BROADCASTING

SOUND AND TELEVISION

MARY CROZIER

BROADCASTING is now universal and television is established in many countries. Both these means of communication have grown up in this century and are used and accepted everywhere for entertainment, information and propaganda. Mary Crozier, who is Radio and Television Critic of the *Manchester Guardian*, first describes the start and growth of broadcasting, showing how, after the early experiments in radio, the many national organizations developed their present structure—in Britain, the Commonwealth and the rest of the world. In the second part of her book she discusses the use of broadcasting and television in politics, education, religion, entertainment and culture. What effect does it have on people? Does it make them more awake to ideas or less so? Will it create ever more listeners and watchers, while those who think and 'do' become fewer? And does it make for peace between nations or exacerbate enmities? Broadcasting is considered by many people as essentially a public instrument, but it is a virtue of Miss Crozier's well-informed and thoughtful book that it suggests the importance of the effect of broadcasting on the individual mind.

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Broadcasting

(SOUND AND TELEVISION)

MARY CROZIER

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BROADCASTING
(SOUND AND TELEVISION)

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The late GILBERT MURRAY, O.M., D.C.L., F.B.A.
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The short quotations from Plato are taken from the translation by H. D. P. Lee of *The Republic* in the Penguin Classics.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

BROADCASTING is sometimes compared to the discovery of printing, which by the making of many books, and so by the spread of ideas and knowledge, brought a new stage in civilization. The growth of broadcasting, which has been entirely a discovery and development of the twentieth century, has been a like revolution. In some ways it has been more remarkable in its effects, for even books have to be circulated and then read, and sometimes have to be translated and printed again abroad; whereas broadcasting quickly got to the point where most countries were directing speech to the people of other countries in their own languages. At home everybody, in most countries, is played upon by a constant stream of sounds bringing entertainment and news, events as they happen, music, politics and teaching. If we look at most of this as the 'spoken word', the wheel might seem to have come full circle, and we in this century have seen a return to the days when the bard's voice alone brought stories and poetry to the people. But that is too romantic, and there is only an element of truth in it. Broadcasting has certainly given enormous importance to the spoken word, but in a very different way.

Its reach is infinite and its scope also. From the sending of messages, which confirmed the technical possibility of using sound waves for communication,

the next step to the sending out of programmes of music and news was immediate. Only the old and the middle-aged can now remember the time when there was no wireless to listen to; no news bulletins, no music, no plays or comedians on the air, and when, if they wanted recreation or amusement, they had to make it for themselves or go and find it outside the home.

The unique thing about broadcasting is that it comes to people in their homes and often seems to have a kind of disembodied authority. What has it done to us? For it has certainly changed people's lives more than they perhaps realize. The first and most important effect has been that whatever the spread of education, of newspaper reading and of the cinema, there was never a time when everybody, young or old, could so easily know about the world outside their own small circle. And whatever lip service is paid to universal education, the truth is that many people still only read with difficulty, and still more never read for choice. There are many lonely, sick or blind people, who cannot go out to theatres, cinemas, or meetings; these can hear the best actors and the greatest music; hear statesmen speaking, take part in national events, follow their favourite sport, or hear religious services.

At its lightest, broadcasting brings into the home a cheerful accompaniment; the housewife can have music in the background, or programmes for small children. Television, which is now at work in forty countries, has added the new and fascinating world of pictures, which has everywhere been more of a spellbinder than

sound broadcasting. If the ordinary wireless set is still the bread and butter, television is the cake, and those who have newly come to it are apt to indulge too much before they learn moderation. Is the effect of all this good, on balance? Amusement is good, gaiety is good; it is good to know more about the world we live in, even if the news is often bad. And if the view we take of people in society is that they can live best and most happily in the air of democratic freedom, then broadcasting can and should open windows upon the world.

There are some obvious objections to this. One is that the stream of entertainment and information that pours out may blunt and lull the mind into passivity. That is a danger, certainly, but perhaps minds that can be so readily stupefied would not be very active at any time, and there is evidence that broadcasting has sent people in their millions to read, for instance, books which they had never heard of till they were broadcast in popular form. Broadly speaking, the minority of thoroughly educated people do not make great use of wireless; they find what they want in reading, conversation or activity. This is neither surprising, nor discreditable to the others.

