Sir) William, MP  
 936 n.
- Variety 47  
 Vaughan Williams, Sir Ralph 57, 234  
*VE Day Plus 20* 714  
 Venables, Sir Peter 501, 569  
 VERA (Vision Electronic Recording  
 Apparatus) 835–6, 837  
 Vernon, Professor Philip E. 71 n.
- VHF 752, 817, 839–43  
   field trials 841  
   finance 734–5  
   and local broadcasting 285, 620, 626,  
     627, 632, 647  
   planning 840–1  
   possible for education channel 740,  
     741, 758, 768, 843  
   problems 840, 843  
   radio on 565, 570  
   and Radio Three 760  
   schools broadcasting 933  
   shortage of receivers 644–5, 842  
   Wrotham, first station 841  
   'Vicky', cartoons 245, 492, 505  
   Video Arts (company) 391 n., 795 n.  
   video-cassettes 926  
   video games 825  
   video-recorders, *see* telerecording; video-  
     tape recorders  
   Videotape Library 839  
   videotape recorders (VTR) 834, 835  
     *see also* Ampex  
   videotape recording area, Television  
     Centre 837  
   Videotape Recording Unit 839  
   videotext 814–15  
   Vietnam War, and television 453, 536  
   Vietnamese Service, BBC 681  
   Viewers' and Listeners' Association 292,  
     299  
   *See also* Whitehouse, Mrs Mary  
   Viewfinder 65  
   Viewpoint 582  
   violence on television 335, 423, 535, 801  
   visual aids 474, 489  
   Voice of America 75, 133, 679–80, 685  
   Voice of Britain (Cyprus) 127, 695  
   Vosper, Dennis 683  
   vulgarity in programmes, ITV 11
- Waggoner's Walk* 927  
 Wagner, Robert 944  
 Waite, David 643  
 Wakeman, Frederick 28  
 Walden, Brian, MP 795  
 Waldman, Ronald 24, 139, 188–9, 194–5,  
 195–6, 713, 837
- Wales 678  
   BBC National Region 34, 625, 652, 672,  
     673, 674  
   radio 808, 841  
   television 676, 807  
   *see also* Plaid Cymru  
   Wales, Charles, Prince of 678  
   Walford, R. G. 509  
   Walker, F. D. 104  
   Walker, Patrick Gordon (Lord  
     Gordon-Walker) 109, 240, 452, 516  
   Wallace, Philip Hope 225

- Waller, Professor Ross 633 n.  
*War Game, The* 418, 531–6  
 Warbey, William, MP 468 n.  
 Ward, Edward 111  
 Ward, Miranda 575  
 Waring, Eddie 221, 931  
 Warner, Jack 430, 526 n., 527  
 Warr, Eric 233  
 Warrack, John 957 n.  
 Warsaw Radio 135  
 washing machines, advertised 6  
*Watch with Mother* 176, 178  
 Waterfield, Gordon 80 n., 81  
 Waterhouse, Keith 357  
 Watkins, Arthur 363  
 Watkins, Gordon 184, 415  
 Watkins, Peter, *The War Game* 418, 531–6  
 Watrous, Eliot 694, 704  
 Watson, Gary 930  
 Watson, Neville 687  
 Watson, Paul 961, 963  
 Watt, Harry 18 n.  
 Watts, Janet 204 n.  
 Waugh, Evelyn 170 n., 525 n.  
