

**Sir Hugh
Greene**

**THE
THIRD
FLOOR
FRONT**

**A View of
Broadcasting
in the Sixties**

As Director-General of the BBC during the eventful decade of the Sixties Sir Hugh Greene carried a burden of responsibility as great as most Ministers. The increasing pervasion of our lives by radio and television raises a host of delicate and crucial problems; to confront these problems, to define them and to make decisions about them was Sir Hugh's constant task. In this volume he presents, with a personal commentary, a number of his lectures, speeches and broadcasts which span a period of thirty years. He discusses the effective use of radio for propaganda in both hot and cold wars, the distinction between liberty and licence in broadcasting and the dangers of commercially dominated television; he describes the structure and finances of the BBC and its constitutional position and he recalls some of the revolutionary changes which he inaugurated in the Sixties – such as the dropping of the sacrosanct nine o'clock news and the launching of the New Satire.

Sir Hugh's views are never narrow and often stimulating. They will be of the greatest interest to all who are concerned with our continually developing traditions of free speech.

After a career in the Thirties as Foreign Correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph* in many European countries, Hugh Greene joined the BBC as Head of the German Service in 1940, a post which he occupied until the end of the war. From 1946 to 1948 he was the Controller of Broadcasting in the British Zone of Germany; for eighteen months thereafter he was Head of the BBC East European Service; and from 1949 to 1950 he was Head of the Emergency Information Services in Malaya. In 1960 he became Director-General of the BBC. After his retirement this year he was made a Governor of the BBC and joined The Bodley Head as Chairman. His one previous book, written in collaboration with his brother, Graham Greene, was *The Spy's Bedside Book*.

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THE THIRD FLOOR FRONT

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in the Sixties*

Sir Hugh Greene



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The Spy's Bedside Book
(with Graham Greene)

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My thanks are also due to George Campey, the BBC Head of Publicity, and to my successive senior secretaries, Minerva Corteen, Jean Beal and Monica Long, who have somehow managed to keep me and my papers in order.

I am grateful to the *Observer* for permission to quote part of a talk between Kenneth Harris and myself which appeared in the *Observer* of March 22nd 1964.

H.C.G.

For Bob Lusty
in friendship and for Lighea
with love

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FOREWORD

It is, I suppose, rather presumptuous to present in this way a collection of fugitive lectures, speeches and broadcasts. My excuse, and I take it my publisher's excuse, is that the face of broadcasting in this country was fundamentally changed in the Sixties. Movement in the Fifties was much slower. ITV started in the autumn of 1955, but a good BBC man who was at home in the late Forties would still have been at home in the late Fifties. He might not be at home in the late Sixties. Broadcasting is no longer a profession for gentlemen: the players have taken over.

The BBC has a very curious position in this country. In no other country in the world is there so much public interest in broadcasting, not only in what is broadcast but in those who work in broadcasting. Here broadcasting is news and anybody who wants a headline has only to condemn from his—or her—pulpit or platform the disastrous effect of broadcasting on the nation's moral standards to achieve his—or her—ambition.

I was Director-General of the BBC for nine and a

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quarter years from the beginning of 1960—almost the whole decade—and for what has been good and for what has been bad, for what has been damaging and what has been beneficial to society in the changes which have taken place I must carry the main responsibility. I presided over the process from my command post—it does not seem unnatural to think in such warlike terms—on the third floor of Broadcasting House.

To be Director-General of the BBC is a very interesting experience. I doubt whether there is a more fascinating job in the world. One must be an editor with a feeling for news. One has to have a knowledge of the arts—though I must confess to complete ignorance of music. One must be an administrator. One must be the father of 23,000 people. One must know enough about engineering to be able to ask the right questions and not reveal one's basic ignorance too clearly. One must be able to walk with confidence in the political corridors of power not only in one's own country but throughout the world; for one is responsible not only for radio and television in one's own country, but for broadcasts in some forty different languages which are heard in every continent. And one is the inheritor of a tradition of truthfulness and reliability which leads people at home and in nearly every country of the world to turn to the BBC in times of trouble.

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I am gradually getting round to providing my excuse for this collection of things I have said in public over the years. If one sets out to change an institution like the BBC—and I was bold enough to do so—perhaps what one has said in the process may turn out, when put together, to be of some interest.

Of course a Director-General of the BBC is responsible to his Board of Governors. During my years in the job I worked with four Chairmen and one acting Chairman and with altogether twenty-six different Governors. Without their support I could have got nowhere. But inevitably it is, and always has been, the Director-General of the BBC who represents the BBC in the public eye and creates the atmosphere of his time. Governors come and Governors go: he goes on for what may sometimes seem to him like an eternity.

When I was made Director-General one newspaper said that some of my colleagues thought of me as a 'careerist with private dreams'. I doubt whether I was ever a careerist. Things have tended to come to me in my life: I have not pursued them. But private dreams I did have and some of these dreams have been realised. I wanted to open the windows and dissipate the ivory tower stuffiness which still clung to some parts of the BBC. I wanted to encourage enterprise and the taking of risks. I

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wanted to make the BBC a place where talent of all sorts, however unconventional, was recognised and nurtured, where talented people could work and, if they wished, take their talents elsewhere, sometimes coming back again to enrich the organisation from which they had started. I may have thought at the beginning that I should be dragging the BBC kicking and screaming into the Sixties. But I soon learnt that some urge, some encouragement, was what all the immense reserve of youthful talent in the BBC had been waiting for, and from that moment I was part of a rapidly flowing stream. Otherwise the job could never have been done. Most of the best ideas must come from below, not from above.

So here are some of the things I said during this for me and, I believe, for my colleagues exciting period. Some of the speeches, or extracts from speeches, included here are purely tactical. At certain points in time one had to try to gain certain advantages; one had to think of competition with the ITV; one had to put one's case across to a Committee of Enquiry or to the Government of the day. Other statements are more fundamental. As we go along I shall do my best to provide some sign-posts.

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In this section I include three pieces which ante-date the decade to which this book is mainly devoted.

The first of them is a reminder that I was a journalist before I joined the BBC. It describes—twenty years later but still, I hope, accurately—what I felt in Warsaw on September 1st 1939. As a matter of fact the first contact I ever had with broadcasting in my life came two days later on September 3rd when I spoke in English from Radio Warsaw on the evening of the day the British Government declared war on Germany. Everything by then was in a state of the utmost confusion, and it never occurred to me for a moment that anybody could possibly have heard the broadcast. Many years later I met somebody who had—in Denmark.

The second piece gathers together my thoughts on psychological warfare based mainly on my experiences as Head of the BBC German Service from October 1940 until the end of the war and as Head of the Emergency Information Services in Malaya from September 1950 until September 1951. I owe my year in Malaya to my war-time record, although

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in Malaya I was dealing with Chinese not Germans and with every form of propaganda except radio—or rather radio only to a very limited extent. In other words it was a typically English appointment. My NATO lecture has been read since by the representatives of Governments fighting other wars in other countries. Whether it has done them any good I do not know.

The third piece, although composed for a German audience, has, I hope, some general historical interest. It deals with a sector of the occupation of Germany after the war which, so far as I know, has not been described in any of the many books on the subject. I may be wrong, but I know of no other case in which a British official worked as if he was a German, responsible to Germans, once the necessary constitutional machinery had been created. Certainly in the broadcasting field there was nothing like it, and my American and French colleagues regarded me as eccentric and even subversive. What my Russian colleagues thought one had no means of knowing once the Berlin blockade started in June 1948. However that may be, a certain mark has been left on German broadcasting until this day.

My excuse for including these three pieces in this book is that without the experiences they describe I should probably never have got to the top in the

BBC or, if I had, I should have been a very different person and should have done a completely different job.

(i) Warsaw: September 1st 1939

At five o'clock on the morning of September 1st 1939, I was woken up from a deep sleep by the telephone ringing beside the bed in my flat in the Aleja Szucha in Warsaw. The call was from Katowice and I heard the voice of Clare Hollingworth, who was my string correspondent in the West Poland industrial area. 'It's begun,' she said. 'German aircraft are over the town and we're being bombed.'

I rang straight through to the house of a high official in the Polish Foreign Office. 'It's begun,' I said. 'The Germans are bombing Katowice.' 'Nonsense,' he said sleepily. 'Negotiations are still going on. It must be an air-raid practice.' He was just about to ring off when one after another, spreading inwards from the outskirts of the city, all the sirens in Warsaw began to shriek. 'So you were right,' he said.

I am not sure that it was much satisfaction at the time to have been probably the first journalist in Warsaw to know that the Second World War had

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begun and to have informed an incredulous Polish Government. I remember wondering what one did in an air raid. I got dressed quickly and went out on the street. Everywhere there were half-dressed people standing about watching the sky and listening to the distant thump of exploding bombs from the outskirts. No one seemed afraid or even indignant but everyone was—I think—a bit embarrassed and at a loss what to do next. No one thought of taking shelter.

And as I remember that early morning, nearly a quarter of a century ago, it was really an uneasy embarrassment which was still the main feeling at the back of my mind when from black specks swooping across the clear sky the first German bombs started to fall on the centre of Warsaw. One wasn't used to war in those days.

But that was nothing to the embarrassment which grew from hour to hour and day to day between September 1st and September 3rd and still there was no British declaration of war on Germany. At that time, and in that place, one was only too conscious of the possibility that the Chamberlain Government might let Poland down as it had let Czechoslovakia down. So when the news of the declaration of war finally came through at about mid-day on September 3rd and, like some other Englishmen, I was lifted shoulder-high and carried

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through the streets of Warsaw in the middle of a wildly cheering crowd, I had, I must admit, a certain feeling of personal relief that I was not being torn in pieces by the same crowd—which, I remember thinking, would have been really rather an unfair end for one who had always regarded the Chamberlain policy of appeasement of Nazi Germany as foolish and wicked.

*Radio broadcast,
September 1st 1959*

(ii) Psychological Warfare

Psychological warfare, political warfare, propaganda or whatever you like to call it, is something with which I have been closely concerned in conditions both of hot and cold war.

I shall omit the usual historical retrospect and pass over such interesting subjects for study as the use of trumpets by Joshua outside the walls of Jericho, the speeches with which Greek and Roman commanders used to encourage their own troops and depress the enemy before battle, the militant use of propaganda both by the Christian Churches and Islam and even the manifestos of Napoleon. I shall pass over the First World War as a separate subject since most of the problems which faced

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Crewe House, as the British propaganda organisation of that time was known, were repeated in a similar form during the Second World War.

My own connection with psychological warfare began in the autumn of 1940 when I joined the BBC to run its broadcasts to Germany—which I continued to do until 1946. Later, for eighteen months between 1949 and 1950, I was in charge of BBC broadcasts to Russia and Eastern Europe—a cold instead of a hot war. For a year between 1950 and 1951 I was given the job of building up a propaganda organisation against the Communists (mainly Chinese) in Malaya—a war which was quite hot enough though it was only called an emergency. Finally I had some, though a more remote, connection with BBC broadcasts to the Arab world until just before the Suez adventure.

So I shall begin with the problems one had to face in the autumn of 1940. It was not altogether an easy time, with the Germans everywhere victorious on land and bombs beginning to fall on London, at which to set oneself to the main task of psychological warfare—which I should define as the attempt to impose your own way of thinking, your own view of the situation, on the enemy's fighting forces and civil population and then, this having been achieved, lead them to behave in the way you desire.

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All the same the general objective was clear enough. It was our job to persuade the enemy that, however gloomy our immediate situation might be, we were confident of ultimate victory and that there were very good reasons, historical, psychological and material, for this confidence. This had to be regarded as a long-term job as it was clearly going to be a long war—if we survived the autumn and winter of 1940 to 1941.

There could not be much doubt, either, about the means to be used: to tell the truth within the limits of the information at our disposal and to tell it consistently and frankly. This involved a determination never to play down a disaster. It would, for instance, be tempting from time to time within the limits of one news bulletin to give more prominence to a minor success than to a major defeat. This was a temptation to be avoided.

To a German audience used to the most unscrupulous lies from its own press and radio we had to put ourselves across as strange beings who were really interested in truth even when the truth was, as it continued to be for many, many months, almost entirely to our apparent disadvantage. I hope that the French members of my audience will forgive me for saying that it was not only from the German example that we learnt the advantages of strict adherence to truth but also from the French.

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In the summer of 1940 the French army communiqués became a byword for (shall I say?) optimism—as I found myself as a newspaper correspondent in France at that time—and the effect on public morale had not, one felt, been noticeably favourable.

We were not in fact being merely quixotic in following a policy of telling the truth. If we were right to foresee a long war the time was bound to come when the tide would turn and we should have victories to report. Then our audience in Germany and in the German forces, having heard us talking frankly about our defeats, would believe us when we talked about our victories, and the will to resist in a hopeless situation could, one hoped, be effectively undermined.

This in fact is very much what did happen. By the last year or so of the war we had an enormous audience among the German civil population (encouraged, I think, rather than discouraged by jamming) and quite a large one in the German armed forces, where our great allies were the radio operators listening at night and telling their friends in the morning what we had been saying. By and large the confidence in our truthfulness seems to have been quite extraordinary. There was even one case when a German naval court-martial preferred the account we had broadcast of the sinking of a U-boat to the account given by its commander, who

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had been picked up by a German ship while members of his crew had fallen into British hands.

But how effective was our psychological warfare once we had built up this position of confidence? It is very difficult to say. Some Germans have claimed that it played a major part in the collapse of German resistance, as they also said about British propaganda in the First World War. I rather doubt it—though I believe that it could have done so.

That brings me to one of the basic facts about psychological warfare. It is essentially an auxiliary weapon. It cannot achieve victories on its own. It must function within the limits of national policy and must reflect that policy, even when it is a bad or stupid policy. This is something which politicians and generals sometimes overlook. In my own experience I should say that generals tend to fall into two categories: those who consider all psychological warfare a waste of time and those who think it can do their job for them. (I met both sorts later on in Malaya.)

I should say now, looking back, that what prevented our psychological warfare against Germany from following up its initial success and leading to a real break-down in the will to continue the struggle was the policy of unconditional surrender proclaimed at Casablanca in January 1943. I thought

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at the time that this was a quite unnecessary mistake and I think so still. It tied the hands of people in Germany and in the German armed forces who if they had been encouraged instead of discouraged might perhaps have acted earlier and more effectively against the Hitler regime than was the case in the desperate but heroic attempt of July 20th 1944.

As it is, I think it can at least be claimed that our psychological warfare did a great deal to ease the task of occupation and reconstruction in Germany because of the confidence it had helped to build up in the British in particular. Whether it did more than that and helped to shorten the war to any extent we shall, I am afraid, never know.

I have talked about policy and objectives but little so far about methods. It follows, however, from what I have said that the most important thing we had to do was to give the enemy news of what was happening both in the outside world and in his own country. Then came the interpretation of the news—and in our BBC broadcasts we were careful to use mainly German-speaking Englishmen for this task and not Germans who could be written off, at any rate by some of the audience, as traitors. Next came Hitler himself. Day after day his recorded voice could be heard screeching, '*Wir werden ihre Städte ausradieren*' (we shall wipe out their cities)

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as the bombs fell on German cities, or, '*Wir werden Stalingrad berennen und es auch nehmen, worauf Sie sich verlassen können*' (we shall overrun Stalingrad and take it, you can count on that), as the Russian ring tightened round the trapped army of Field-marshal Paulus—and so on. Hitler was perhaps our best propagandist. Satire played its part in other ways too, and it is worth remembering that ridicule is an effective weapon against dictatorships.

Leaflets and waistcoat-pocket newspapers supported with the printed word what the BBC did through the radio. For deception purposes there was so called 'black' broadcasting—mainly a tactical weapon, whereas 'white' broadcasting was essentially strategic. I have my doubts about the value of 'black' propaganda in these or any other circumstances. I had some personal experience with it later on in Malaya when my organisation produced a deviationist newspaper too subtle to be understood by anyone except a Marxist intellectual (it certainly deceived the police) and turned out forged Chinese documents which were such dynamite that they could never be used. But, my God, they were brilliant.