The report of the Broadcasting Committee of 1949, under Lord Beveridge, said 'Broadcasting is one of the most pervasive and therefore one of the most powerful of agents for influencing men's thoughts and actions . . . How can mankind ensure that this great power is exercised at all times for good rather than evil?' The answer is that the right use of broadcasting lies with those who organize it and therefore with the political

systems which, in greater or less measure, inspire or control these bodies everywhere in the world. Theirs is the responsibility and they use the power according to very different ideas of freedom and of human integrity. Those who have criticized 'monopoly' broadcasting in Britain might well consider the rigid system of Communist broadcasting. The clash between the two worlds, the free and the totalitarian, is the great battle of this century, and in this broadcasting is used as a weapon of propaganda between countries. Sir William Haley, when director-general of the BBC, once spoke of broadcasting as a 'hostile and disruptive international force' and said 'at the heart of the battle the issue to be decided is the opening or closing for centuries to come of the mind of man'.

Here then is the contradiction of this new force; on the one hand the child enjoying fairy tales and music, the lonely old woman feeling that the voice on the wireless brings friendship, the receptive mind being lit by some great play; on the other hand the power of broadcasting to sway whole peoples with political doctrines and to make them feel fear and hate. Broadcasting is not a neutral; it may be good or bad; but it cannot be ignored, and in no country in the world is it used without purpose.

The aim of this book is rather to discuss the human effects of this new force upon people than to describe its technical or administrative structure. But it is a good idea first to see how broadcasting started and has developed all over the world. So the next chapter will describe, without the formidable technicalities in

which broadcasting abounds, the way in which radio communication was discovered and works, its development in sending out programmes, and incidentally the many other interesting uses of electronics, and the growth of the radio industry.

Next comes the story of broadcasting in Britain, which is taken as the central point for the whole survey. There are so many different systems of broadcasting, and it is at such different stages in various parts of the world, that the picture is less confused if one looks at it from a point which gives a focus. Also, broadcasting in Britain, which is largely the history of the BBC, very early took a definite shape and was guided by a deliberate policy; in a sense it has always been unique and has been recognized as such. No apology is needed for taking it as a standard to which other systems can be compared. The history of the BBC is briefly sketched, with some indication of its constitution, of its methods and of its broadcasts to other countries as well as its home services. This leads on to the picture of broadcasting in the Commonwealth and the Colonies, which has grown up generally on the British model, and along with this goes the complementary tale of the important two-way traffic between the home country and the Commonwealth.

The rest of the world shows the greatest variety and the furthest extremes of radio systems, from the private enterprise of the United States to the State-controlled organizations of Russia, China, and the satellite Communist countries. It is important to have an idea of the structure of world broadcasting. Its ability to entertain,

or to reinforce education, is one thing, but it is inseparable from the latent spirit that everywhere imparts an idea of a 'way of life'. There has been no such ubiquitous, inescapable moulder of minds till this century, and it is now inspired according to the philosophy of the two camps into which the world is divided. As the Greek idea opposed the might of Persia in the ancient world, so the 'free' world to-day opposes the totalitarian, and broadcasting is a weapon in the battle. In a small compass it is not possible to examine the radio systems of great areas of the world in detail; the American system alone would need a whole book. But it is possible to give a brief, comparative idea of how things work, and certain specific points, such as educational broadcasting, may be found taken up in a later chapter.

After the groundwork, the actual substance and influence of broadcasting is considered, and with it television, the more recent and dramatic development. Television is discussed in some detail because it is already powerful and its future is incalculable. It is a much greater factor in social life than sound broadcasting ever was, and probably a more forceful 'teacher'; and its potentialities have been seen in countries otherwise 'backward'. Commercial television, and its introduction into Britain, the home of public service broadcasting, is also dealt with in some detail, since here are to be found most of the trends that make people suspect television as a debasing influence.

Broadcasting and television are now an essential part of every man's life, and what they actually provide, and the effect this may have in forming or altering people's

ideas of information, entertainment, culture, politics, education and religion, or in re-shaping home life, is discussed in the last five chapters. With broadcasting there has grown up in every country, for instance, a widespread reliance upon a constant supply of news and other services such as weather forecasts, Government announcements, relays of sports and other 'outside' events. This means that people normally hear and expect to hear what is going on all over the world; it also means that they will hear just so much of this, given objectively, as is allowed by the Government under which they live, or they can get secretly from foreign stations, where they are not free to hear without attempts at interference. It also means that in any and every country they are likely to be puzzled by any suspension of this service.

Then again all Governments and all politicians have to reckon with broadcasting, particularly during elections. Ministers' pronouncements are expected on the wireless and the screen; the parties vie in producing the programmes that they hope will appeal most to the elector, and political meetings are often deserted while families hear or see the speakers at their own firesides. Though the politicians' efforts do not seem to impress the electorate in Britain much, yet whether a statesman's appearance is 'telegenic' may cause him justifiable concern.