 wavelengths 734, 735–6, 752, 758  
 Waverley, John Anderson, Viscount 51  
 weather forecasts, television 158  
 Webster, David 883  
 Wedell, E. G. 4, 596  
*Wednesday Play, The* 396, 519–25  
*Week-ending* 805  
 Weigall, D. B. 831 n., 847  
 Weiss, Peter 935  
 Welland, Colin 433  
 Wellington, (Sir) Lindsay 35, 36–8, 39, 387, 627  
     and finance 44 n., 51  
     post-Marriott changes in radio 50–1, 58, 59  
     and music 233, 399  
     and regions 654, 658, 659  
 Welsh Home Service 841  
 Welsh language 673, 678, 999–1000  
 Welsh Nationalist Party, *see* Plaid Cymru  
*Welsh Sports Parade* 676–7  
 Weltman, Joseph 475  
 Wenham, Brian 969  
 Wenvoe transmitter 676  
 Wesker, Arnold 889  
 West, P. E. F. A. 925  
 West Indians, need for programmes 590–1, 592  
 West Region 623, 625, 652, 661 n., 669  
 West Region Council 762  
*Western Daily Press* 113  
 Westmore, Michael 178  
 WGBH, Boston 713  
 Whale, John 557  
*What's My Line?* 7, 143, 172, 174  
*What's Your Pleasure* 60  
 Wheatcroft, Harry 299  
 Wheeler, David 166, 240  
 Wheldon, (Sir) Huw 390, 796, 882, 967–8  
     and *The British Empire* 938  
     on *Civilisation* 612, 614  
     and crisis (1973) 980  
     and Curran 967, 969, 970  
     defends plays before Governors 523–5  
     and General Election (1970) 883  
     and India 940  
*Late Night Line Up* 586  
     and Light Entertainment 948  
     Managing Director, Television 727  
     and *Monitor* 167–8, 169  
     and *Our World* 716  
     and Pilkington 289  
     possible Director-General 727  
     and regional broadcasting 763, 807, 999  
*Royal Heritage* 614  
     and *The War Game* 534–5  
     and *Yesterday's Men* 895  
     retirement (1975) 970  
*Where?* 491 n.  
*Which?* 361 n.  
 Whicker, Alan 163, 535, 672 n., 857  
 Whitaker, Ayton 419  
 Whitaker, David 418  
 Whitby, Anthony 224, 719, 941  
     Controller, Radio Four 800, 802, 928  
 Whitby, Joy 347 n.  
 White, Carol 522  
 White City, *see* Television Centre  
*White Heather Club* 678  
 White Papers:  
     (Cmnd. 1770), 1962, 304, 619–20  
     (Cmnd. 1893), 1962, 304–7, 620  
     (Cmnd. 3169), 1966, 564, 620, 639  
     (Cmnd. 4636), 1971, 648–9, 886  
 Whitehead, Phillip, MP 383, 550, 787 n., 889, 993, 995  
 Whitehouse, Mrs Mary 309, 423, 526, 529, 533 n., 582, 948, 985  
     Campaign against New Morality 332–4  
     cartoon of 890  
     and *The Family* 962, 963  
     and Lord Hill 602, 606–7  
     and *A Question of Ulster* 912  
     supports Standing Conference on Broadcasting 890–1  
     and *Wednesday Play* 519, 525  
 Whitelaw, William (Viscount Whitelaw)  
     559 n., 649 n., 886, 903  
 Whitmore, Hugh 957  
 Whitley, Mrs Elizabeth 270

- Whitley, Oliver 315 n., 320 n., 383, 384,  
388, 602, 683, 791, 883  
and External Services 705, 711–12, 727  
and *The War Game* 533, 534
- Whitney, John 888  
'Whitworth', cartoon by 603  
*Who Me?* 432
- Wigg, George, MP (Lord Wigg) 110–11
- Wiggin, Maurice 63 n., 191, 301–2
- Wilcox, Desmond 965–6
- Wilde, Marty 201, 205
- Wiles, John 425 n.
- Wiles, Professor Peter 687
- Wilkins family of Reading 961–4
- Wilkinson, John 695, 704
- Williams, Andy 857
- Williams, Douglas 802 n.
- Williams, Francis (Lord Francis-Williams)  
165
- Williams, Professor Glamor 536 n.,  
603–4, 672, 764–5
- Williams, Kenneth 357, 929
- Williams, Leila 178
- Williams, Marcia (Lady Falkender) 452,  
497 n., 556–7, 595
- Williams, R. C. G. 491 n.
- Williams, Raymond 461 n., 944, 950
- Williams, Shirley (Baroness Williams)  
445–6, 993 n.