One of the British 'black' broadcasting stations during the war, the Soldatensender Calais (or Soldatensender West as it was later renamed) which

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purported to be run by German soldiers for their comrades was a brilliant technical operation. Its programmes were often so funny that I have sometimes wondered whether they did not raise rather than depress morale; certainly no one can have believed for long that such a station was really run by defectors behind the German lines. But 'black' propaganda seems to have an irresistible attraction for those in authority and the mere mention of the magic word 'black' will sometimes open up sources of valuable intelligence which might otherwise be withheld. It seems so much more fascinating and romantic than the slowly grinding mills of orthodox propaganda. It appeals to the small boy's heart which still beats under the black jacket or the beribboned tunic. Forged postage stamps, a new dirty story about Dr Goebbels or Field-marshal von Reichenau—what fun. But the use of it all? I remain sceptical.

One problem which came up during the war—and which could come up again—was the recruitment of the right people as psychological warriors. Probably on the whole journalists and university dons turned out to be the best. But there was a recurrent belief that people from the world of advertising were just the right types for propaganda and that there was a genuine connection between the techniques of advertising and those of psycho-

logical warfare. In fact they are essentially different. The advertiser has a captive audience and he can persuade people to buy his goods through, for instance, the constant repetition of slogans either in a visible or audible form. The psychological warrior has to adapt himself to changing circumstances day by day rather than work on a detailed long-term plan and he has to persuade people who may be hostile or frightened. He has to provide material which is really worth the effort or risk which may be involved in listening to it or reading it.

Early in the war there was a temporary craze in England for the use of ad men. The ad men drew up great campaign plans—and they were quietly pigeon-holed. Later on, when SHAEF was set up, the ad men came into their own again and a group was formed called, I think, 'the Creative Planners'. I was present when their great plan was expounded after weeks of deep thought at a SHAEF meeting. Their spokesman declared that all broadcasts and leaflets as they had been up to that day were a complete waste of time, that the vulnerable points in the morale of the enemy could be reduced to two simple concepts, fear of wounds and homesickness, which in turn could be reduced to two single words. 'Repeat those two words,' he cried, 'week after week, day after day, hour after hour, minute after minute and you will break the morale of the enemy:

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pus, mother, pus, mother, pus, mother, pus, mother.' That plan too (which one might perhaps call the 'Guinness is good for you' technique in reverse) was quietly pigeon-holed.

After the war I spent over two years in Germany in charge of broadcasting in the British Zone. I was able to collect a good deal of personal evidence on which I have based my remarks about the impact there of our psychological warfare effort.

At the beginning of 1949, when I rejoined the BBC, I was put in charge of our broadcasts to Soviet Russia and Eastern Europe. The cold war was at its coldest, the Berlin blockade was on and in the spring of 1949 the Russians began to jam our broadcasts, as they have continued to do ever since, except for a few months in 1956 after the Bulganin-Khrushchev visit to London and before the Hungarian revolt.* (Our broadcasts were, as I have mentioned in passing, also jammed by the Germans during the war, but my impression is that German jamming in the end deterred very few listeners while Russian jamming is very effective in the centre

* The Soviet Union stopped all jamming of BBC broadcasts in the summer of 1963 immediately before the visit to London at my invitation of Mr. M. A. Kharlamov, the Chairman of the State Broadcasting Committee. For over five years there was no Russian jamming of the BBC and it was only resumed in August 1968 at the time of the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia. Russian jamming does not seem to be as effective as it was before, perhaps because some of their equipment has been moved eastwards to deal with Chinese broadcasts.

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of big towns, though not in the suburbs or countryside.)

Even in the coldest of cold war conditions the objective of propaganda to Soviet Russia was rather different from what our hot warfare objective had been in the case of Germany. It was of course our aim, as before, to get our audience to accept our view of events, our method was still to tell the truth and a subsidiary aim was to shake faith in Stalin—though he had unfortunately not been as incautious as Hitler in providing us with damning recordings. But no one in his senses could believe that it should be any part of our objective to contribute to the overthrow of the Soviet regime or to ‘liberate’ the Soviet peoples, who had probably no desire to be liberated anyway, at least from outside. In the case of the countries of Eastern Europe under Soviet domination it was certainly part of our aim to keep alive their links with the West and the belief that somehow, some day, for their children if not for themselves, things might be better and Russian rule might be shaken off. But in broadcasts directed from Britain to Eastern Europe we have always been careful to avoid any hint of encouragement to sabotage or revolt.

That brings up another important principle of psychological warfare which arises logically from its position as a subsidiary weapon. Any encouragement

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to action, whether through broadcasting, leaflets or any other means, should always be closely tied up with political or military planning. Otherwise valuable lives are lost and deep disillusionment caused. In the BBC we learnt this lesson during the war through what I should describe as one of our failures, the V campaign directed to the occupied countries. This led up to a V-Day on which in fact nothing happened—and the whole thing collapsed like a pricked balloon. By 1944 when the invasion of Europe took place our broadcasting and other propaganda operations were better co-ordinated with military action.

The policy of caution in our approach to Eastern Europe was, I think, shown to be right by what we learnt about the impact of BBC broadcasts in Hungary when for a short time communications were possible at the time of the revolt. We had won the confidence of the people. This is shown by the message to the BBC which was broadcast from Budapest during the few days of freedom. It ran as follows :

We express our appreciation of the London radio station, the 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 soli-

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darity in our joy over victories and in our sorrow in weeping for our dead.

So far as propaganda to Soviet Russia is concerned, the picture has changed considerably in the nine years since I was personally concerned with it. Khrushchev has shaken faith in Stalin much more effectively than we ever could—and perhaps in doing so he has helped to show our audience in Russia that we had been telling the truth about Stalin for many years.

In the conditions of what Khrushchev called 'a certain thaw' I should hesitate to apply the term psychological warfare to propaganda operations directed at Soviet Russia. Our main objective, as I see it, is to show that we in the West are both strong and pacific and (when we can truthfully say so) united and to encourage our audience to take an interest in everything which comes from or is done in the West—in literature and the arts as well as in industry and defence preparations. I am not joking when I say that one of the most important contributions the BBC is making today to those operations is through the English by Radio broadcasts, which are not jammed and which we know are listened to by a considerable number of people in Russia who want to learn more about Britain and the United States.

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If propaganda is to give proper support to policy it seems very important at the present stage to exclude from broadcasts to Russia any trace of the old cold war mentality and any talk of 'liberation' as applied to the peoples of the Soviet Union. This does not mean that one should not take account of, and carefully exploit, the existence of certain categories of people in the Soviet Union who tend to be to some extent disaffected: for instance people who have been in forced labour camps, 'Teddy Boys' (*Stilyagi*) and adventurous young people generally, the lowest paid workers who resent the wage and class differences, and people who are against the regime from personal conviction either because they disapprove of Communism or because they think the regime has betrayed Communism. All these people will tend to be receptive and attracted in different ways by the freedoms of the West. They and other listeners to our broadcasts can help to form a Soviet public opinion not unfriendly to the West and there are some signs now that such a public opinion is being formed. A dictatorship cannot ignore public opinion entirely, and thus by a very gradual process our propaganda may affect Soviet policy. But a gradual process it must inevitably remain and those who hope for dramatic results will be disappointed.

If the outbreak of a third world war is prevented

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there will still be limited wars in Africa, Asia and elsewhere which many NATO members, certainly Britain and France, and perhaps America, will be compelled to fight from time to time. For this reason it is possible that my experience as a psychological warrior in Malaya—the next chapter, so to speak, in my life and hard times—may be more relevant to the conditions of the present-day world than what I had to say about psychological warfare in the Second World War. It is hard to imagine that in conditions of nuclear warfare there could ever again be a world war in which broadcasting, leaflets and so on could play a big part, once the bombs had started to explode.

I went to Malaya in September 1950 to build up a psychological warfare organisation for the Director of Operations, General Briggs, and stayed there for exactly a year. This time, for a change, broadcasting as a propaganda weapon hardly entered into the picture.

I went out to Malaya because the British Government had been asked by the Federation of Malaya Government to let them have someone with 'experience of propaganda in war conditions'. But there was very little resemblance between war conditions in Europe and in Malaya or between a German and a Malayan Chinese Communist. It had become usual to talk about the enemy in Malaya as 'bandits'.

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This was a misleading term. It suggests an unorganised rabble of picturesque ruffians. In fact what we had to deal with was a uniformed and disciplined Communist army of about five thousand men armed with pistols, rifles, Sten guns and a few Brens. The army was supported by an underground organisation in the towns and villages of perhaps fifteen thousand men who provided it with supplies, intelligence and recruits and carried out individual killings. The active underground in turn could rely on the regular assistance, willing or unwilling, of—it is anybody's guess but let us say another hundred thousand people. The underground was all round you in Malaya. The Chinese boy who served you your drinks at the club, the Chinese cashier who handed you your money at the bank, the Chinese girl who danced with you in the amusement park, the old and dignified servant at the High Commissioner's residence—any one of them for all you knew might be a member of the Communist underground.

The Communist fighting forces deep in the Malayan jungle were a formidable force, only prevented from being still more formidable by a lack of trained technicians for sabotage and by an absence of the spark of imaginative daring which has marked the great guerrilla leaders of history.

The underground organisation in the towns and

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villages was very difficult to penetrate and disrupt, particularly for a largely Malay police force led by British officers, many of them new to the country. The appalling savagery with which traitors were dealt made it all the more difficult to break up the underground. Bullets were scarce and were seldom used on Chinese, Indians and Malays thought to be co-operating with the authorities. For them there was burying alive, slashing into strips with parangs, beating into pulp with spades and perhaps, if there was time to spare for such a refinement, crucifixion.

On our side more than one hundred thousand regular and auxiliary police and some forty thousand British, Gurkha and Malay troops were being kept at full stretch.

As I saw it, there were two main immediate psychological warfare objectives. One was to raise the morale of the civil population and encourage confidence in the Government so that the flow of intelligence could be increased, and the other was to attack the morale of the Communist army and underground and drive a wedge between the leaders and the rank and file with a view to encouraging surrenders. The first of these objectives could not be attained by words alone. People had to see that protection was available before they would come forward with information. The second objective,

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too, demanded effective military and police action for propaganda to follow up.

So none of this could be done in a vacuum and the real interest of this operation—from which I think much could be learnt for future limited wars—is that it proved possible to establish the very closest working co-operation between the army, the police, intelligence and civil authorities and the psychological warfare organisation not only at headquarters level but throughout the country.

By the time I left Malaya there was seldom a major military operation which was not preceded and accompanied by a propaganda barrage. In the areas in which troops were to operate, surrendered Communists known to the local people by sight were sent out on lecture tours round the towns and villages and would often attract audiences of a few thousand people. There is no better anti-Communist propagandist than one whose own god has failed. Leaflets and safe conducts would be dropped by aircraft in millions on the jungle and news of any success against the enemy or any surrenders would be immediately passed on by leaflets and by word of mouth, so that the pressure was maintained and intensified so long as the operation was in progress.

In the rather peculiar conditions of Malaya, with an enemy scattered in small groups in deep jungle,

methods which may seem very extravagant had often to be used to achieve one surrender. I remember one case when we arranged for aircraft to drop a couple of million leaflets over a large area of jungle offering safe conducts and hospital treatment to five members of the Communist army who were known to be in the district and to be suffering from various jungle diseases. Four of them emerged with leaflets. It was the intelligence obtained in this way and the impetus given to further surrenders which made such operations worth while. The stock surrender leaflet which we used was of very simple design. On one side it showed photographs of surrendered enemy personnel, complete with their names, in pleasant surroundings and with happy faces. On the other there were photographs of the shattered bodies of dead men. The text was nothing much more than the question, in Chinese characters, 'Which would you rather be?' This simple approach seemed to work quite well with the very materialistic Chinese. That materialism was also played on through the offer of substantial rewards for weapons handed over and for information leading to captures or killings. I remember one cheerful ruffian who walked in from the jungle with a reward leaflet, carrying his commanding officer's Sten gun—and his commanding officer's head.

Both by the written and the spoken word we did,

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I think, do something to improve public morale and also to increase the number of surrenders. But before the year was out I found myself preaching the doctrine that the limits of what could be achieved by psychological warfare were in sight and that the war in Malaya would never be ended without big political and social changes. The last few years have shown that there was a good deal of truth in this.

That brings me almost to the end of my personal experiences as a psychological warrior. I mentioned at the beginning of this lecture that until just before Suez I had been concerned, though rather more remotely, with our broadcasts to Arab countries, and from this experience I would draw one more example to support my argument that propaganda is essentially a subsidiary weapon. The power of Cairo Radio as a weapon in Colonel Nasser's hands has been very much exaggerated by many people. In so far as Cairo Radio achieves anything it is through the exploitation of feelings (pan-Arab, anti-British, anti-French) which are already there. It does not create them. Those who expect British, French or American broadcasts to compete with Cairo Radio are equally mistaken. Our policy is not one of lies and agitation and we should be false to ourselves, and do no good at all, if we descended to Colonel Nasser's level. The truth is an unexciting weapon and it often works too slowly for

those who, naturally enough, are eager to see quick results.

I have in passing referred to a number of principles which hold good for any psychological warfare operation. I should now like to mention another and perhaps more controversial principle. Psychological warfare must have a national rather than an international basis: to be effective it must reflect a national character—though an exchange of information with other nations pursuing the same aims is not of course excluded.

In theory a NATO propaganda effort sounds all very well but in practice it just would not work. Let us start at the beginning. What would be the directing body? Presumably an international one. In any international body there are conflicting ideas and interests, different traditions, customs and forms of expression. There is a big difference between sinking such national conflicts in a military effort (and that may sometimes be hard enough) and sinking them in a propaganda campaign.

How would a news bulletin—that basic broadcasting operation—be composed by an international staff when there is news, as inevitably there often is, of conflicts between the countries concerned and differences of emphasis on such vital matters as the right approach to the Soviet Union, European trade, any localised wars which might be in progress

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or what have you? A uniformity in news treatment imposed from above and the avoidance of controversial subjects in order to give a sometimes false impression of unity would not only conflict with what I have said about the importance of truth in propaganda but would also be deadly dull. The British, the Americans, the French, the Germans, the Italians, do not look at the world through the same eyes. There is no absolute standard of truth: one can only stick to the truth as one sees it. I can see no harm in a Russian listener getting somewhat divergent impressions of what is going on in the world from British, American or French broadcasts. He will get a much truer picture of the world in this way than he would from any international broadcasting organisation, and I should say that our lack of uniformity is, in fact, a positive advantage.

I have been talking about this problem in terms of politics and economics. But in any propaganda effort directed towards the Soviet Union today it is just as important to interest the audience in the arts, literature and daily life of each Western country. Whether we are British, American, French, German or Italian, we want Russians to come in larger numbers to our countries, we want them to read our books, to see our films, to buy our goods. And variety, not uniformity, is one of the attractions we have to offer.

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We should by all means share, so far as we can, the technical means of reaching a Russian audience in an effort to defeat jamming and other impediments. We should keep each other informed about what we are doing and saying, but I am convinced that so far as content is concerned we must continue to operate as separate national units.

In the last war we never got very far with Anglo-American co-operation in the field of psychological warfare and in the end that co-operation, apart from the exchange of information, was limited by mutual consent to such matters as the sharing of transmitters and wave-lengths. What we and the Americans did was certainly not the worse for that.

In conclusion, therefore, I should like to offer the following short list of psychological warfare principles, which apply to any overt form of propaganda.

The task of psychological warfare is to impose your own view of the situation on the enemy and then to lead the enemy to behave in the way you desire.

It is an auxiliary and never an independent weapon. To be effective it must be provided with intelligence and be closely associated with, but not under the control of, or tactically influenced by, political and military planning.

It achieves its effects slowly and gradually.