In religion broadcasting has caused no great revolution yet, but it has offered more knowledge about the churches and their work than most people ever try to find for themselves. Only a minority now in Britain are

practising Christians, and the use made by the churches of this most modern way of spreading the Gospel may have effects much more striking than we can see at present. In education, both formal and incidental, broadcasting has done much and has more to do; in this Britain has been a pioneer.

In another chapter is considered the whole field of entertainment and cultural broadcasting; how it has fostered an interest in music and plays, literature and history; how, also, it has given birth to the great 'national' myths and family fictions—the endless serials with which millions identify themselves daily, till they do not seem to know the difference between their own lives and life in these charmed circles. What are we to think of the mentality of people who, when a member of one of these families dies, send wreaths to the BBC? These chapters are necessarily based mainly upon British broadcasting, for not even the most pertinacious critic or observer can hope in less than a lifetime to see personally the reactions of Russian workers, American housewives, French peasants or Albanian intellectuals to their own radio programmes. It is in considering these questions that we see most sharply the contrast between what broadcasting can do as a stimulant and an awakener of interest, and what it can do as a drug. But we must never forget that at its lightest it may be a merciful anodyne to lives that are poor, narrow and dull. And attitudes change. In the late 1920s and early 1930s academic people had no use for the 'wireless', but in the 1950s dons speak regularly on the Third Programme.

The last chapter will attempt to give some answer to the questions which have been raised, both about broadcasting and television as an international force and about its effect on the individual. In considering this it is not possible to be impartial, since broadcasting affects men's minds. Either one takes the view that men's minds matter, and that every individual is of infinite worth—in short, has a soul, or one takes the opposite view. To pretend that this cannot be known or is a matter of indifference would be mere evasion of the only question that does matter. Could one for a moment suggest that the end of broadcasting, used to propagate a system such as Communism—if one looks upon it as evil—is as good or as desirable as that broadcasting which in general supports the ideas of that part of the world which still stands for human liberty? On this no compromise is possible.

The rapid growth of broadcasting and television over the world makes it difficult to assemble absolutely up-to-date figures. Statistics are available from many sources, some of which are indicated in the bibliography. However, as each estimate of the number of licences, number of stations and number of listeners is issued, these numbers are exceeded. New groups of listeners or viewers are reached by still more powerful transmitters; new countries begin to experiment with television, or new foreign services are started. The figures in this book are valid up to the end of 1956, and any change after that can be assumed to be an increase.

Chapter Two

WHAT RADIO DOES

MAN has always needed to communicate over longer distances than his voice alone could reach; writing itself is such a form of communication, which can be sent through both space and time. 'The horn of Roland high on the Pyrenees' at Roncevaux is perhaps the most famous legendary instance of long distance sound. Flags were used for naval signals. Nelson's famous message at Trafalgar would to-day be sent by wireless. Printing itself is, of course, a means of communication, and communications become more intricate with the growing complexity of industrial civilizations. Only quite recently—at about the turn of the century, did wireless telegraphy become a practical way of signalling over long distances. To-day, as a result of the discovery of how sound waves behaved, and how they could be used, the air of the world is full of sounds, and of pictures too, unheard and unseen except by those who have instruments attuned to receiving them.

We who live in the middle of the twentieth century take these marvels for granted, so rapidly have they come upon us, and been extended and elaborated. Yet it is possible for anyone now in middle age to remember the first time he heard a broadcast, when it seemed like a miracle, and his father was born into a world in which the science of radio-communication played no

part at all. No two generations in the history of the world can have seen such a change.

What the miracle is worked with has always been there; what happened was that the scientists learnt a new way of using it. When the human voice makes a sound, it produces a movement of the air, rather like that of a bellows or concertina; this travels across the air till it strikes a solid object. If someone is listening, then his ear-drums vibrate in accord with these waves and the message is recognized, through the nerves and the brain, as the sounds originally emitted. These wave motions are relatively slow, hence the time lag before we hear an echo; but the sound travels more rapidly through matter that is denser than air. In wireless the wave motion has to be enormously accelerated, and in fact the 'crest' of a wireless wave moves at terrific speed, bringing sound across vast distances more rapidly than it reaches people actually on the spot where it is made. The normal passage of sound through air is given this essential impetus by the application of electricity, for electricity, like light, passes across space at great speed. This long distance movement of electrical energy must travel through a medium more sluggish than air—the aether of space—through which both light and electricity travel at extremely high speeds.