- Williams, Tennessee 957
- Willis, Ted (Lord Willis) 190, 426, 430,  
445, 527
- Wills, John Spencer 27, 300
- Wilson, (Sir) Angus 362
- Wilson, Dennis Main 204, 210, 527
- Wilson, Donald 191, 419–20, 422, 525
- Wilson, (Sir) Duncan 126, 127, 128
- Wilson, Harold (Lord Wilson of  
Rievaulx) 254, 370, 439, 530, 550  
and advertising on BBC 542, 543, 544  
appointment of Hill as Chairman of  
Governors 595–6, 599–600  
and BBC 446–7, 447–8, 542, 547–9,  
553, 557, 559–61, 596, 690, 803, 976  
and *The Beatles* 463, 504  
and Curran 611  
General Election (1964) 442, 446–7,  
449, 451, 452  
General Election (1966) 556–7  
General Election (1970) 868–9, 874,  
877, 879  
General Election (February 1974) 988  
General Election (October 1974) 992,  
993  
Government problems (1966) 558–9  
and Greene 548, 559–61, 602–3, 609  
and Hill 610–11  
and licence fee 778  
and local radio 647  
and political broadcasting 548, 555, 560  
and Swann 976  
and television 440, 546–7, 551  
'University of the Air' (OU) 476, 491,  
493, 497  
and *Yesterday's Men* 892, 893, 894–5,  
899–900
- Wilson, Noble 450
- Wiltshire, Professor Harold 492–3, 569
- Wimbledon tennis, first in colour 857
- Winstanley, Michael, MP (Lord  
Winstanley) 773, 776, 786
- Winster, Reginald, Lord 148–9
- Winter, Tom 156
- Winters, Mike and Bernie 199
- Wireless Telegraphy Act (1949) 503
- Wisdom, Norman 930
- WNET 961
- Wodehouse, P. G. 331
- Wogan, Terry 575, 926 n.
- Wolstenholme, Kenneth 219 n., 580
- Woman's Hour* 755, 877, 927
- Wombles, The* 959 n.
- women newscasters 65
- Women's Programmes (television  
department) 341, 346
- Wood, Bill 815
- Wood, Duncan 204, 211, 212, 213, 215,  
435, 951
- Wood Green Empire 195
- Woodcock, George 451
- Woodentops, The* 176
- Woodfall (film company) 190
- Woodland, Geoffrey 940
- Woodward, G. W. O. 937
- Woolton, Frederick Marquis, Lord 151
- Wootton, Barbara (Lady Wootton) 13 n.,  
731 n.
- Workers' Educational Association 183,  
403 n., 475 n., 493 n.
- Working Party on Electronic Computers  
822
- Working Party on the English Regions  
(television) 666
- Working Party on Sound Broadcasting  
(1956–7) 38, 39–48, 62
- working week, cut 980, 988
- World at One, The* 578, 686, 801, 803,  
805, 928, 984
- World Cup football 580–1, 593, 838,  
875
- World of Sport* 174, 220
- World Service, BBC 692, 697–717  
and education 706  
finance 708, 709, 710



- World Service Listener Panel 701  
*World This Week, The* 62, 70  
*World This Weekend, The* 578, 686, 894  
*World Tonight, The* 803  
 Worsley, T. C. 520 n., 526, 528 n., 954, 957 n.  
 Worth, Harry 215, 436, 659  
 Wright, Billy 268–9  
 Wright, Kenneth 227  
 Writers' Guild 792  
 Wrotham, VHF station 841, 842  
 Wyatt, Woodrow, MP (Lord Wyatt) 106, 107, 111, 112, 165, 250, 252  
 Wynn, R. T. B. 687  
 Wyton, Stuart 988 n.
- Yarwood, Mike 804  
 Yates, Ivor 610  
 Yates, Victor, MP 530–1
- Yesterday in Parliament* 588, 929  
*Yesterday's Men* 892–9  
*Yorkshire Evening News* 360  
*Yorkshire Post* 632, 633, 650  
 Yorkshire Television 596  
*You and Yours* 929  
 Young, (Sir) Brian 971  
 Young, Jimmy 575, 917, 926 n., 982, 987  
 Young, Michael 472, 476, 477, 487, 491  
 Younger, George (Lord Younger) 776  
 Younger, Kenneth, MP 51, 52  
*Your Concert Choice* 804  
 Yugoslavia 717, 1001
- Z Cars* 191, 416, 426–34, 525–6, 653, 835, 947  
 end of 526  
 and 'faction' 430