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Whatever form it takes it must hold, interest and inform its audience.

It must have its roots in national character.

Most important of all, it must for long-term effectiveness be based on strict adherence to the truth as one sees it. It is a strategic weapon and must not deviate from the truth for tactical reasons.

*NATO Defence College, Paris,
September 1959*

(iii) Rebuilding German Broadcasting

I shall begin my story not on October 1st 1946 when I arrived in Hamburg to take over the post of Controller of Broadcasting in the British Zone but on November 15th 1948 when I made my farewell and handed over to Adolf Grimme as the first German Director-General (and also, as it happened, the last) of the North-West German Radio.

In my farewell speech in the big Hamburg concert hall I described some of the things I had been trying to do in the previous two years and emphasised in particular the need for broadcasting to be independent of state and party political influences. Criticism from the political parties was, however, something healthy and welcome. I expressed the hope that the day would never come when the

Chairman of the Social Democrats would stop talking about the 'North-West German CDU Radio' and the Chairman of the Christian Democrats of the 'North-West German Red Radio'.

'You will fail, Mr Greene, you will fail,' growled Herr Brauer, the Bürgermeister of Hamburg (a very good friend but an opponent in some ways) as I came down from the platform at the end of my short speech.

Was Herr Brauer right or was he wrong? Perhaps my own answer to this question will emerge as I tell my story.

When I arrived in Hamburg on October 1st 1946, NWDR was already a going concern. So far as I can make out from the records it was at ten o'clock on the morning of May 4th 1945 that a small British unit of three officers and a few men took over the Hamburg station. They found the German engineers at their posts: Radio Hamburg was on the air in several languages at seven p.m. that evening: the interval between the last Nazi-controlled and the first British-controlled broadcast was barely twenty-four hours. In this way, before the last shots of the war had been fired, began the period of team-work between Germans and Englishmen which reached its planned end on November 15th 1948.

The first job was physical reconstruction. The only workable broadcasting equipment anywhere in

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the British Zone—much of it obsolete or nearly worn out—was in Hamburg. Cologne station was an empty and bomb-shattered shell and its transmitter at Langenberg had been destroyed by the Wehrmacht in retreat. Hamburg thus inevitably became the centre of a radio network which a few months later was given the name of North-West German Radio and came to embrace stations also in Cologne, Hanover and Berlin.

In spite of shortage of technical equipment and building materials and one disaster after another (in 1946 for instance the only factory in the British Zone making microphones was burned down) the studios and transmitters at key points in the Zone and in Berlin were gradually repaired or built. Cologne was back on the air by the late summer of 1945.

The Hamburg engineering research and designs department, without which the rapid construction of the NWDR network would not have been possible, was brought into being through an adventurous stroke. One of the German engineers knew that a great quantity of valuable technical equipment was stored in a salt mine in the Harz, just on the edge of the Russian Zone. He and a British officer found their way through and got the equipment out.

In this early period men like Peter von Zahn, Axel Eggebrecht, Ernst Schnabel and Hans Schmidt-

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Isserstedt found their way to Hamburg, attracted, I think one can say, by the atmosphere of comparative freedom even in those early days.

So by the time I arrived in Hamburg the period of physical reconstruction was already far advanced and the men who gave the NWDR programmes their distinctive character—I have only mentioned a few of them—had already been recruited.

My job as I saw it was to give NWDR a legal status, to knit it into the political life of post-war Germany and to encourage and carry still further the already established tradition of freedom and independence. One of the first things I did was to hold a meeting of all the staff in the big concert hall and to say, 'I am here to make myself superfluous'. I saw to it that many of the British Control Officers, the less effective among them, became superfluous very rapidly, and I reduced the British staff to a small body of men prepared to work with enthusiasm for the same ends.

When I look back to my early days in Hamburg everything seems dominated by the icy cold winter of 1946-7, and I think it was a very important thing for the morale and unity of the whole staff, German and English, at that appalling time, that though we English had better food and drink, we too froze in our quarters and were known to do so. There was some heating in the Hamburg Broadcasting House

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and many people spent their nights there on sofas, on chairs or on the floor.

We got into a lot of trouble that winter for the freedom of our reporting; not trouble with the British military government which, generally speaking, understood what we were getting at and gave remarkable support, but with the Hamburg city fathers and the embryo German political parties.

There was for instance the great peat scandal. In one of the suburbs of Hamburg there existed, for reasons which I have forgotten, an enormous stock of peat. We reported the existence of this valuable reserve of heating material. Thereupon the Hamburg Senate announced that it was unburnable, wet peat. One of our reporters spent a night with the watchman at the peat dump and found that his little hut, warmed with the unburnable peat, was the most comfortable place in Hamburg. His report the next day brought the Hamburg politicians screaming with rage to my office with demands for apologies and the dismissal of all concerned. Naturally they got nothing.

In the news that winter we used to report the approach of coal trains in much the same terms as a war-time communiqué about a raid by enemy bombers: 'A coal train is standing at this moment in a siding at Buchholz in der Heide. Another will

pass the Hamburg Dammtor station in about an hour' and so on. I dare say there are still some Hamburgers who remember those revealing communiqués with gratitude. We were in good company. Cardinal Frings of Cologne in a famous sermon in which he said that the Fourth Commandment did not apply to coal trains added the word '*fringsen*' for a time to the German language.

This was more or less straightforward reporting. We had satirical programmes too and satire, as can always happen, was sometimes misunderstood. I was told, for instance, by the *Hamburger Echo* in a large heading, 'Mr Greene, eat your hat' because I had declared in a broadcast, 'If NWDR has ever engaged in anti-democratic Nazi propaganda I'll eat my hat.' 'Anti-democratic propaganda' was of course a phrase used in some political circles about broadcasts which showed up and laughed at the inevitable failures, and the occasional corrupt practices, of a new democratic system. I believe as firmly now as I did then that it is good for politicians to be laughed at whether they like it or not.

In that winter, if I remember rightly, the staff of the Hamburg station took part in two general strikes to protest against the insufficient food rations. I think the staff unions felt rather let down when I agreed without hesitation to their participation in the strikes and protest marches and to the

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closing down of broadcasting, so long as the news went out.

It must have been at about this time that Peter von Zahn made a famous broadcast, 'How to Get on with Conquerors', inspired, as Ernst Schnabel told me recently, by some annoyance with me. The beautifully modulated opening of this broadcast has never quite left my mind: 'About how to get on with children and women, with Chinese and with human beings in general, about how to get on with horses and machines, many wise words have been said. How to get on with conquerors, on the other hand, is a matter of total obscurity.' That broadcast brought protests—from the Americans:

But I am wandering too far from my main theme, though perhaps it was worthwhile trying to recapture some of the atmosphere of that improbable time. It was an exhilarating period in the history of broadcasting, and I hope that some of the gaiety (which was there in spite of physical hardships) and irreverence of those days still echoes down the corridors of German broadcasting stations.

As you may imagine, I have looked through a lot of documents in preparing this talk and among the most interesting have been the full protocols of the meetings of the Radio Sub-Committee of the Cultural Committee of the Zonal Advisory Council (oh dear, those titles) which I attended between the

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summers of 1947 and 1948. I must admit that I had completely forgotten in what detail I discussed with them a wide variety of broadcasting subjects quite apart from the constitution of NWDR. One thing, however, which I had not forgotten was the wise chairmanship of a great lady, Professor Helene Weber. We dealt with such programme matters as allegations of indecency in radio plays, accusations of partiality in political broadcasts and the need, in the interest of the political parties, to get their spokesmen to accept some training in broadcasting. You will see from this list of subjects how little some things change in the broadcasting world. We also discussed at this time the functioning of the new NWDR training school and all sorts of other things including the personnel policy of NWDR and the dismissal of members of the staff for falsifying the questionnaires in which details of any Nazi past had to be given. I see that I was bitterly attacked in the *Hamburger Echo* in June 1947 for refusing to give the names of the dismissed men and for describing them as 'valuable colleagues'. I do not regret the description. Perhaps I might add at this point that my dismissal of some Communist members of the staff, most of whom were working in Cologne, took place in somewhat less painful circumstances. I have been looking again with some amusement at a long open letter which Karl Eduard

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von Schnitzler,* by then in East Berlin, addressed to me in March 1947. This is how that letter ended: 'The listeners to NWDR will one day realise that NWDR in the labour pains of German democracy failed under your leadership and did not fulfil its historic task of reconciliation among nations and social and spiritual reconstruction.' I seem to remember that this open letter fell rather flat after I had written Schnitzler a warm letter of congratulation on his eloquence.

But enough of this wandering down so many by-roads. I must come now to the NWDR charter, which was finally issued as an appendix to Military Government Ordinance No. 118—a number which is engraved for ever on my heart. A very considerable part of my time during the year 1947 was spent on the drafting and detailed discussion of this document. This original constitution of NWDR has been criticised sometimes as one imposed by military government, copied from the BBC and unsuited to German circumstances. On the other hand, in a speech in the Bundestag Herr Schröder when he was Minister of the Interior criticised the occupying

* Herr Schnitzler is still a leading East German broadcaster. All arrangements had in fact been made for him to defect back to the West and only at the last moment did he fail to keep the appointment. I had planned to reinstate him in the NWDR, put him on the air to explain the reasons for his return to the West and then sack him immediately for "lack of character".

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powers for not introducing something like the BBC into Germany when they had the opportunity and the power to do so. It is hard to have it both ways.

However that may be, I should like to describe the background to my own thinking on the subject and try to make clear what I was trying to do.

Nothing had more influence on me at this time than my long talks with Dr Bredow, the father—the Reith—of German broadcasting. It was from him that I learned something of the weaknesses in the organisation of German broadcasting before 1933 as he with his unrivalled experience and inside knowledge had seen them. To use his own words, the dead hand of party political control led to colourless reporting, a lack of actuality and an unnatural neutrality towards the events of the day. The activities of the broadcasting companies (grouped together under the Reichsrundfunks-gesellschaft, in which the Post Office held the majority of shares) were closely controlled by the political committees, on which representatives of the Government and of the political parties sat side by side. This supervision had developed in the course of time, Dr Bredow told me, into a regular pre-censorship by the political parties of talks and other programmes dealing, even remotely, with political subjects.

Dr Bredow also agreed with me that it was

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desirable for political and technical reasons that the broadcasting organisations and not the Post Office should own and run the transmitters. In August 1947, when we were in discussion with the Post Office on this matter, Dr Bredow was asked to support the Post Office point of view and he declined.

With this background it seemed to me that with necessary and sensible modifications the constitution of the independent BBC could be adapted to fit German conditions. My task in 1947, as I saw it, was therefore to produce a constitution which would take account both of German and British experience and if possible produce a synthesis which would work and, given time, might be acceptable as a lasting solution.

During this year I drove all over the British Zone to discuss a succession of drafts, which I constantly modified, with all the Länder governments, with the Zonal Advisory Council and with representatives of the parties, the churches, cultural organisations, the trades unions, employers and so on. I see from the record that after one meeting of the Zonal Advisory Council I accepted every single amendment which had been suggested to me.

On one point, however, with the support of British military government, I stood absolutely firm, and that was in rejecting the demands put forward

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by the political parties, or most of them, for what they called 'democratic control' of broadcasting by some form of supervisory committee representing the party machines. There was long argument, long negotiation, but in the end the complete exclusion of the political parties from any say in the control of broadcasting was expressly provided for in the NWDR charter—and this, together with the transfer of transmitters from the Post Office, gave NWDR a position of independence hitherto unknown in German broadcasting.

The Länder governments, as distinct from the parties, were given some say at the summit through the presence of the Prime Ministers of Nordrhein Westfalen, Niedersachsen and Schleswig-Holstein and the Bürgermeister of Hamburg on the Principal Committee. Educational, cultural, religious, Trades Union and some other interests were also represented. The main task of this Principal Committee (which took the place occupied by the monarch where the BBC is concerned) was to be the election of the members of the Administrative Board (the equivalent of the BBC Board of Governors), who were not to represent special interests of any kind or to receive instructions from any outside quarter. In their turn the Administrative Board appointed the Director-General.

In preparing this speech I have looked through

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the NWDR charter for the first time for many years and with much more experience behind me (in 1947 I was a comparative innocent in these high matters) and I do not think it is at all a bad effort. I have been told that some years later, after NWDR had ceased as such to exist, Herr Arnold, the then Prime Minister of Nordrhein Westfalen, who bore some responsibility for the split between Hamburg and Cologne, said that in the NWDR statutes the charter for the whole Federal Republic broadcasting system might have been found if the matter had been handled properly. But that by the way.

The charter was handed over in the concert hall in Hamburg on December 30th 1947 by Mr Steel (who later as Sir Christopher Steel was British Ambassador in Bonn). It came into force on January 1st 1948 and NWDR thereby became the first German broadcasting organisation to acquire a legal status after the end of the war.

Things got off to a good start. The first Administrative Board was unanimously elected in March 1948 by the Principal Committee and it chose as its first Chairman Adolf Grimme, who at that time also held the post of Minister of Culture in Niedersachsen.

That was the end of the first stage of my work. From March 1948 I worked as Director-General under the supervision of the Administrative Board

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and no longer regarded myself as a British Controller. I said in my farewell speech in Hamburg that I should always consider it an honour that the Administrative Board had apparently not found it too difficult to consider and treat me, a foreigner, as if I had in reality been the Director-General of their own choice. I do not know of any parallel for this position in any other branch of administration during the occupation period.

It was a great pleasure to work with Adolf Grimme as my Chairman and though the broadcasting world was strange to him I think it was an important gain for German broadcasting that a man of his reputation and integrity became associated with it in those early post-war years.

In my last months I did a good deal of thinking about the future of German broadcasting. For instance I thought there might be a lot to be said for a degree of rationalisation and amalgamation and for the creation of four powerful independent organisations, the NWDR based on Hamburg, Cologne and Berlin and three others in Frankfurt, Stuttgart and Munich. This idea did not appeal to my American and French colleagues.

I have, however, come across a report on the future of German broadcasting which I drew up for British military government. It is dated March 16th 1948. In it I advocated the creation of an

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'Arbeitsgemeinschaft des deutschen Rundfunks', as in fact the Association of West German broadcasting organisations is now known. The 'Arbeitsgemeinschaft' would, I said, represent German broadcasting interests at international conferences and be responsible among other things for the co-ordination of programming and the elimination of unfair competition. This proposal too met with American and French objection at the time, but it has been realised since the occupation ceased.

I still had to complete the job of making myself superfluous by finding a German Director-General to take my place. I finally came to the conclusion that Adolf Grimme was the right man for the job. He took some persuading—and what a responsibility one takes on oneself when one sets out to change the whole course of a man's life. I hope he did not regret it. His life, I expect, was much stormier than it would otherwise have been. But I hope and believe that he found it interesting and worthwhile. So on November 15th 1948 I handed over to Herr Grimme and left Hamburg four days later. I do not believe in backseat driving.

At the beginning of my speech today I quoted the words Herr Brauer murmured to me on this occasion: 'You will fail, Mr Greene, you will fail.' Was Herr Brauer right? I suppose that to some extent he was. Perhaps I was too ambitious. Perhaps

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I underestimated the difference between German and British political traditions. Perhaps I should have compromised, even more than I did. Certainly things have changed. The original statutes have been replaced. NWDR as such no longer exists.

But I am immodest enough to think that in a wider sense my two years in Germany were not a complete failure, and that I did something to establish a tradition of independent broadcasting which still lives on.

*Stuttgart,
April 1965*

ONWARDS TO PILKINGTON

When I look through my files for the years from 1959 to 1961 I seem to have been making speeches at home and abroad two or three times every month. One's mind was full of the enquiry into the future of broadcasting which was bound to come, and in July 1960 Sir Harry Pilkington was appointed to be its Chairman.

I approached this event as a problem in psychological warfare: define one's objectives, rally one's friends, rattle one's enemies, state one's case with the utmost conviction, persuasiveness and clarity. I do not believe that I could have done this job without my previous experience in the BBC German Service and in Malaya.