It was in the latter half of the nineteenth century that a group of scientists, led by Huyghens and including the Scotsman, Clerk Maxwell, established that light passed from place to place by wave motion and was of electro-magnetic origin. Heinrich Hertz, experimenting in support of this theory, worked to produce

electrically rapid vibrations in the aether which should behave in the same way as light. He found in 1887 that he could so send a wave across space by electrical means. But it was not until 1892 that the discovery was carried a stage further by the French professor, Edouard Branley; later still the young Italian, Guglielmo Marconi, in 1895 thought of combining the processes so as to transmit intelligible signals across space. If we cannot call Marconi the inventor of wireless, it was he whose imagination built upon the pioneer work of Hertz and the others, including Sir Oliver Lodge in Britain. Marconi arranged a Hertzian wave apparatus, interrupted so as to send out trains of waves representing the dots and dashes of the Morse code; a few feet away he placed a 'coherer' in which a small pile of filings was made to pass, or refuse to pass a local electric current (Branley's discovery). When the sparking contacts of this receiver were adjusted the Morse signals were correctly reproduced by the electric currents passed locally through the coherer. This was the foundation of 'wireless' communication.

In Italy where his experiments were made, no interest was aroused. So Marconi came to London, where the engineer-in-chief of the Post Office gave him encouragement and assistance. Marconi's vision was of the order of genius. He increased his transmission to miles, but dreamed of spanning oceans. In 1901 he installed a transmitter in Cornwall and set up a receiving station in Newfoundland. In December of that year the Morse signals were received, on an aerial held aloft by a kite, over 1,800 miles of ocean. From

then on progress was continuous. A few years later Ambrose Fleming made the first two-electrode valve, and Lee de Forest, an American, added a third electrode, called the grid, resulting in the triode valve which led the way to broadcasting, radio telephony and television.

The importance of the valve was that whereas wireless telegraphy sent out the wireless waves in dots and dashes, actual sounds such as speech and music could now be transmitted. The transmitter could send out a continuous wave or 'carrier'. A microphone converted the waves into varying electric currents and amplification made these modulate the carrier wave. At the receiver corresponding processes took place so that speech or music was reproduced in the headphones.

The crystal set and the headphones were used in these early stages of wireless transmission, but it was not long before simple two or three battery sets were evolved. And though different variations of the small portable battery set are still in use, the set which could be plugged into the electricity supply has been the most convenient of all. The aerial erected to receive the signal has often been replaced by a small indoor aerial, and sometimes it is not necessary to have any aerial.

Experiments in the sending of pictures by wireless had also begun towards the end of the nineteenth century and something of the process went to the making of television as we know it to-day. The sending and receiving of pictures is more complicated than the parallel process in sound, but the principle is the same. When the microphone picks up sound waves and turns

them into electric impulses, in television what may be called an 'electric eye' responds to light variations and turns them into electrical variations. The essential point about the transmitting of pictures is that they are sent out not whole but by a process in which the 'electric eye' moves over the picture and sends it out strip by strip, like a series of jerks, which are then mixed with the continuous wave of the transmitter and on the receiver are sorted out and built up point by point as they were sent out. That is why different television systems vary in the number of 'lines' by which they are defined. (The British system to-day has 405 lines; most other countries have more. The first system tried in Britain had only 30 lines.)

The discovery of the light-sensitive properties of selenium in 1873 gave the possibility of turning light fluctuations into electric fluctuations. Even as early as 1875 elementary apparatus for the sending of pictures over telegraph lines began to be described; by 1881 it was possible to send such 'still' pictures (photo-telegraphy). Experiments continued; there were demonstrations in France and Germany. It was a Frenchman, Maurice Leblanc, who conceived the essential idea of 'scanning' (breaking the moving picture up and rebuilding it) in 1880. Nipkow, a German, invented the scanning disc. In the early 1900s came the invention of the cathode ray tube, the method generally used now for receiving high-definition pictures. Despite the efforts of many experimenters, and partly because of the interval of the first world war, no television system was actually found to work until in January, 1926, John

Logie Baird, a poor young Scotsman, demonstrated true television, with his own improvised equipment, to members of the Royal Institution in London.

The first demonstration in the United States was by the American Telegraph and Telephone Company in April, 1927. The Americans had already acknowledged that Baird's was the first demonstration of real television. Baird's two greatest contributions were a good method of synchronizing the moving parts of transmitter and receiver, and the use of the neon tube in the receiver. Within three years of his demonstration the BBC had started experimental low-definition transmissions from the Baird laboratories in London. (Later they were to change to the E.M.I. High-Definition television system when they started a public service in 1936.)

Such were the beginnings, not a sudden magical discovery of how speech, music and pictures could be flung across countries and continents, but a gradual process of discovery, the vital next step onwards being seized by minds in which imagination set the spark to scientific progress. From the 1920s onwards, when broadcasting became a reality in Great Britain, the actual achievement and the refining of the methods have been continuous. This story cannot dwell at length on all the technical details, but we may see what, in 1957, is the great complex of sound and television which we use as our right.

It is based upon the electro-magnetic waves travelling with the speed of light (seven times round the world in a second). Broadcasting started with long radio

waves but has been using ever shorter waves and higher frequencies. Receiving aerials, when needed, are now commonly short metal rods, no longer a pole and a long aerial wire. In broadcasting there are long wavelengths of 1,000 to 2,000 metres, following the earth's curvature and giving reliable reception over very long distances; medium wavelengths of 180 to 550 metres which have a shorter range in daylight—these signals are strong but there are so many that they increasingly interfere with each other; short wavebands of between 13 and 50 metres which give very long ranges by day and night because of their reflection properties. These are vulnerable to atmospheric disturbances, fading and sunspots.

Shorter waves and higher frequencies, known as VHF (very high frequency), are now in use. In Great Britain the system of VHF is being extended and gives clear reception, free from the interference found on many medium wave lengths. These shorter waves are divided into three 'bands'. Band I contains all the five BBC television channels; Band II is used for high quality sound, by 'frequency modulation', known as F.M.; Band III is used for the new British (ITA) television service, and only three out of its eight channels are in use. The others are not yet allocated. There are still more bands (ultra high frequency) which may be used for colour television or some other development.

Colour television is the next great step to be expected. An experimental service is now being run by the BBC, but it is unlikely to come into normal use for some

years. In the United States there has been some colour television since 1954, and in 1956 colour could be carried to 190 television stations in 134 cities. The Radio Corporation of America is said to have spent more than £20 million on colour development. One reason for the cautious advance in Great Britain is the greater cost of receivers; also the BBC and the radio industry are not yet convinced that they have found the best system. A version of the American system (National Television Systems Committee) has so far been used in British tests. The important thing about this is its 'compatibility'—the pictures can be received in black and white on ordinary receivers. But a great amount would have to be spent on starting the system here for the national network. The ordinary colour programme in the USA in 1956 cost about half as much again as in black and white. Also, the 'interleaving' process which is required causes the picture quality to deteriorate and British viewers are already used to higher picture quality than the Americans and might view a poorer quality with disfavour. Another technique has also been investigated by the BBC.

The variety and improvement of transmission techniques, in both broadcasting and television, in the last thirty years, have been accompanied by a corresponding advance in the devices for reception. In Great Britain there has been an annual radio show held by the industry since 1933. Early listeners to wireless commonly used the crystal set with a cat's whisker and listened through earphones. But it was not long before the first loud speaker sets were built. The convenience

of earphones, in that a single listener could hear programmes while others need not, has been kept, for instance, in hospitals; they are also worn, of course, by technicians, cameramen, floor managers, and commentators in producing broadcasts and television shows, where they alone must hear the instructions.

The loud speaker set is now the normal receiver, and it has gone through many changes. In its early years it was often large and elaborate; it could be combined with a radiogram and with devices for long playing records with automatic coupling. With the coming of television there were seen all-purpose sets which could be quite massive pieces of furniture, including sound, television screen, radiogram, record player and it was said, a cocktail cabinet too. But in the normal sound or television set, simplicity has come back into favour. The portable set has found a new public, for in the post-war years more people have had holidays and cars and have wanted radio wherever they go. By 1956 many more sets were being made tuned to VHF, and in 1957 there appeared the first portable television sets.

Probably the most important development in radio technique was a device which was seen in practice at the 1956 radio show in Great Britain—the transistor. This is a substitute for the valve, on which the whole science of electronics is founded, and it has indeed some advantages over the valve. It is an amplifying crystal, very much smaller than a valve, but with a higher efficiency electrically. It can be used in conjunction with valves, but portable radio receivers are now made with transistors only. The great advantage is its elec-

trical economy and it has many applications outside the field of broadcasting.

Wireless, by whatever system of waves and whether in sound or vision, has for many years now been not only internal to different countries, but has spanned Europe and the world. Some interesting technical achievements and some future possibilities may be mentioned here. Experiments in televising between France and England were made in 1952 and 1953; in 1954 'Eurovision' began, when Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Holland, Belgium, France and Great Britain were all linked in a now permanent chain of television exchange.

Viewers are now used to television from the air, in which equipment installed in an aircraft, balloon or helicopter, takes pictures and transmits them; a test at Cambridge in 1956 was watched by representatives of our armed forces and air attachés from many countries. At about the same time the opening of a new transatlantic telephone cable suggested that ultimately a transatlantic television interchange may be possible. It can only be a matter of time before this becomes a reality. American television has not yet been seen here, but a recognizable picture from British television has been seen for a short time in America.