The ITV, led by the old victors of the campaign for commercial television in the early 1950s, made the usual mistake of thinking that they were fighting the same war over again and were bound to win. (The BBC must remember that next time.) They were lazy in the public presentation of their case and fatally casual, even, I believe, contemptuous, in the preparation of their evidence, written and oral, for

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the Pilkington Committee. They got what was coming to them.

Mild-mannered as I became in my last years as Director-General of the BBC, I am quite surprised to see the vigour with which I used to speak. Perhaps I may give an example from a speech to the Manchester Luncheon Club in November 1960:

'I have noticed a tendency in recent pronouncements by some ITA spokesmen to make out that there is no real distinction between the BBC and commercial television as we have it in this country—that commercial television, at any rate here, is a form of public service. Sir Robert Fraser, for instance, when he spoke to this club last May, referred to what he called a "remarkable homogeneity" between the BBC and ITV: they were in large part, he claimed, "assimilated".

'Now, 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; 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. In a recent survey of United States television in the magazine *Esquire*, the well-known American writer Richard Rovere said, "Only a cheap and distorting mirror can be held up to life

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when the principal aim is to sell shampoo or liver pills. Ends determine means." Richard Rovere was, of course, talking about United States television. But even here, with our Television Act and all that, advertisers expect to have their audience "delivered", and if it is not (as happened so strikingly at the time of the 1960 Olympic Games) there is apt to be a fuss.

'I am not being critical or aggressive, I am just stating a fact when I say that commercial broadcasting in whatever form exists to sell goods, and public-service broadcasting to serve the public. Commercial broadcasting is part of a country's business apparatus, subject, as we have recently seen here, to all the hazards of business such as take-over bids. Let us have no more talk about "homogeneity" or "assimilation".

'There were other passages in Sir Robert Fraser's speech to this club on which, as you have honoured me with this invitation, I may perhaps be allowed to comment. Among other things he said that the Television Act enfranchised the viewer because by giving or withholding support for programmes the viewer was able to control the kind of programmes which commercial television provided, and he described commercial television as "people's television". (I might remark in passing that Sir Robert Fraser is evidently more of an

optimist than Mr Norman Collins, who is reported to have said at the recent National Union of Teachers' Conference on Mass Media, "If you gave the people what they wanted the programmes would be deplorable".)

'Sir Robert Fraser implied that the BBC, living "on a State grant or subsidy" (as he put it), was indifferent to the likes or dislikes of ordinary people. This is odd because it is the BBC alone which maintains an organisation at great expense, not only to count the heads of viewers and listeners, but also to study their reactions to programmes.

'Individual people do not only make up majorities, they also form part of innumerable minorities—and perhaps this is truer of this country than of any other in the world. People are gardeners, or enjoy cricket, or breed whippets, or like listening to seventh-century music, or are amateur archaeologists, or collect old detective stories, or want to learn a foreign language. It seems to me that if the ideas put forward by Sir Robert Fraser in his speech were accepted as valid, these minorities would have a poor deal because they would be consistently out-voted.

'If the cash register came to be regarded as the test of success, one could say goodbye to minority interests and the whole flavour of life in this country would be in for a sad change.

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'It is our belief in the importance of minority interests which among other things lies behind the BBC's claim for a second television programme, and behind our claim for the right to operate local sound broadcasting stations which would extend our service to minorities so far left out in the cold by national, and even regional, broadcasting.'

That was a concise statement of our case for a second television channel and for local radio. There was more than that, but these were the things about which some of us felt most passionately.

So the Pilkington Enquiry came and went and the BBC emerged from it more successfully than we had imagined in our wildest dreams. I remember receiving an advance copy of the report just before the meeting of the BBC Board of Management on Monday June 25th 1962. I read out the summary of recommendations and everything was there that we had hoped for, or very nearly everything. It was an exciting moment. Perhaps when one looks back one is tempted to think that we did almost too well. But one does not fight a campaign to achieve a partial victory.

In a speech to the Parliamentary Press Gallery in February 1963 I said, 'An Enquiry like this is an ordeal. For two years or more it took up most of the time of many of us in the BBC. We had to

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marshal our evidence and our arguments. We had to think about ourselves and the justification for our existence. We had to have our facts ready at our finger-ends. It was no push-over. It was a very penetrating committee. Personally I enjoyed it. But once is enough in the working life of a Director-General and a generation of the BBC's senior staff.

'To have come through with success releases new energies—energies backed by all the thinking we have been forced to do about our responsibilities and our place in national life. So it was no coincidence that "That Was the Week that Was" came into existence at this particular moment and no coincidence that our programmes generally, from one angle or another, are trying to take a harder, franker look at "This Island Now", trying to illuminate our national and international problems and our place in the world at this revolutionary time.'

SOME FOREIGN EXCURSIONS

I had many invitations to speak abroad, particularly in Germany, Austria, the United States and Canada. It was often convenient to say things in other countries and arrange for them to be reported back. The impact could then be all the greater.

People in this country probably think that they understand the constitutional position of the BBC, though in fact very few do. This is shown by the considerable flow of letters from members of the public to Members of Parliament asking them to intervene with the Postmaster-General to stop the BBC from using bad language, showing performing animals or bull-fighting, depicting scenes in which two members of opposite sexes get somewhere near a bed, or otherwise acting in ways of which the writers, who never seem to think of switching to another programme or off all together, disapprove.

It has seemed less offensive to describe the BBC as it is to foreign audiences and hope that some of it will trickle back. And, of course, there are good reasons in countries which have not achieved the same independent status for broadcasting to let

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them share our experience. The BBC seems often to be more respected abroad than it is at home.

I shall begin this section with some extracts from a speech I made at a lunch in New York given to celebrate the thirty-fifth birthday of NBC, one of the three great American networks, on November 13th 1961. I began by referring to the professional ties between the BBC and the United States networks:

‘We are all professionals. I do not believe that any of us could have perpetrated the speech recently made by the Chairman of one of the ITV programme companies in the United Kingdom. Let me repeat what he said:

Railways, tramways, trackless trolleys, radio stations, television stations, the generation and distribution of electricity, the manufacture and distribution of coal gas, airlines, wired radio, television, motor omnibus services, road-goods transport—all these activities have been our life. The bus interests alone number 13,000 public service vehicles. Is it surprising that we should have been entrusted with the task of furnishing television programmes to the largest city in the western world?

‘The answer one is tempted to give to that last question is a resounding “yes”. I find it hard to understand an attitude which can equate the

operation of bus companies and trackless trolleys with the provision of television programmes which have an immense power to influence the minds of millions of men, women and children, and determine to a large extent whether we develop into an educated and alert democracy or into a society of morons.'

I then described the constitutional position of the BBC, which is just as great a mystery to Americans as it is to Russians or Frenchmen :

'The BBC type of organisation is, I think, quite unknown on this side of the Atlantic and is for that reason often completely misunderstood. I have had a good deal of advice as to how I should try to explain what we are. Well-meaning people have suggested, for instance, that I should draw a comparison between the BBC and the Tennessee Valley Authority. I think it is much safer just to say that we are as strange in the American scene as a kangaroo would be in the English countryside. The kangaroo might be approached with initial suspicion and disbelief, but it would be found on close inspection to have an existence, a punch, of its own.

'Most people over here regard us as a government agency which must dance to whatever tune the British Government may call at any moment. In your fascinating trade magazine *Variety*, particularly in the headlines, we used invariably to be

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described as the "State Web". I consider it one of our greatest triumphs in the United States that *Variety* now understands what we are and no longer used this temptingly concise but misleading description.

'It is not true in any sense whatever that we are a government agency. We are a public corporation established by Parliament, to which complete independence has been given by government decision. It has been said that the British Parliament can do anything except turn a man into a woman—perhaps it could even do that nowadays. The creation of the BBC may seem almost as unnatural an act. But it happened. We are there. We are, I would dare to claim, the most truly independent broadcasting organisation in the world.

'The ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the affairs of the BBC lies with our Governors, who are appointed by the Queen in Council—that is to say by the Government of the day. Once appointed they act in the interests of the BBC and not in the interests of the Government or of any political party with which they as individuals may happen to sympathise. They have been described correctly as "trustees in the national interest".

'Our independence rests on a solid financial rock. We derive our income from the proceeds of a licence fee for the operation of receiving apparatus

imposed and collected by the State. But the State does not have the slightest degree of control over the way in which the money is spent. That is a matter for the BBC, and only for the BBC.

‘You will agree, I think, that one of the important tasks of any board is the appointment of its chief executive. I know from my own personal experience that there was no consultation whatever with the British Government before I was appointed Director-General of the BBC. The Government was told in a very informal way a couple of days before the public announcement as a matter of courtesy. Even if they had viewed my appointment with the utmost distaste, there was nothing whatever they could have done about it.

‘Our independence of the State has come in the course of time to be treasured not only by the BBC itself, not only by the public, but also by Parliament and by successive governments which have been wise enough to see that it is a great national asset. This independence extends to our broadcasts for the world in thirty-nine different languages. It is probably fair to say that this independence for our overseas broadcasts could not exist unless the service was part of the BBC with its overall tradition of independence. What the Government prescribes in the case of these overseas services is the languages in which we broadcast and the period of time to be

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devoted to each language. The content is a matter for the BBC and no one, I think, recognises the advantages which this gives us, the speed for instance with which we can react to events, more than our friends in the Voice of America.

‘On paper, the Government of the day has the power to veto any BBC broadcast. The BBC—and this is the important point—has the right to broadcast that this veto has been exercised. In the whole history of the BBC no Government—not even in war-time—has made use of this power in connection with any particular programme or item and it is now pretty well politically unthinkable that it ever could be made use of. Governments are of course exposed to great temptations from time to time in connection with an instrument of such immense influence as broadcasting. There was the period of the Suez crisis. Opinion in Britain was deeply divided about the rights and wrongs of the Anglo-French action. There was a deep feeling among many people that the nation needed unity at such a moment and that the real division in the country should not be revealed to the world or even given expression at home. Our Board of Governors took the view that it was the duty of the BBC to reflect the actual state of affairs in its broadcasts for the world as well as in its broadcasts at home. The Governors acted in this matter as “trustees in the

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national interest” and not in the interest of a particular Government. I think it is generally recognised today that the maintenance of the independence of the BBC on this occasion did a great deal for public enlightenment and, more than that, helped to keep the Commonwealth together at a moment of acute crisis.

‘If I may bring the point nearer home, it would never occur to the British Foreign Office in the event, let us say, of Mr Khrushchev coming to London, to suggest to the BBC that the visit should not be given too much publicity. The Foreign Office would know that the BBC would pay no attention whatever to any such suggestion. And the same is true of British commercial television whose titular “independence” depends so much on the tradition of political independence established by the BBC over the years.

‘That is one form of independence—the political side. We attach just as much importance to our independence of commercial pressures, and there too the source of our income is the rock on which our independence rests. We do not have to worry about the susceptibilities of sponsors and advertisers. We regard—and the important thing is that we can afford to regard—the recent statement by the Chairman of another of the British Commercial Programme Companies that “profitability is the

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only measure of success” as representing a denial of what should be the true purposes of broadcasting.’

My next extracts come from a speech which I gave in Washington in March 1962 at the Alfred I. Dupont Awards Foundation Dinner:

‘How much verbiage, how many high-sounding phrases have to be cleared out of the way or discounted in almost any public discussion of broadcasting. Words like “freedom”, “democracy”, “competition” (an even holier word with you perhaps than with us) get thrown about all over the place and, I would say, strikingly misused. Often, I have the impression that these words are intended by their users not only to stir our noblest emotions but also to disarm our critical faculties. There is an apparently irresistible tendency to quote Milton or Benjamin Franklin. Though this, too, is a public occasion, I shall not.

‘Of course there are bad words as well as good words. The “State” represents the opposite of “freedom”. It is intended to evoke the image of a malignant, inefficient, dwarfish bureaucracy, intent on censorship, intent on preventing an honest man from making his pile under the banners of “freedom”, “democracy” and “competition”.

‘I speak as the representative of an organisation which is often—by those who hold aloft the banner

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of "freedom"—labelled "Government-owned" or "State-run", an organisation which, one is almost persuaded, was probably one of the more sinister creations of the tyrant George III. That the BBC is not Government-owned or State-run is one of those awkward little facts that tend to get overlooked—perhaps sometimes intentionally overlooked—by people with axes to grind on both sides of the Atlantic.

'I think it is worth while taking a good hard look at some of these words, "freedom", "democracy", "competition", as they apply in broadcasting. What do people who speak about "freedom" in broadcasting really mean? So far as I can make out they usually mean freedom from Government control. We are, of course, all against Government control—as we are all, no doubt, against sin. We are all willing to go on the barricades to defend broadcasting against that iniquity. But who are these rather curious allies who stand with us on the barricades, beating off the Government forces in the name of freedom? Don't they want to control broadcasting for economic ends—for selfish ends—just as intensely as any government? And why should broadcasters regard bondage to economic interests as "freedom" and bondage to State interests as "slavery"? Both conditions are bondage. And if we are to serve the public with true single-minded-

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ness, which I would declare to be our main responsibility, we cannot be both bond and free.

‘Whether he likes it or not, the broadcaster under any system is always a public servant. In the last resort he operates by permission of the public—and there is no country in which the State does not retain certain sanctions. If the public feels itself abused by its servants, in the end the public may remove them and replace them by others. Where the broadcaster is part of a totalitarian system it may require a revolution to eject broadcaster and Government together. In a democracy there are more peaceful but equally effective means of bringing about change.

‘Then we come on another of those loaded phrases: “giving the public what it wants”. This phrase is linked with “democracy” and with “trusting the people”—the simple faith, preached by many men who are not at all simple, that what most people want all people should have.

‘To use the word “freedom” in this connection is an abuse of language. What we are in fact concerned with at this point is tyranny—the tyranny of the ratings or of the mind machines. There is, to my mind, mortal danger for the broadcaster in erecting the ratings chart into a kind of totem, contradicted only at great risk. I have already said that we broadcasters are public servants. Yes. But

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what is the public? How little in fact the ratings tell us. They tell us simply how many people watch a particular programme. They tell us nothing about the people themselves: who they are, why they watch or how much they enjoyed what they watched. Yet I should have thought that why they watched and how much they enjoyed what they watched were vital pieces of information in the planning of a responsible broadcasting service. Did they watch because they actually wanted to or merely because they were too apathetic to switch off? Did they actively enjoy the programme or did they merely tolerate it as means of killing time for those who like time dead, as Rose Macaulay put it? Or were they perhaps fast asleep—or even as dead as their time—with the set still switched on?

‘The ratings therefore tell us hardly anything about the things which, as responsible broadcasters, we ought to know. Yet this imperfect system is often hailed as a triumph for democracy, of the people voting, not like the Czarist army with their feet but with their fingers on the knob. But does democracy really triumph if we merely give some mild pleasure or a soporific to people too indifferent to switch the programme off? Are we not doing more for democracy if we sometimes, even quite often, give great pleasure to a few people even at the cost of provoking many into switching off? As

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broadcasters we can so easily be terrified into the thought that nobody is listening to us, nobody is watching us. And in broadcasting terms "nobody" can often be numbered in hundreds of thousands or even millions, if on another channel "somebody" amounts to tens of millions.

'I know that those who challenge the sanction of the majority and the functioning of the profit motive often run the risk of being branded as fascist beasts or communist commissars or even neo-colonialists. But I am sure that is not the case in this company.

'The very simplicity of the concept of "giving the public what it wants", and its too frequent use by those whose professional skill is cajolery of the simple-minded, should make us suspicious. To be sure, a statement is not necessarily invalid because it is simple and evocative, but neither is it necessarily true because it has these qualities. The phrase implies the existence of a collectivity called "the public" which has a common will. "It" can want this and not want that. "We" can speak in its name, "we" claim to know what "it" wants. But the truth is that the public is an abstraction. In reality it is people. And, in our less pretentious moments, we all know that people have widely differing tastes, interests, and satisfactions. If you substitute for "giving the public what it wants" the phrase "giving

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everyone what they want” you expose its essential falsity. You cannot give everyone what they want all the time. But you can, under what I should call a free broadcasting system, do your best to think sometimes in terms of the few, sometimes in terms of the many; and even if, as must inevitably be the case, there are many interests which you cannot satisfy, you can at least not kid yourself into thinking that the studied neglect of minorities is justified on democratic grounds.

‘Lord Reith, the first Director-General of the BBC, one of whose successors I am proud to be, said back in the 1920s, “He who prides himself on giving what he thinks the people want is often creating a fictitious demand for lower standards which he will then satisfy”. That seems to me to be as good a summing up on this matter as one can hope to find.

‘The other word towards which I want to invite some critical examination is “competition”. It is perhaps more unusual on this side of the Atlantic than on the side from which I come to suggest that competition is not always, by some unchanging law of nature, a “good thing”. There is, I think, a fair amount of evidence that in broadcasting competition has tended to do more harm than good—that is, if one looks at the results of competition, as it is reasonable that one should, from the point of view of the public we broadcasters are supposed to serve.

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'I am ready to admit, at least in theory, that competition may lead to a better Western, a better panel game, or a better comedy series. Whether it has done so is another matter. What competition between different networks or broadcasting services does not, on the evidence, provide is a better choice of programmes.

'I wonder whether a careful analysis would show that the inhabitants of New York with access to seven channels have, at any rate in the peak evening viewing hours, a wider choice of programmes than the inhabitants of London. And I should add that the inhabitants of London would have a wider choice still if its programmes were all planned by one non-commercial authority.

'Perhaps I may conclude by saying something about American television as one sees it abroad (the warmth of American hospitality makes it difficult to see much of American television on one's occasional visits to this country). The subject is not I think irrelevant to my general theme, which has been the broadcaster's responsibility.

'At the end of last year the BBC showed a ninety-minute film called *Television and the World*. It was made by one of our own directors and was an attempt to show the present development of television in many different countries, not only in Europe and the United States, but also in Africa,

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Asia and Latin America. Most people who saw the film found it a depressing experience. The main impression was of the way in which television is being misused—of the way, it would not be too harsh to say, in which broadcasters are betraying their responsibilities.

‘In so many countries Governments seem to think that national prestige demands the installation of a television service. The programmes can be put together anyhow. With limited studio accommodation and still more limited budgets, it is inevitable that television services, particularly in the so-called under-developed countries, should fall back on imported material. I hardly need to say that the American television and film industry has been able to provide a great deal of assistance in such cases—and very cheaply. The result is that night after night around the world people are huddled around television sets in their homes and in public places to watch Westerns and crime and adventure series, and not always the best of their kind. (Not that I have anything against a well-regulated dose of the very best Westerns and crime and adventure programmes.)

‘Perhaps it does not matter so much that, as the director of our film reported, many Africans believe that Americans go everywhere on horseback and that every American home has its complement of

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bullet holes. Much more serious must be the ultimately corrupting effect of constantly seeing violence used not only by criminals but by the upholders of what should be law and order. The shoddiest of all the shoddy arguments used to justify this is that such films are educational because, forsooth, they show the triumph of right over wrong.

‘Looking at the world as a whole, one cannot help feeling that a great opportunity is being lost—and I hope you will not think that I am abusing your hospitality in saying so. The leadership of the Western world is today in American hands. History has known few nobler or more selfless actions than the generosity which America has shown to other nations during the last twenty years. One cannot help wondering whether the good that has been done by programme after programme of foreign aid is in danger of being undone by the image of America as it appears in programme after programme on the television screens of the world.’

Sometimes in Germany, and universally in Austria, the staff of broadcasting organisations are chosen partly because of their political opinions. If the head of a department is a conservative, his deputy must be a socialist and vice versa. Many

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far-sighted people in those countries regard this system with distaste, and its existence is one sign that Herr Brauer was right when he said to me on the occasion of my farewell in Hamburg in November 1948 that I should fail in the long run in my intention of excluding party political influences on broadcasting in Germany.

I was asked by those who wanted to bring about changes in Austria (they, too, have failed) to speak to an invited audience about the political independence of the BBC, and this was what I said in September 1963 about the position of the staff of the BBC in this connection:

'We have a strict rule that neither outside candidates nor staff members considered for any post may be questioned as to their political views or party political allegiance.

'Although I am the Director-General, there is no reason why anyone should know how I cast my vote at the last General Election, and it would never occur to anyone to ask. And the same is true of the whole of our staff. Sweeping statements are sometimes made to the effect that our whole staff inclines too much to the Left or too much to the Right. Statements of this kind are not heard from responsible quarters, and we can afford to ignore them.'

Perhaps I could regard a speech I made to the

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Foreign Press Association in London in December 1963 as an extension of these foreign excursions. From that I should like to include some remarks which I made about the position of the Board of Governors of the BBC, their relations with the Director-General and the Director-General's relations, in his turn, with his staff. They will, I think, always be valid, however personalities may change:

'Who then is responsible for the control of the BBC? There is no owner other than the public, so, as with a newspaper which has not got a single clearly defined owner, one looks for a Board. In our case this Board is the BBC's Board of Governors and they have ultimate responsibility for everything that is broadcast. They are appointed by the Queen in Council, which means, in effect, the Government of the day and, by one of those strange British conventions which are so inexplicable in many other countries, they cease, from the moment of their appointment, to have any political character which they may previously have had and become trustees of the national interest.

'Their job is to provide the element of ultimate control and the element of responsibility which must be the accompaniment of independence. The Board's role, as was said in the evidence submitted to the Beveridge Committee on Broadcasting, is to keep in close touch with the work of their

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Corporation, to bring their judgement to bear on the questions which come before them and to ensure as far as possible that change proceeds in the right direction.

‘But no matter how responsible a Board may be and no matter how often they meet and how much interest they take, they cannot really be responsible for the day-to-day running of an organisation. They must have a chief executive, an editor; and that editor or chief executive is me. And here I must digress for a moment to emphasise once again this strangely British fact of political independence. I was appointed by the Board of Governors and so were my predecessors. No Government had any say. And no Government can sack me. Only the Board of Governors can.

‘Clearly, this situation can only work if there is a two-way flow of confidence and trust between a Board of Governors and a Director-General and that this is so the present Board and Director-General would certainly agree. But, equally, an organisation can only work if this two-way flow of trust and confidence extends downwards from the chief executive to his staff, and here again I like to believe that this is so. No correspondent could do his work if he had an editor constantly breathing down his neck. And the same is true of producers. Nothing could be achieved by censorship or coer-

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cion, either from within the Corporation or from the outside—nothing, that is, except the frustration of creative people who achieve their best work by the conscious stimulation of their positive ideas. “Education”, as Lord Brougham said, “makes a people easy to lead and difficult to drive, easy to govern but impossible to enslave”, and this is certainly true of my production staff.

‘But this does not mean that correspondents or producers can be allowed to do exactly as they like. They must know what is what in the mind of their editor or Director-General and their Board and the sort of standards at which they should aim and by which their work should be governed. What I am really saying then is that, in an operation as diverse in its output as broadcasting, the only sure way of exercising control is to proceed by persuasion and conviction, and by encouraging the staff immediately responsible to apply their judgement to particular problems in a framework of general guidance which rises from the continuing discussion of programmes by themselves, by their seniors, by myself and my fellow Directors on our Board of Management, and, at times, by our Board of Governors.’

Though it too was not exactly a ‘foreign excursion’, it seems logical since I have touched on the

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relations between Governors and Director-General to include at this point an extract from an interview with Kenneth Harris of the *Observer* which took place in March 1964:

Harris: What makes a good Director-General?

Greene: God alone knows. It's a very personal job. There's a certain amount you have to do in a more or less routine way, but the important part is what you do your own way, for better or worse. I can't tell you what makes a good Director-General... But I can tell you one thing which makes a good BBC—it's a good relationship between the Director-General and the Chairman of the Governors. However able and well-intentioned a Director-General was, or a Chairman, if they couldn't work together, the BBC would be in trouble. The Director-General works *for* the Governors. It is the Governors who interpret the public to him whenever they think necessary, not just when he asks them. The Governors can ask him to take programmes off. As a matter of fact I believe the Governors take more interest in programmes today than they ever did before, partly because so many of our programmes are controversial, pioneering. Governors usually learn very quickly how the machinery works, what strains it will stand, how best it is used. The newcomers to the Board are staggered. The Board is renewed by

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instalments, so that a new Governor can learn the ropes from those who have had more experience. If the Governors started to try to run the BBC themselves from day to day there'd be an awful breakdown in no time.

Harris: What are we to make of reports at any time of rows between the Director-General and the Governors?

Greene: Complete nonsense. If there was an honest-to-goodness row and a real breach between the Director-General and the Board of Governors, the Director-General would have either resigned or have been sacked before you read about the row in the newspapers. Things would have become quite impossible and he would have had to go. One task of the Governors is to create the atmosphere in which the Director-General works. He must know their minds: they must know his. I think people would think less in terms of rows if they understood better what critical discussion was—free critical discussion—and the amount of it that goes on in the BBC. People who work in the BBC are encouraged to be openly critical about each other's work, and, being selected among other things for their intelligence and ability to be critical, and for the strength of character to give and take criticism, they don't need much encouraging. Naturally critical discussion at all working levels is repeated

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in out-of-hours talk at BBC clubs and BBC pubs. When outsiders hear it, and there is no reason why they shouldn't, it sometimes gets blown up into a picture of an organisation ravaged from top to bottom and from left to right by a multitude of marauding robber barons.

On the other hand, you often hear people talk of the top-heavy bureaucratic monolithic BBC giant, where no man can call his soul his own and where everybody has his place in the structure and can't move out of it. The two pictures contradict each other, and both extremes are wrong.

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So we come to the heart of the matter, the programmes which the BBC exists to put out and the changes which during the last decade have led to so much discussion, so many hundreds of telephone calls, so many thousands of letters, so many column yards in the press. In a talk to the Society of Bookmen in January 1964 I quoted what Dr Johnson said in the preface to his dictionary about the lot of lexicographers: 'It is the fate of those who toil at the lower employments of life to be rather driven by the fear of evil than attracted by the prospect of good; to be exposed to censure without hope of praise; to be disgraced by miscarriage or punished for neglect, where success would have been without applause and diligence without reward. . . . Among these unhappy mortals is the writer of dictionaries.' Any Director-General of the BBC given to self-pity might add himself to the list. He is the universal Aunt Sally of our day.

In February 1965 I spoke in Rome to a conference of UNDA, the International Catholic Association

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for Radio and Television. I had been given a rather high-sounding subject, 'The Conscience of the Programme Director'. It was an unusual sort of gathering for me and from the beginning there was something odd about the whole affair. On the morning of February 9th 1965 I woke up in my Rome hotel and drew the curtains. Outside the whole world was white. As I stood there a tree in the square outside my window slowly collapsed, with the grace of a ballet dancer, under the weight of snow. During the night Rome had had its heaviest snow-fall for more than two centuries. The hall in which I was due to speak was about half an hour's drive away at the best of times: the car which was due to pick me up never came: there was not a taxi to be had. At last I found a piratical car-driver who was extorting enormous sums for his services. We proceeded, slithering crab-wise, at a remarkably high speed, drenched every hundred yards or so by the police who, in the absence of any other equipment, were optimistically playing fire-hoses on the streets and the passing traffic, thereby making the freeze-up even worse. There were men coming down the Spanish Steps on skis.

I arrived nearly an hour late at the place where I was supposed to speak, to find nobody there at all, except, fortunately, a barman who for the next hour

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or so kept me liberally supplied with black coffee laced with brandy.

Gradually people, mostly priests of every conceivable nationality, drifted in and also settled down with sighs of satisfaction to the coffee and the brandy. After about a couple of hours somebody suggested that I might like to deliver my address. It was then found that the interpreters had not arrived. Why not go ahead with volunteers? some genius asked. This was immediately vetoed by the large and formidable lady with a heavy cavalry moustache who was in charge of the hall. She would never hear the last of it from the Interpreters' Union; her hall would be black-listed.

Finally the interpreters did turn up and after we had all had some more coffee and brandy we filed into the hall and, in a more cheerful mood than usual, I got up to speak. I had been speaking for about one minute when all the lights went out.

The interpreters were working with the most up-to-date electrical apparatus for simultaneous translation into several different languages, and they were considerably put out. Suddenly the lights came on and I started all over again. In thirty seconds they went out and stayed out: there was a power failure over the whole area.

So I read my speech by candle-light without any interpretation. This was taken in good part by most

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of those present, who seemed to understand enough English anyway. The only objectors were some French priests, who were apparently under the impression that the whole affair was some sort of obscure affront to French national pride.

In fact what I had to say went down remarkably well. Some young Irish priests were particularly enthusiastic and said that I really ought to be talking to the members of the Vatican Council: they might learn something from it. Little did I foresee the storms that were about to break round my head.

In May 1965—my speech had obviously reached Scotland with gratifying rapidity in spite of weather conditions in Italy—the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland passed what is known as a Deliverance in the following terms:

The General Assembly, deeply concerned by certain statements and programmes emanating from the BBC which would seem to suggest a change of policy in regard to matters of moral and spiritual importance, thank the Church and Nation Committee for its vigilance in this matter and, realising that democracy and society can be damaged as much by a decadent morality as by subversive politics and that the Christian conscience of Scotland has been outraged, call upon the Chairman

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and Governors of the BBC to reverse immediately the policy recently put forward by the Director-General, in order that the high moral standards of the BBC may be restored.

The General Assembly instruct the Principal Clerk to send copies of this Deliverance and the relevant section of the Report to the Chairman of the Board of Governors and the Director-General of the BBC, the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Postmaster-General and all Scottish Members of Parliament.

Strong stuff, and, I think, of general social interest far beyond the actual contents of my speech. What was acceptable in Rome, so often regarded as the home of censorship, was wicked, subversive stuff in Scotland, but not, I hasten to say, to all Scots or to all clergymen of the Church of Scotland. Even in the General Assembly there was one voice to defend me—in fact in rather extravagant terms: I did not feel that I was being crucified. And I had letters from other Scottish clergymen regretting their General Assembly's Deliverance.

I hardly need to say that the BBC Board of Governors refused to repudiate my Rome speech.

In October 1965 Lord Normanbrook, then the Chairman of the BBC Board of Governors, and I went to Edinburgh—not to Canossa—to meet

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representatives of the General Assembly. It was an interesting meeting and we did not recant. What has remained most clearly in my mind is the demand made by one of the Scottish clergymen (I am sure most of his colleagues in the delegation did not agree with it) that the BBC should revert to what it had been in the 1920s—not even the 1930s, the 1920s!

This seems to me to be a perfect example of how communication between human beings of the same generation brought up in the same little island can be as impossible as communication between, say, hawks and handsaws (even when the wind is southerly).

What could one say? Lord Normanbrook, a man of his time if ever there was one, was just as much at a loss as I was.

I am afraid that, after all this, what I actually said in Rome will come as something of an anti-climax.

THE CONSCIENCE OF THE PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

I speak to you today with great humility on a subject to which all of you, I feel sure, have given much more thought than I have in the course of a busy journalistic life. We are all conditioned by our early life and in my approach to broadcasting I have always remained, incorrigibly, a journalist.

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In preparing to speak today to this International Catholic Association so soon after the Vatican Council's recent discussions on Ecumenism which I followed with great interest in the press and in our own broadcasts from Rome, I was particularly struck by the parallels between the problems of Ecumenism and of broadcasting.

The senior representative of my own country at those discussions, the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal-Elect Heenan, described the purpose of Ecumenism in these terms :

Its object is not the conversion either of non-Catholics or non-Christians. It sets out to break down barriers between religious denominations in order that each may come to know and better understand the other. Ecumenism is an essay not in polemics but in charity. The dialogue is not a battle of wits. Its intention is not for one side to score a victory, but for each side to emerge with deeper knowledge of the other.