The modern world uses the quickly developing science of electronics in many ways which are basically the same as broadcasting but are directed to quite other uses. These variations are making revolutionary changes in many procedures which before were slow and depended more upon the human element. Some of

the developments have been due to the impetus which war, or warlike preparations for peace, always give to scientific method. There is, for instance, radar, extensively used in the last war for detecting objects before they could be found by the human eye or ear, and now used as a normal procedure in the air or at sea. An optical attachment for radar known as the chart comparison unit can now improve the efficiency even of the ordinary radar system. The Farnborough Air Show in 1956 demonstrated the part of electronics in aviation; one new device was the radar-trainer. Airports, harbours and ferries all depend on radar for controlling their traffic, especially in poor visibility. Radio stations are now to be used for aiding transpolar air services; three stations are to be built in Greenland for ground-to-air communications on the transatlantic and transpolar services from Europe to North America, and the transpolar route from Scandinavia to Tokio. Direct radio contact was made in 1956 between London and the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition at Shackleton Base, a distance of 10,000 miles.

On a cross-channel yacht race in 1956 one yacht was equipped with a special electronic device known in the services as SARAH, for air-sea rescue location. It transmits signals over a radius of 70 miles for twenty hours continuously. Radio plays a growing part in the work of rescue and mercy. In Ottawa a new device has been tested for sending signals from an aircraft which may have crashed in remote country. The International Labour Organization in the autumn of 1956 adopted a resolution for the maritime session of its general con-

ference in 1958 urging that world-wide arrangements should be made for a twenty-four hour medical service by radio for all ships at sea. Such a service is now provided by some countries but seafarers think that it should be greatly extended. Another aspect of this work can be seen in the British plan now approved by the Postmaster General whereby over 1,000 radio amateurs ('hams') will be available to provide communications for the British Red Cross in the event of disasters. The terms of amateur licences have now been varied to allow third party messages for the Red Cross to be relayed.

In what is known as 'mobile radio', which uses very high frequencies, advances since the war have enabled a large number of transmitters to operate without mutual interference. Examples of this are police cars, ambulances and 'radio taxis', which can all keep in communication with each other and with headquarters while on the move. In some countries, such as sparsely populated parts of South Australia, lonely ranches have receiver-transmitters which can keep in touch with the Royal Flying Doctor's Service station. Teaching can thus be done by teachers who never see their pupils. The electricity is produced from wind-blown generators. In Britain recently recommendations have been made for changing the allocation of wavelength channels. In the next few years about 2,400 stations, involving taxis, ambulances, doctors' cars and fire brigades will have to be changed to different wavelengths, since Band III, which they have been using, was cleared for independent television. Increasing use is being made of television for industrial purposes.

Distant parts of a factory can be seen and checked on the screen by those in charge of complicated processes; this sort of 'closed circuit' television will play a steadily more important part in industry and is already a factor in what is called automation. Industrial television units are installed in guided weapon establishments, atomic plants and power stations in Great Britain. On the 'intercom' the chief sub-editor of a newspaper can speak directly, as if he were broadcasting, to the composing room or any other department; can the day be far off when he will also be able to see the compositors at work—or they see him? A curious and interesting way in which television has been used for this sort of contact was at the Glyndebourne (Sussex) opera house in the summer of 1956, where a miniature television camera was installed so that the chorus, when in the wings, could have a direct view of the conductor. This was the first of its kind in Britain; the example was set by the first European installation in the new State Opera House in Vienna earlier in the year.

The television camera can be used, too, in hospitals for demonstrating surgery. Hitherto operations could only be watched by a limited number of students. With the camera over the operating table, the surgeon's work can now be seen in greater detail and close-up by numbers of students in a different room. Colour television is really needed for the fullest efficiency of this way of teaching. A demonstration of colour television in surgery was given in London in 1957.

Yet another extension of television is for seeing and photographing under water. The underwater 'eye'

reminds one of Jules Verne's wonderful submarine the 'Nautilus'. When salvage ships were on their way to help to unblock the Suez Canal, this story was told about using the television screen to direct the divers' work. The officer speaks to the diver by telephone. One Admiral telephoned 'Write something on your blackboard, diver.' The diver scribbled away and held up the board in front of the camera. It said: 'What about more pay for divers?' Much of what we now know happens every day in the field of radio communications shows how accurately the genius of H. G. Wells and other writers of early scientific fiction forecast the future. Most marvellous of all perhaps is the development of radio astronomy. The great installation built by the University of Manchester at Jodrell Bank in Cheshire records the rushing, crackling sound of radio waves from the stars, and this very sound has been recorded and broadcast to listeners in the course of a talk by Professor A. C. B. Lovell. A new system of precise measurement of distance, depending on a radio technique somewhat similar to radar, was demonstrated in London in March, 1957.