Substituting for 'Ecumenism' the word 'broadcasting', and enlarging the religious concept to which Cardinal-Elect Heenan referred to include also the widest secular concepts, I believe that his definition provides some notable parallels.

Broadcasting's true objectives too, I believe, are

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not 'conversions' but rather the 'breaking down of barriers', so that those of differing views 'may come to know and better understand' each other's attitudes. Like Ecumenism, broadcasting's main purposes, I believe, are not 'polemics' or 'battles of wits'; not the 'scoring of victories', but rather the emerging of each side in controversial matters 'with a deeper knowledge of the other'.

This does not mean that broadcasting should try to avoid entirely 'polemics' or 'battles of wits'—or even some 'scoring of victories'. My own personal attitude is far too combative for me to think that. I believe that sometimes these things make for lively broadcasting, and without some liveliness there will soon be no broadcasting, or at least only broadcasting to a limited and intellectually moribund audience. But they are not its main purpose.

The main purpose of broadcasting, I suggest, is to make the microphone and the television screen available to the widest possible range of subjects and to the best exponents available of the differing views on any given subject, to let the debate decide or not decide as the case may be, and in Cardinal-Elect Heenan's words 'to emerge with a deeper knowledge'.

The presentation of varying views does not mean that the BBC merely seeks to foster an equivocal attitude towards all that it broadcasts, to attach an

ubiquitous, unanswered question-mark to everything it touches in religion, culture, politics or education. But it does mean, in my opinion, that the BBC should encourage the examination of views and opinions in an atmosphere of healthy scepticism.

I say 'healthy scepticism' because I have a very strong personal conviction that scepticism is a most healthy frame of mind in which to examine accepted attitudes and test views which, in many cases, have hitherto been accepted too easily or too long. Perhaps what is needed, ideally, (though we cannot all—I certainly cannot—achieve the ideal) is what T. S. Eliot described as 'an ability to combine the deepest scepticism with the profoundest faith'.

It follows that in its search for truth—indeed in whatever it undertakes—a broadcasting organisation must recognise an obligation towards tolerance and towards the maximum liberty of expression. As John Milton put it three hundred years ago in one of the most famous essays in the English language against censorship and in favour of freedom of expression, 'Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions; for opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making.'

Obligations towards tolerance and liberty of expression for serious thought are not, of course, problems only of the BBC, nor only of broadcasting

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organisations. Long before the discoveries of that great Italian, Guglielmo Marconi (to whom all we broadcasters owe our professional origins), your own Church here in Rome had some experience of these problems—going back to Galileo and beyond. Echoes of this were heard during the Vatican Council's discussions.

Indeed, in the presence in Rome of an organisation with close on two thousand years' experience of judging what limits and safeguards need to be placed on total freedom of expression, you may well think it presumptuous of me to discuss the experience and views of an organisation which goes back only a little over forty years and in which I have had less than twenty-five years' personal experience. But in discussing the subject you have given me, 'The Conscience of the Programme Director', I excuse myself with the reflection that all such programmes only go back those same forty (or, to be precise, forty-two and a half) years that the BBC goes back and that, therefore, no *broadcasting* organisation in the world has a longer experience of the particular modern form which these problems of freedom of expression take. I am very conscious too of the fact that I am going to express a very personal attitude with which some of my predecessors might at some points quite strongly disagree.

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First of all perhaps it would be helpful if I were to describe briefly the legal and constitutional limitations within which the BBC works.

Like Great Britain itself, the BBC has no—or almost no—written constitution. It is not a commercial company; therefore it is not subject to the legal limitations of Acts of Parliament regulating companies. It is not a Government department; therefore it is not answerable for its day-to-day operations, and particularly not for details of its programmes, to a Government Minister or Parliament.

In theory the Postmaster-General (the Minister who in Britain is responsible for broadcasting matters in the very broad sense) and, behind him, the Government can, subject to certain safeguards, require the BBC to broadcast or refrain from broadcasting any particular matter. But, in practice, in forty-two and a half years this right has never been exercised in respect of any single programme. This fact alone, in view of the significance and authority we give in Britain to such working precedents, makes it highly unlikely, I think, that it ever would be exercised in face of opposition from the BBC's independent governing body and its Director-General.

The BBC in fact operates under one of the least restricting legal instruments known in Britain,

namely a Royal Charter, supported by a licence to operate from the Postmaster-General. These two instruments lay down a relatively small number of things which the BBC must *not* do. It must not carry advertisements or sponsored programmes. It must not express its own opinions about current affairs or matters of public policy. Almost the only positive thing which the Corporation *is* required to do is to broadcast daily an impartial account of the proceedings of Parliament—and even that the BBC started to do on its own initiative before it was made an obligation.

For the rest, the BBC is left to conduct its affairs to the broad satisfaction of the British people (and, in the last analysis, of Parliament) under the guidance and legal responsibility of a group of nine distinguished individuals known as Governors.

This Board of Governors, once appointed (for fixed periods of time), is free to guide the Corporation and its affairs and policies according to their best judgement, without detailed answerability to any outside body or Minister. The Governors in turn appoint the Director-General—at present myself—and then leave him, with his executives, to conduct the day-to-day affairs of the BBC and its programmes.

From all this you will gather that the BBC, its Governors and Director-General are remarkably

free of controls or restrictions from outside—from politicians or written laws.

Of course, again like Britain itself, over the years a number of conventions have grown up which, almost with the force of law, but not quite, govern the BBC's conduct in practice. But I must emphasise again that unlike, for example, theatres in Britain (which are subject to the censorship of a high official of the Court) and unlike the cinema (which is subject to censorship by a self-established cinema industry board of censors and also to the rulings of local legal authorities known as magistrates)—unlike all these, the BBC is subject only to its own self-control and, naturally, to the laws of the country. As many of this audience will know, these laws in Britain are especially severe in a field which is of especial concern to all broadcasters and newspapermen—the law of defamation.

But subject to these few restrictions the BBC, its Governors and Director-General are left alone to keep for themselves the delicate balance between freedom and responsibility.

How do we in the BBC interpret and use this freedom? Straight away I should say we do not see this freedom as total licence. We have (and believe strongly in) editorial control. Producers of individual programmes are not simply allowed to do whatever they like. Lines must be drawn

somewhere. At the same time there must be stimulation of ideas in an atmosphere of freedom. In stimulating these ideas we have to take account of several important factors, some of which are new to this age of broadcasting, some of which are as old as articulate man himself.

We have to resist attempts at censorship. As Professor Hoggart, one of our leading British writers on the themes of broadcasting and freedom, has noted recently, these attempts at censorship come not merely from what he describes as the 'old Guardians' (senior clergy, writers of leading articles in newspapers, presidents of national voluntary organisations) who like to think of themselves as upholders of cultural standards although, in many cases, they lack the qualities of intellect and imagination to justify that claim. They come nowadays also from groups—Hoggart calls them the 'new Populists'—which do not claim to be 'Guardians' but claim to speak for 'ordinary decent people' and to be 'forced to take a stand against' *unnecessary* dirt, *gratuitous* sex, *excessive* violence, and so on. These 'new Populists' will attack whatever does not underwrite a set of prior assumptions, assumptions which are anti-intellectual and unimaginative. Superficially this seems like a 'grass-roots' movement. In practice it can threaten a dangerous form of censorship—censorship which works by causing

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artists and writers not to take risks, not to undertake those adventures of the spirit which must be at the heart of every truly new creative work.

Such a censorship is the more to be condemned when we remember that, historically, the greatest risks have attached to the maintenance of what is right and honourable and true. Honourable men who venture to be different, to move ahead of—or even against—the general trend of public feeling, with sincere conviction and with the intention of enlarging the understanding of our society and its problems, may well feel the scourge of public hostility many times over before their worth is recognised. It is the clear duty of a public-service broadcasting organisation to stand firm against attempts to decry sincerity and vision, whether in the field of public affairs or in the less easily judged world of the arts including the dramatic art.

I believe that broadcasters have a duty not to be diverted by arguments in favour of what is, in fact, disguised censorship. 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. I believe that great broadcasting organisations, with their immense powers of patronage for writers and artists, should not neglect to cultivate young writers who may by many be considered 'too advanced', even 'shocking'.

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Such allegations have been made throughout the ages. Many writers have been condemned as subversive when first published. Henrik Ibsen, for example, was at one time regarded as too shocking for his plays to be staged in Britain. Indeed, I am informed he was at one time on the *Index* of your own Church here in Rome—not, I gather, that many people take the *Index* very seriously nowadays.

At least in the secular and scientific fields today's heresies often prove to be tomorrow's dogmas. And, in the case of the potential Ibsens of today, we must not by covert censorship run the risk of stifling, before they are grown, talents which may prove great.

I do not need to be reminded that broadcasting has access to every home and to an audience of all ages and varying degrees of sophistication. We must rely, therefore, not only on our own disciplines, but on those which have to be exercised by, among others, parents. Programme plans must, to my mind, be made on the assumption that the audience is capable of reasonable behaviour and of the exercise of intelligence—and of choice. No other basis will meet the needs of the situation. How *can* one consciously plan for the unreasonable or the unintelligent? It is impossible.

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Editorial discretion must concern itself with two aspects of the content of broadcasting—subjects and treatments. If the audience is to be considered, as it really is, as a series of individual minds, each with its own claim to enlightenment, each of different capacity and interests, and not as that statistical abstraction the 'mass' audience, then it would seem to me that no subject can be excluded from the range of broadcasting simply for being what it is. The questions which we must face are those of identifying the times and the circumstances in which we may expect to find the intended audience for a given programme.

Relevance is the key—relevance to the audience and to the tide of opinion in society. Outrage is impermissible. Shock is not always so. Provocation may be healthy and indeed socially imperative. These are the issues to which the broadcaster must apply his conscience. But treatment of the subject, once chosen, demands the most careful assessment of the reasonable limits of tolerance in the audience, if there is any likelihood of these limits being tested by the manner of presentation of the material. As I have said, however, no subject is (for me) excluded simply for what it is.

The most recent Committee of Enquiry into Broadcasting in Britain described the responsibilities of broadcasting in these matters like this:

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Broadcasting must pay particular attention to those parts of the range of worthwhile experience which lie beyond the most common; to those parts which some have explored here and there, but few everywhere. Finally, and of special importance: because the range of experience is not finite but constantly growing, and because the growing points are usually most significant, it is on these that broadcasting must focus a spotlight.

Does all this, I wonder, strike some of you as arrogant? What right have I and my colleagues in the BBC—even with the guidance of our Board of Governors—to decide where lines should be drawn? Why should we be more wise than outside censors? I don't suppose we always are more wise. But—here we come to another of my personal convictions and one which I think one can support from the experience of history—it is better to err on the side of freedom than of restriction.

Attempts at both open and disguised forms of censorship are only one of the forms of pressure to which the BBC—like all other independent broadcasting organisations—is subject. In the case of the BBC, however, we are especially fortunate in our power to resist. The system of licence fees paid by our viewers and listeners is one which makes us

financially independent not only of the Government but also of commercial pressures.

I hardly need to remind an international audience like this of examples of the kinds of pressure of which some Governments are capable. What may happen in various parts of the world where programmes are broadcast under the commercial 'sponsorship' system is perhaps somewhat less familiar. A former Chairman of the American Federal Communications Commission, Mr Newton Minow, has described a classic example of such pressures. The gas industry sponsored the presentation in a drama series of a play about the Nuremberg War Trials under the title *Judgment at Nuremberg*. Viewers noticed that a speech by the actor Claude Rains about the killing through cyanide gas of thousands of concentration camp prisoners was abruptly interrupted by a deletion of words. The editing was done by a television network engineer while the videotape recording of the drama was actually on the air. The words eliminated were 'gas chamber'. The editing was done to accommodate the gas industry sponsor; and a broadcasting company executive later gave this explanation: 'We felt that a lot of people could not differentiate between the kind of gas you put in the death chambers and the kind you cook with.'

One of American television's finest writers, Rod

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Serling, has also recounted the changes in a script that an advertising agency can force. Mr Serling had based a one-hour drama on the lynching of a Negro boy in the deep South. By the time the agency had finished with the story, the chief character was a former convict and living not even in the South but in New England!

Nor can we on this side of the Atlantic afford to be smug about the dangers. Our own post-bag of correspondence at the BBC is full of examples of attempts to exercise pressure in favour of this interest or against that—usually by complaints or by thinly-disguised threats to cause trouble by approaches to Members of Parliament.

Without true independence, therefore, it is difficult for any broadcaster to maintain the highest standards of truth, accuracy and impartiality. Conversely, of course, without a reputation for these things—truth, accuracy and impartiality—it is difficult for any broadcasting organisation to be recognised as truly independent and to be generally trusted.

Truth and accuracy are concepts which are not susceptible of legal definition. The Government in Britain is content after forty years' experience of the BBC to recognise that the BBC tries to honour these concepts and to treat 'with due impartiality' all controversial subjects.

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But although in the day-to-day issues of public life the BBC tries to attain the highest standards of impartiality, there are some respects in which it is not neutral, unbiassed or impartial. That is, where there are clashes for and against the basic moral values—truthfulness, justice, freedom, compassion, tolerance, for example.

Nor do I believe that we should be impartial about certain things like racialism or extreme forms of political belief. Being too good 'democrats' in these matters could open the way to the destruction of our democracy itself. I believe a healthy democracy does not evade decisions about what it can never allow if it is to survive.

The actions and aspirations of those who proclaim these ideas are so clearly damaging to society, to peace and good order, even in their immediate effects, that to put at their disposal the enormous power of broadcasting would be to conspire with them against society. But the case must be clear, and the potential effects immediate and damaging, before we can claim the right to exclude.

Finally, I come to a field which is of special concern to UNDA, as a Catholic organisation seeking to establish a philosophy of broadcasting. I speak of religious broadcasting. I would suggest that in radio and television it is for the Church, all Churches, not to adopt a merely negative or critical

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attitude towards these new forms of communication. They should recognise that the techniques of communication in the modern age are something which the Church must acquire, and about which it must take an attitude which is positive and shows readiness to experiment in the forms such communication should take.

I think I can speak with some authority here because, as far as I am aware, our range of religious broadcasting is unrivalled anywhere in the world, because of, rather than in spite of, the increasingly secular nature of our society.

The field of religious broadcasting is one in which, probably more than any other, broadcasters have to honour and respect the feelings of their audience—if only because it is a field in which beliefs and feelings are more deeply, and often more easily, aroused.

This does not mean that in our broadcasting on religious matters we avoid the difficult or controversial questions. The BBC long ago added religious controversy to the other forms of controversy which it is prepared to broadcast. It regards it as its duty, too, to broadcast views of *unbelief*, as well as of differing beliefs. We do not, for example, think it wrong to allow broadcasting opportunities to Humanists. We believe in fact that it is our duty to help to remove blinkers from believers—and unbelievers too—who may be inclined to wear them.

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One of Britain's leading present-day Anglican theologians, Dr Vidler of Cambridge, has declared, 'Real Christianity can be healthily recovered only by having to contend on equal terms with competing faiths and No-faiths, and by being forced to re-discover its own base.' Or, as John Milton, again, put it much earlier, 'Though all the winds of doctrine were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter?'

In all these matters of belief and conscience I believe that the fundamental rule is *not* to avoid everything that is difficult or controversial, but on the other hand to be sure that we honour other people's consciences, even where we, as programme producers, do not, or even cannot, share their beliefs.

In the last analysis the decisions of all broadcasting organisations about what to broadcast and in what form come back, as UNDA has truly observed in giving me the title for this lecture, to the 'conscience of the programme director'.

In their output of television and radio programmes, producers and their programme directors have to put into effect, by daily, hourly or even instantaneous decision, their own judgements of

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what it is proper to put forward to an audience which may run into millions.