Television has been successfully used for sorting out traffic blocks. The all-seeing eye can photograph the scene and bring the situation to traffic control officers who can then take measures to relieve it. In Durham, in the summer of 1956, a policeman at the market centre was able to see on a monitor screen the traffic flowing in on approach roads and to regulate the lights in accordance with what was about to happen. The same experiment was made in Hamburg a little earlier,

where pictures were projected in a central control unit from which traffic signals were operated.

Radio can even be put to work to beat the burglar. Devices have been demonstrated which *The Times* called 'cunning equipment which guards space as such, rather than the mere entry into it'. A supersonic generator sets up a pattern of sound waves and any movement in the area disturbs the pattern and sets off an alarm. A similar system uses very high frequency waves.

Commerce can make use of new applications of electronics for much routine work. Thus it is possible that a bank cashier using the small 'industrial' television camera would be able to have a signature checked at a central registry without leaving his counter. Such suggestions are made, of course, purely from the point of view of time-saving efficiency. It might be that the cashier, like many another man who works with his eyes and his head all the time, would still prefer to stretch his legs and walk a few yards.

Newspapers too can call television in aid. How far will this go in the future? In 1956 during a Republican convention at San Francisco delegates received every day an 8-page edition of the *New York Times*, using materials set up in type for the regular New York edition of the paper and sent across the continent by television circuits operating through a micro-wave relay system of 300 stations. Two pages at a time were sent in a minimum of four minutes; the photographic image, received in San Francisco, was developed and engraved for printing in a local newspaper plant.

There are some extensions of the ubiquitous radio and television that bring comfort; some that bring a suggestion of fear. The thought of voices and pictures thronging around one, ever available if not always physically present, can be oppressive. Car radio is always with us. Some people think it a tiresome companion, but it has been known to keep solitary drivers awake. When there is a vital Test match being played small groups of anxious people can be seen gathered round any stationary car that has a set. Ought we to have television in cars? It would certainly be dangerous for drivers. One British firm has recently fitted a 9-inch television screen in the rear of one of its luxurious models; it will run off the mains or car battery and includes VHF sound reception of the three British home services.

Do we want to see each other when we make telephone calls? In America experiments have shown that a picture of the caller can be transmitted with the sound, though this is not television proper. If the special switch is turned off, the call goes through without pictures.

Inevitably the whole apparatus of broadcasting—both the transmission and the reception of so many programmes in sound and television, has been the source of a whole new industry. Although in recognizable form it is less than forty years old, it has expanded rapidly to keep pace with the technical achievements of radio and has produced apparatus of such quality that the British radio industry is now responsible for a large and growing volume of exports all over the

world. At home the demand for sets of every kind, taking the total of sound broadcasting and television, has increased year by year. Most households in Great Britain have what is known as a 'radio' set—that is for sound reception; more and more each year acquire a television set. Getting the new does not necessarily mean abandoning the old. The radio set (still most important for music) is a general utility; it is often movable, it brings the time and the news, it is less cumbersome than the television cabinet, and it can still be heard while manual jobs are done. Credit restrictions have not seriously affected the sales of sets. In August of 1956 sales of television sets in Great Britain were 110,000 compared with 79,000 in July; sales of radio sets were 86,000, an increase of 4 per cent over July, though over a whole year the sales of radio sets had fallen slightly. At the end of 1956 the total number of licences in Britain was 14,424,236, of which 6,433,417 were for combined sound and television. The industry was offering the public not only ordinary sets but such refinements as radio gramophones, sets with record players and sets with special adjustments for using the top as a coffee table, and a television set with 'armchair' control of the switches.

The other side of the home industry which has thrived steadily since broadcasting started is that of electrical engineering, which provides the transmitter stations and the mass of intricate and delicate apparatus they use. Since television began again after the war, in 1946, Great Britain has erected a network of high-power and medium-power transmitters covering almost

the whole country and the coming of independent television has nearly duplicated this system. Restrictions on capital investment made the BBC's progress slower than it would otherwise have been, and the need for still more capital expenditure at a time when the Government was urging economic retrenchment all round, was questioned by the opponents of commercial television.