These judgements must spring (since they have to be exercised at such speed) from some ingrained code, which in its turn is derived from basic standards. These standards, in practice, are composed, I believe, of a number of different elements:

- (a) The personal attitudes of producers, programme chiefs and directors—which depend upon their own beliefs and upbringing.
- (b) The general code of practice established in the BBC, though not made rigid, by experience.
- (c) The proper sensitivity of production staff to the world around them, so that they are concerned with a relationship to the audience which cannot exist if the language in which they are talking, and the assumptions they are making, seem to be remote from the language and assumptions of the audience and of the times in which they are communicating.

These things, I believe, add up to 'the conscience of the programme director', and I think I have made clear the sort of atmosphere in which I am convinced that that conscience should be exercised.

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The Fowler Report on Broadcasting in Canada said, 'The only thing that really matters in broadcasting is programme content; all the rest is housekeeping.' Very true. But, all the same, the housekeeping is very important and inevitably takes up a great deal of the time of a Director-General. From time to time there have been suggestions that administration should take up all his time—which would be nonsense.

In an interview on Border Television in March 1965 I referred to the campaign to 'curb Greene' launched by some not very important Ministers in the Conservative government in the spring of 1964 and I remarked, 'One of the elements in that was to confine me to administration and one felt that the attitude among the people who took that line was "By gad, sir, we've got a Director-General of the BBC who's interested in programmes, we can't have that".'

I was, I should say, an editorial Director-General who was interested in administration. I enjoyed being Director of Administration from 1956 to 1958

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and it gave me some pleasure when I was made a Fellow of the British Institute of Management in 1966.

In connection with some of the financial problems peculiar to broadcasting I said in a lecture in Duisburg in October 1966:

‘Early and farsighted decisions about general broadcasting policy are essential, and one must be aware of their inevitable financial consequences. The scale of the initial capital investment is so small in relation to the total broadcasting expenditure that it is very tempting to take the first step. In sound broadcasting, for example, the construction of the principal Third Network transmitter and of the related supplementary transmitters cost the BBC some £400,000. And yet this decision, because it implied an ultimate full day’s service, has committed us to an expenditure which is now running at about £4 millions a year.

‘By the end of the first phase of construction of the BBC-2 transmitter network we shall have spent some £14½ millions. The cost of providing the programme service for forty hours a week, which is the present average, is running at about £10 millions a year, a figure which will rise as output increases. The greatest capital expenditure we have ever succeeded in attaining in a single year in our domestic operations, at the most intensive phase in the build-

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up of BBC-2, studios and transmitters included, was some £8,750,000. This represented rather less than one-sixth of our income in that year. It may take us some ten years before we complete the BBC-2 network to the reasonable satisfaction of the viewing public. The total cost to the BBC will be of the order of £35 millions. The average annual capital expenditure for this purpose over the ten years will therefore be some £3½ millions.

‘These figures are the clearest possible demonstration of the need for an intimate understanding by all those concerned of the relationship between major policy decisions and their ultimate consequences in terms of the money which has to be found for programmes.’

A fuller statement of my philosophy of broadcasting administration came in a talk I gave at the Fellows' Lunch of the British Institute of Management in November 1968:

BBC MANAGEMENT TODAY

During the last twenty-eight years of my life I have been at different levels both a manager and an editor. Before that I was a foreign correspondent and foreign correspondents have historically not always made good editors or managers. However that may be, I hope to be able to show you that even

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under my leadership the BBC has known how to combine good management with good broadcasting.

It must occur immediately to many of you that it is hard to find a yardstick by which to measure the efficient management of an organisation which has no shareholders and makes no profits on its broadcasting activities. But don't forget that the BBC runs a publishing house with an annual turnover of several millions. It made a net trading profit of some £850,000 in the last financial year. Our Television Enterprise department grossed nearly £1½ million in sales from all its commercial activities round the world during the same period. On these commercial activities we pay income tax. On our broadcasting activities we don't—as a result of winning a court case a few years ago. I was once able to persuade a doubting American of the BBC's independence of Government by telling him we had fought through three stages an ultimately successful case against the Treasury. But that by the way.

It has been said that management's aim is to use available resources in the most effective possible way, which usually means the way which yields the highest economic return—or profit.

The BBC has heavy fixed costs, and so it must organise itself to ensure as far as possible that there is the minimum of slack in the use of its equipment and facilities.

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In 1964 some German consultants, DEORGA of Stuttgart, spent several weeks with the BBC Television Service. They had been commissioned by West German Television to advise on the re-organisation of production methods, and they came to us for purposes of comparison. They found that the productivity of BBC television studios was six or seven times higher than that of West German studios, and they said that our methods should be taken as the standard against which to judge West German practice. More recently the firm of McKinsey gave the BBC pretty good marks for the planning and control of the use of available resources.

We approached the McKinsey study in the knowledge that successive Committees on Broadcasting had praised our management of resources. But we were not complacent, and McKinsey was asked to look at the whole organisation and tell us how in its opinion we could make ourselves better managers in the long term. McKinsey made its diagnosis and now we are working on the treatment. Incidentally, the words 'bureaucracy' and 'red tape', so freely used in allegedly inside stories about the McKinsey Report, do not appear, even by implication, in the document.

Many of you know enough about McKinsey's philosophy to be able to visualise how Roger

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Morrison and his team approached their task. Let me remind you of the four points made in Roger Morrison's article in the November edition of *Management Today* last year. First he said that managements need to be challenged continually to improve on past performance. They have to be set tough goals or improvement targets. Second, he said that middle management should be given more responsibility. Delegation pays dividends. Third, he pointed out that most mistakes in decision-making could be traced to the absence of relatively few simple but vital facts. Management information was essential. Finally, he called for a greater awareness of the need to be impatient with the *status quo*. He called this constructive dissatisfaction.

Now all these are sensible comments, and any big organisation can learn from them. But of course management consultancy is no novelty to the BBC. McKinsey is one among many firms which have helped us over the years. And we have our own internal management consultants, who more than earn their keep.

Let me give you an example—a small and rather light-hearted one.

When I became Director of Administration in 1956 I received a report from our Organisation and Methods people on one cosy corner of the BBC. The three good people concerned—let us call them Pip,

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Squeak and Wilfred—spent their time checking and cross-checking costs to the nearest penny regardless of the fact that they were duplicating the effort of at least one other department in the BBC. Every quarter they proudly gave birth to a thick schedule of costs. A member of the Organisation and Methods staff tactfully asked the senior official for whom the schedule was intended whether he found it useful. 'Which schedule do you mean?' the official asked. The Organisation and Methods man obligingly explained. 'Oh,' he said, 'that thing! I never read it. It goes straight into my wastepaper basket.' Well, that was all a long time ago.

One of the most common misconceptions about the BBC is that it is obese and overloaded with administrators. It isn't. Not having spent all my life working in the BBC, I can make comparisons.

Of our 23,000 staff nearly 15,000 are what one might call the front-line troops, production staff and engineers. Over 5,000 are manual staff, divided into nearly a hundred different crafts and trades, and some of these are front-line too. That leaves under 3,000 of the total strength, of which less than one third are pure administration.

Being big can be praiseworthy—for some. No one ever calls us the British Broadcasting Giant in the approving way beloved of headline writers when dealing with some other industries.

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We are big, but no bigger than we need to be to transmit more than 23,000 hours of radio and more than 6,000 hours of television every year on the national networks. I have not included the hours of broadcasting heard only in the regions of the staggering output of our external services. . . .

How do we monitor the expenditure of resources on programmes? We at the BBC naturally look at this question from an angle which is somewhat different from that of many industrialists. Many of the things produced in industry respond to a predictable universal demand. The products of broadcasting must be as varied as the human beings they serve. Each programme is—or should be—custom-built, in fact a ‘one-off’.

The manager must not ask the producer to subordinate quality to cost. What he can and does do, however, is to demand that the producer should reconcile the two. For example, an over-enthusiastic producer may call for a number of elaborate sets. The carpenters go to work; the design department purrs over the successful results, which create exactly the right illusion; but on the day of the production much of the elaborate detail never comes within the cameraman’s field of vision. My imaginary producer has let his creative instincts swamp his managerial common sense.

Many of you will no doubt have seen editions of

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'The Money Programme'. Some of you, I am sure, have appeared in the programme. In the current quarter of the financial year the producer, Michael Bunce, is working on twelve editions of twenty-five minutes each. In the middle of August he submitted a programme budget estimate. On this estimate he showed item by item what he expected to have to spend on each edition.

This was not simply a statement of cash expenditure—artists' fees, transport and so on. It itemised the cost of all the central facilities on which he intended to draw during this quarter. They included the salaries of his assistants and the use of studios and editing channels. One of the least expensive items in the estimate was the cost of making up the faces of the people who were to appear in the programme. I hope that the producer meant that as a compliment. Those who appear in 'The Money Programme', which is in colour, never, I am sure, suffer from a condition known in the profession as 'Brewer's—or Vintner's—flush'.

After doing his sums Michael Bunce found that the total cash outlay within his programme allowance was going to be about £1,800 per edition, and that he would need to allow about £1,200 a time for his use of facilities. In other words, he expected to use an average of £3,000 of the BBC's total resources in the production of each edition. Every

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fortnight he will be told how his efforts to keep within that budget estimate are getting on. After four weeks the cost accountants will have worked out in detail the cost per hour of his programme, so that he can compare it with the average cost per hour of all programmes within his Group. The Controller of BBC-2, David Attenborough, as well as the Head of Current Affairs Group, John Grist, will also be comparing the estimate and the actual results.

'The Money Programme', of course, is homework for you. Though it may entertain you too, its main purpose—which I hope it fulfils—is to make viewers better informed about your professional world. When 'The Troubleshooters' comes on, on the other hand, with its stories of tycoonery on an international scale, you can afford to put your feet up. As you would expect, the producer has to manage a much bigger budget. The artists' fees alone may cost as much as an entire edition of 'The Money Programme'. But the producer has to go through the same managerial hoops. His programme budget estimate sets out each item in precise detail. Instead of spending £4 per edition on making up *your* distinguished features the producer finds himself allocating about £44, and he has to call in a make-up supervisor on top of that. He will probably find that each fifty-minute episode

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costs just under £10,000 and he too will be comparing actual with budgeted costs in the knowledge that his Head of Department and his Network Controller are doing the same.

The chain of accountability includes the Director of Television, myself, and, for really big sums, mainly of capital expenditure, the Board of Governors. Comparatively few people realise that the BBC meets all its capital expenditure out of income. When we asked for an increase in the licence fee we had in mind a commitment to spend nearly £70 million in capital over the next five years. A very big item in that capital expenditure is the conversion of the British television system to colour and from 405 lines to 625 lines. And I hope that not only the British public, but British industry—including the export industry—will benefit.

APOLOGIA PRO VITA MEA

In the following lecture given at Birmingham University in October 1968 I tried to sum up what I had been aiming at in the previous nine years. Not a student hooted.

BROADCASTING IN THE SIXTIES

It is always difficult to talk about one's own past work. It is more than difficult—it is impossible—to separate what one has done oneself, what one has initiated oneself, from what has been done and initiated by one's colleagues. Perhaps in the end it comes down to the creation of an atmosphere, of a style. The obituaries of myself which I was able to read in the press last July have helped me, I gladly admit, to analyse what that atmosphere has been.

Ten years ago at this time I had just started on the job of Director of News and Current Affairs. I had learnt my trade as a journalist when I was a foreign correspondent for the *Daily Telegraph* in Germany before the war and in various parts of Europe during the first months of the war. When I was in charge of the BBC German Service from the autumn

of 1940 onwards my work was very much of a journalistic nature. I was a journalist and psychological warrior. I have never considered myself and do not consider myself as an ex-journalist. I have in fact been a journalist since the winter of 1933 when I worked in Munich as a stringer for the *Daily Herald* and the *New Statesman*. I suppose those years in Germany which ended with my expulsion in May 1939 did more than any other period in my life to form my character and my characteristics. To put it broadly, I learnt to hate intolerance and the degradation of character to which the deprivation of freedom leads. My first task as Director of News and Current Affairs was to restore freedom to the News Division, which had become known as the Kremlin of the BBC. Little more was needed than an act of will to bring about a flowering of talent and enterprise among those who worked in News and Current Affairs, which soon led to an enormous improvement in, and expansion of, our output.

When I became Director-General at the beginning of 1960 I allowed my previous post to lapse and I remained in fact, if not in name, Editor-in-Chief. That is to say that since then I have exercised general editorial control of the BBC's output. It does not mean that I have personally supervised every word and picture, even in the area of News and

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Current Affairs. That would be impossible in an organisation which in all broadcasts 150 hours a week on television and about 400 hours a week on radio to the home audience alone, apart from the forty languages in which we broadcast to the world.

We have all become so accustomed to television that we tend to forget how new it is. The BBC television service re-opened after the war in 1946 and the number of combined licences did not pass the million mark until 1952. Ten years ago there were still about seven million families with a radio but without a television set. Commercial television was still a novelty, but it had very quickly captured the lion's share of the audience from a BBC which was still smarting from the loss of its monopoly and appeared to be behaving as if it was too proud to fight.

It was only ten years ago that the political parties woke up to the importance of television. Harold Macmillan became the first Prime Minister to answer questions in a popular programme 'Press Conference'. He was sensitive to the wind of change in broadcasting as in other fields.

In those days David Attenborough was roaming the world on his Zoo Quests, Huw Wheldon was just beginning to delight some and irritate others with 'Monitor', his programme on the Arts, and Paul Fox was still editing 'Sportsview'. Hundreds

of BBC staff had moved over to ITV. There was an atmosphere of frustration. Everyone realised that there was something wrong with the system, but what could be done about it? There was a general feeling among the talented young men in the television service that the top brass of the BBC only cared about radio—and the young men of radio felt they were working for a service which had lost touch with the nation. I remember Val Parnell's scornful dismissal of the BBC television service as a minority channel. He wished we would realise that there was no point in trying to compete with the commercial programme companies in entertainment. He knew what the public wanted and the BBC was something with a great past and no future.

So that is where we were ten years ago. The BBC had barely more than a quarter of the television audience. If we were not to forfeit public acceptance for ever it was time to take up the challenge and to realise that competition could be stimulating and good in itself and not a word too vulgar to be used by BBC gentlemen. Not everyone—inside or outside the BBC—relished the idea of change. The BBC seemed to be a pillar of the Establishment. The popular conception of a Corporation official—I do not know which word I dislike more, 'Corporation' or 'official'—was of a bowler-hatted gentleman in striped trousers and black coat, entering the hushed

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precincts of Broadcasting House with tightly rolled umbrella at the slope. (I think the last of the breed went into gentlemanly retirement about a couple of years ago.) In one of the old British film comedies shown on BBC-1 in 1968, *The Green Man*, Colin Gordon played the part of the BBC man I have just described. I had never owned a bowler hat in my life and I was just about to commit the greatest sacrilege of all, the abolition of the nine o'clock news.

The passing of the nine o'clock news was in fact a good example of the BBC taking account of the new facts of life in the Sixties. In the golden age of radio that bulletin was the great moment of the day's broadcasting. Everyone listened to it and to all nine strokes of Big Ben. People associated it with the splendours and miseries of the war and with the Churchillian speeches of long ago. But by 1959 the nine o'clock news was a shadow of its former self. The bulk of its audience was elsewhere. So we placed the main radio bulletin of the evening at ten p.m. and followed it with discussion and comment on the day's events. The uproar from those who detested change was really quite remarkable. I had betrayed a sacred trust. I was like a Beefeater tampering with the Crown Jewels. But in a few months all was quiet—at any rate on that front.

I said just now that the News Division I took

over in 1958 had been the Kremlin of the BBC. In those days news was news and current affairs were current affairs and never the twain should meet. They had been living in water-tight compartments for many years in an atmosphere of mutual distrust and even contempt. My job as I saw it was to weld together the news and current affairs elements in radio and television so that they could carry out their respective functions against a background of shared policy and journalistic assumptions. I had to create an atmosphere in which journalistic enterprise and talent could flourish without any loss of reliability. A BBC foreign correspondent or reporter had not been allowed to achieve a scoop. He had to share his exclusive stories with colleagues—particularly agency colleagues—or they would not be used by the BBC. To me as an old journalist the whole system was incredible. I changed it. Since that time events have proved over and over again the value of unified control in the BBC, and also that one can be enterprising without loss of public confidence.

It is almost impossible now to believe that the General Election of 1959 was the first reported by the BBC in its news bulletins and the first in which there was questioning of representatives of the parties and some discussion of the issues in current affairs programmes. Before that the official Election

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series in which time was given to the political parties was the sum total of all that was done about the General Election campaign in broadcasting. This had always seemed to me to be an abdication by the BBC of its responsibilities. The theory was that the BBC must be completely impartial and not risk saying or reporting anything that might effect the way in which any member of the public exercised his vote. The BBC and ITV showed in 1959, and showed again in 1964 and 1966, that responsible and impartial coverage of a General Election campaign is perfectly possible. Complaints there have been and always will be, but serious complaints have been very few.

During the 1959 Election campaign we received a remarkable complaint from an earl living in deepest Gloucestershire. He wrote to us that in one particular news bulletin we had covered a statement made by Hugh Gaitskell at the United Nations in full and had completely ignored one by Selwyn Lloyd. This, said the earl, had led him to tell his neighbours in Gloucestershire that, as he had always imagined, we were a lot of Reds. We were able to point out to the earl that both statements had in fact been included in the bulletin and at about the same length. We suggested that he might make another round of calls on his neighbours in Gloucestershire and withdraw his previous remarks. Not a bit of it. The earl was not convinced. He told us

that he had taken the text of the bulletin which we had sent to him, had sat down in an armchair in his library and had done what no doubt our announcer had done. He had gabbled the report of Selwyn Lloyd's speech and enunciated Hugh Gaitskell's in rounded and measured periods. You can't win at this game. I have even had complaints of bias from all three major parties about one schools programme—and one from the Communists about the same broadcast for good measure.

After I had been in charge of News and Current Affairs for a few months I took an opportunity to speak against political control of broadcasting. I said that such control tended, at the very least, to make a broadcasting service suspect and to destroy its authority as a source of information and that, at the worst, it turned broadcasting into an instrument of totalitarian dictatorship. Nothing that has happened since 1959 could lead one to change that view. One of the saddest spectacles in Europe has been the submission of the French radio and television service to the pressure of Governments. ('How can one govern without television?' André Malraux is reported to have said.) One of the most hopeful events, on the other hand, was the part, shortlived as it was, played by the radio and television services of Czechoslovakia in the movement towards greater freedom.

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The freedom in broadcasting we have in this country is not due to chance. It was due to the foresight and strength of the BBC's first Director-General, Lord Reith. It will be obvious to you that I disagree with some of Lord Reith's views on broadcasting, so I should like to say that many of the best and most durable features of the BBC today can be traced back to him—the BBC's editorial independence, its reputation for impartiality in presentation of controversial issues, its world-wide credibility as a source of news and the fact that it can reconcile freedom of expression with responsibility. He saw that impartiality and independence went hand in hand. The nature and power of broadcasting and the technical limitations within which it works are such that you cannot have one without the other.

Having made my position clear in 1959 on the independence of broadcasting, I also inaugurated the era of competition with ITV by saying some harsh words, and repeating them many times in the next few years, about the effects of commercialism on broadcasting. During recent years I have spoken less harshly and that is not due to chance. When one is fighting a campaign one goes out for victory. When one has won that campaign one can appear to be more mellow and generous.

When I became Director-General almost my first

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task was to organise the BBC evidence to the Pilkington Committee and to get the public relations services of the BBC into shape, in order to create an atmosphere of public support for that evidence.

It was an exercise in psychological warfare and I confess that I found my experience as Head of Psychological warfare in Malaya in the early 1950s extremely useful. There had previously been no unified control of the various departments in the BBC which dealt in different ways with the public and public opinion—Publicity Department, Audience Research, Publications, our Secretariat and Correspondence Section and so on. I put all these under one Director who also provided guidance for all the thousands of members of the staff of the BBC who are in touch with influential people and influential organisations. I told the staff of the BBC that every single one of them was a public relations officer for the BBC and that they would be provided with the necessary information to enable them to do their job. I doubt whether without these efforts there would have been so much influential support for the BBC case as it was put to the Pilkington Committee.

It was also clear to me that however good our case might be there would be no political or public support for any recommendations the Pilkington

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Committee might make along the lines we urged if people were still turning to ITV in an overwhelming majority. Why should they pay a licence fee if they were not using the BBC? I therefore told the television service that without any abandonment of BBC standards they must aim at increasing our share of the television audience from its lowest ration of 27:73 to 50:50 by the time the Pilkington Committee reported. That was exactly achieved at the beginning of 1963. Now we are doing even better.

The Pilkington Report seemed to us at the time a gratifying vindication of all that the BBC had been trying to do. We had hoped for an endorsement of the aims of public service broadcasting based on a licence fee system and we got it; we had hoped for an endorsement of one BBC, of the advantages of a unified system of public service broadcasting covering radio, television and our external services and we got it; we had hoped for a second television channel which would provide viewers with a genuine choice of programmes and we got it; we had hoped for extensions of radio broadcasting, including local radio, and we got some immediately and the prospect of more later; we hoped for an early introduction of colour television but we had to wait; we hoped for an increase in the licence fee to pay for the new services, but again we had to wait. It was an exciting time.

Perhaps in some ways the extent of our success was bad for us. It made some of us cocky and it hardened the hearts of the BBC's enemies. A member of the Conservative Government coined the phrase about 'washing the BBC whiter than white'. From that time onwards the knives were out.

By the early 1960s many of the old hands in the BBC who thought we were going too fast and too far were leaving. A new and younger generation was in control and there was a remarkable flowering of production and writing talent. Radio stopped losing ground and regained it under a new and enterprising Director who inspired his staff. The television service was embarked on the course marked by the production of such programmes and series as 'Z-Cars', 'The Age of Kings', 'The Wednesday Play', 'Steptoe and Son', 'Till Death Us Do Part', 'That Was the Week that Was' (to mention only a few) which raised the BBC's reputation to new heights throughout the world. But not everyone at home was happy.

Those of us most concerned with the launching of 'That Was the Week that Was' had thought that it would be a programme likely to appeal to a substantial minority rather than to a national majority audience. We were wrong. Its audience became national in every sense, both in size and in distribution. Women liked it as much as men; the

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old as much as the young; the provinces as much as London. Nothing could be more misleading than the suggestion that it was a wicked metropolitan programme corrupting the innocence of Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the more distant parts of England. It has been suggested that it matched the national mood of wry dissatisfaction. However that may be, it proved that an intelligent programme of sharp humorous comment on current affairs could hold an audience of many millions and could, as the headmaster of a comprehensive school in Yorkshire told me, encourage an interest in current affairs among people both young and old who had previously been too apathetic to read the newspapers with any attention.

'TW₃' became the symbol for the BBC's new look. It was frank, close to life, analytical, impatient of taboos and cant and often very funny. It was capable of being mature and compassionate—the full text of the programme which followed the assassination of President Kennedy was read on the motion of Senator Humphrey into the record of the United States Senate—and it was resolutely on the side of the angels. It dropped some bad bricks from time to time, but items which I for one should regard as not only defensible but positively good often aroused as much offence as its undoubted mistakes.

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The BBC had always been a target for those who could not bear to hear the expression of their opponents' views in a controversy. Now it was also a target for the defenders of taboos, especially those which surrounded public discussion of sexual matters. But we were also under fire from people who thought the BBC too timid. As I said at the end of 1963, 'It was in my capacity as a subversive anarchist that I yielded to the enormous pressure from my fellow subversives and put "TW₃" on the air; and it was as a pillar of the Establishment that I yielded to the fascist hyena-like howls to take it off again.'

I do not need to go over the subsequent history of the so-called satire programmes. Inspiration seemed to fade. Times changed. Perhaps the mood of the nation changed. In any case, none of them came up to the first sparkle of 'TW₃'. None the less, this vein of programming undoubtedly influenced the flavour and content from then onwards of some of our plays, some of our light entertainment and some facets of our approach to current affairs. (Should we have had Alf Garnett without 'TW₃'?) Nothing could ever be the same again.

I think the BBC's output during these years (ITV, with its safe formulas, played a much smaller part in this) has brought out into the open one of the great cleavages in our society. It is of course a

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cleavage which has always existed: Cavalier versus Roundhead, Sir Toby Belch versus Malvolio, or however you may like to put it. But in these years was added to that the split between those who looked back to a largely imaginary golden age, to the imperial glories of Victorian England and hated the present, and those who accepted the present and found it in many ways more attractive than the past. It was not a split between old and young or between Left and Right or between those who favoured delicacy and those who favoured candour. It was something much more complicated than that, and if one could stand back for a bit as the brickbats flew it provided a fascinating glimpse of the national mood. It also provided at times a rather distressing insight into the degree of sickness and insanity in our society. Some of our public upholders of virtue should be disturbed to know how much support they enjoy among the writers of obscene postcards and those whose response to somebody or something they dislike is a threat of physical violence or of a bottle of acid in the face.

I have been, and am, on the side of tolerance. Tolerance to me means the capacity to listen to other views than one's own and to discuss them freely and frankly in a civilised way. I would claim, though here again many people would disagree with me, that the BBC has done a great service to this

country by widening the limits of discussion and challenging old taboos. Of course the law sets certain limits to freedom of expression and the law must be observed. Public opinion and current standards of taste have also to be taken into account. It is part of the job of an editor to know the limits set by the law and to be aware of the less easily defined limits set by public opinion and taste. He has to reconcile freedom of expression with respect for the law and for the audience.

But sometimes—and I hope I speak without arrogance—it is very difficult to have any respect at all for certain expressions of public opinion. There was a quite unusual flood of complaints when the BBC as part of its coverage of student unrest presented the programme 'Students in Revolt'. Even before the programme was broadcast many people, including people prominent in public life, argued strongly that the BBC was doing something wicked and irresponsible in bringing here leaders of student unrest from many countries so that they could be questioned in a television programme. I found this more depressing than anything I had experienced in the last ten years. The French Fifth Republic had been shaken to its foundations, Marshal Tito had come to the microphone to comment on student demands, there had been rioting in Spain, rioting in the United States, rioting in

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Germany, rioting in Czechoslovakia, rioting in Poland. In this sheltered little island there had been incidents even in Oxford. This was a phenomenon that should be studied and analysed in the interest of understanding. It was so easy to approve of student unrest in countries ruled by Communist or Fascist dictatorships and disapprove of similar outbreaks in the Western democracies, so easy for a Russian or a Spaniard to look at it exactly the other way round—so easy and so superficial. I cannot claim that the programme we put on in fact provided very much enlightenment, but I have no doubt whatever that we were right to try and that those who objected to our even trying were ostriches with their heads in the sand.

The television journalist even more than the newspaper journalist works today in a very difficult atmosphere. People have come to expect to see the news as it happens or soon after it happens. Television reporters and camera crews must be on the spot when disaster strikes or civil disobedience turns into a riot. We live in a shocking and distressing world. But here again many people hate to be shocked and distressed and brought up against the realities of, let us say, Nigeria, Vietnam or Chicago. We are told that we should not show violence because violence on the television screen breeds violence. Vice-President Humphrey has rebuked

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American television companies for their coverage of riots and violence. In his opinion television has spread the message of violence and looting and has encouraged even more trouble. But he was humble enough to admit that he was unable to solve the basic problem, which was how to report the facts without making the situation worse. Perhaps today he might feel—and still more so might Senator McCarthy—that there is something in the argument that the situation in Chicago might have been even worse if newspaper and television reporters in large numbers had not been there as witnesses.

In all such cases the television news editor has to make a decision from minute to minute. He has to balance what is true against what is tolerable. His decision must often be an agonising one and it will never satisfy everybody. On an occasion like the Nigerian execution there is never any shortage of advice afterwards from people with plausible reasons for suppression. He needs a steady nerve. . . .

I should not overlook, having spoken about the Pilkington Report, another landmark in broadcasting history in the 1960s and that was the Government White Paper of December 1966, which led to the introduction of our pop channel, Radio 1, the disappearance of pirate radio and the present experiment in local radio. Those developments were no

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less important than the introduction of BBC-2 and the coming of colour.

During those ten years I have been as much interested in international broadcasting as in what happens in this country. Every Director-General of the BBC must be. It was in June 1959 that we gave the first public demonstration of the transmission of films for television by transatlantic cable. In April 1961 we had the first live outside broadcast direct from Moscow, when Yuri Gagarin was welcomed home. Later that year the Russians, who had shown us their May Day Parade, saw our Trooping of the Colour. We have since seen a different kind of parade of Russian military power, on film from Czechoslovakia. Thanks to all the committee work and technical co-operation in earlier years, in which we played a big part, a telephone message from the BBC in London to the Austrian television service was all that was needed to bring film of the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia into millions of homes by way of the Eurovision network.

World television broadcasting, by way of satellite, is now commonplace, though still expensive. 'Our World', broadcast in June 1967, had a potential audience of 350 million people in five continents. The total would have been nearer 500 million if the Russians had not decided to drop out at the last moment for political reasons.

Two years ago about 400 million people saw the World Cup Final. On that occasion in 1966 the BBC provided (in co-operation with ITV) all the technical facilities needed for more than a hundred relays, and commentators. And now, this year, this month, the BBC is covering the Olympic Games live and in colour from Mexico, and using its own new electronic standards converter to make that possible, not only for us but for the whole of Europe.

Another aspect of international broadcasting is the co-operation that exists within the Commonwealth. I have attended four Commonwealth Broadcasting Conferences in my time as Director-General, and I firmly believe that they and the work that stems from them are an important Commonwealth link. Here you see the Commonwealth in action instead of in vague sentimental phrases.

Britain's position in the Commonwealth includes a large element of aid and training, in which the BBC has played a leading part over the years. I came back from the Commonwealth Broadcasting Conference in New Zealand earlier this year with the knowledge that other Commonwealth broadcasters, and not only those in the developing countries, continue to look to us for a lead. They want to learn from us, they have an insatiable appetite for our programmes, and they are anxious about our

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future. I was impressed, and touched, by their concern.

You see, independent public service broadcasting, which we take for granted here, and about which we tend to be complacent, is a beacon, an inspiration, to many of them. Imagine yourself as the head of a broadcasting organisation in a newly independent Asian or African country, trying to run an independent service. You might not have much hope, but you would have less if the BBC's light ceased to shine.

I have enjoyed this decade of change, but I am glad to be handing over to my successor on the threshold of the Seventies. Some of his problems can be foreseen, some will be fresh and unforeseeable. On the evening of March 31st 1969 I shall close the door of my office behind me, go out past the bust of Lord Reith which stands guard in the corridor, rub his nose for luck for the last time, and cease to be Director-General.

CONCLUSION

Among the many things written when my forthcoming retirement from the BBC was announced in July 1968 it was an article by T. C. Worsley in the *Financial Times* which gave me most pleasure. He made a point which has escaped, I think, every other writer in the press. He wrote:

The genuine voice of the Seventies is likely to be subtly different from the voice of the Sixties. We shall look for it not in a revival of satire or a simple duplication of the Wednesday play formula. It will break out, I prophesy, in some unexpected places. And it will be up to the new Director-General in the first place (and us in the second) to spot it, foster it and give it its head.

So much for those who draw dismal conclusions from the present absence from the BBC schedules of 'satire' and the more abrasive type of situation comedy. Their conclusions are wrong. Inspiration does not continue to strike in the same place. Where

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it will strike in the next decade nobody can possibly know, any more than I knew on January 1st 1960.

London, December 31st, 1968