In radio equipment the quality of British work leads the world, and it was not surprising that when the first plans were begun to forge the European exchange, British engineers and British radio equipment were sent abroad to establish essential points in the technical 'links' such as the relay system high up on the Jungfrau in Switzerland. In May of 1956 the volume of British exports in radio, television and electronic equipment was £3·4 millions, a new monthly record. The annual rate was £40 millions, compared to £33 millions in 1955 and £2 millions before the war. The main exports were: radio and television receivers, sound reproducing equipment, components, valves and tubes, transmitters, communications, equipment and navigation aids. The Minister of Supply, opening the Radio Show of 1956, said that the British radio industry had become one of the major national industries and that it, together with the electronic industry, was 'essential to the country in war and peace', for without it we could not take advantage of new developments in atomic energy or even automation. His view of the importance of the industry came at a time when, it could be said, it was entering upon the fourth major era in its short and exciting

history. They have been outlined by a leader of that industry as the 'wireless telegraphy' era, about the turn of the century; the 'radio' era, at the end of the first world war, with wireless telephony and broadcasting; the 'television' era, which began immediately before the second war, and now the 'electronic' era, and the last may prove to be the most important and indeed revolutionary of all.

Chapter Three

BROADCASTING IN BRITAIN

In the first half of this century, then, the means of communicating across space have passed from the earliest stage of a mere signal to an intricate apparatus of broadcasting in sound and vision all over the world and all round the clock. In drawing a picture of this formidable power the viewpoint from which the perspective will mainly be taken is that of broadcasting in Britain, which, as a public service with a unique constitution, has been the model for many other countries and a standard for all. In Britain, not long before the war of 1914, and in Germany and America also, experiments were made with 'wireless telephone' sets for commercial purposes. In America especially there were good facilities for research into the use of telephone microphones. So in 1915 an American company transmitted speech and music from the United States naval station at Arlington to the Eiffel Tower, 3,800 miles away; a little later American experimenters, in their homes, used wireless for the transmission and exchange of programmes. In Britain in 1919 a member of the Marconi Company transmitted good speech from Ballybunion in Ireland to Louisburg, Cape Breton Island (1,800 miles). In America the broadcasting of music and entertainment had begun; in Britain private experimental work was viewed with caution by the naval and military authorities and the development of

wireless telephony was restricted. British manufacturers, unwilling to fall behind, decided to erect a station so powerful that foreign countries could hear its programmes. The result was the Chelmsford station, which was easily heard by Madrid. In the spring of 1920 two daily programmes of half an hour each—news, songs and instrumental music—were sent out in all directions on the same wave-length as the Poldhu station which was transmitting news to ships telegraphically. These programmes were heard on ships 1,000 miles away, and on crystal sets by people in various parts of England.

The *Daily Mail* became interested and asked Mme Melba to broadcast. This seems to have been remembered as an historic occasion. Most European countries heard it. In Christiania the music was relayed from the wireless station by telephone to the chief newspaper offices. Wireless programmes, as we know them now, may be said to have begun. The Marconi Company set up stations in Cornwall and Newfoundland and one on a transatlantic liner; news and programmes were exchanged, and other countries asked for demonstrations. In America the first regular broadcasting station was set up in East Pittsburg, Pa. At the end of 1920 England still suffered under restrictions, but free enterprise America was going ahead with anything from classical music to advertisements for pickles—a pattern which it has followed to its own satisfaction until to-day. By 1923 it had over 500 broadcasting stations.

Britain went more soberly. Licensed experimenters were allowed to send out programmes; in 1921 the

Radio Society of Great Britain agreed with the Post Office for a small Marconi station at Writtle, under Captain P. P. Eckersley, to send out programmes; they were mainly gramophone records. A play was done in 1922. In this year a station called 2LO began to broadcast from Marconi House in London and it soon had an audience of 50,000. Another station, 2ZY, started in Manchester that year: then a second London station. Meanwhile there were conferences with the radio industry and groups anxious to broadcast, and the British Broadcasting Company was formed, backed by six great firms and licensed by the Postmaster-General until the end of 1926. A chain of eight stations was to be maintained and advertising was forbidden; the service was to be 'to the reasonable satisfaction of the Postmaster-General'. There was no charter. Such was the first shape of broadcasting in Britain as a public service. Official broadcasting began on November 14, 1922, with declaration of results in the general election. The general manager was Mr. J. C. W. Reith and the chief engineer Captain Eckersley.

The BBC, as it was soon called, even then saw broadcasting as a source not only of entertainment but of information and culture; under Mr. Reith its standards were high and it took its responsibilities gravely. To him, more than to any one pioneer, and to his idea of the function of the BBC was due its shape in years to come. The possibilities, especially in dealing with news, events and opinion, were unlimited. Lord Crawford's Committee of 1925, appointed by the Government to advise on future management and control,

recommended that broadcasting should be run by a public corporation 'acting as trustee for the national interest'. They suggested one conception fundamental to the position of the BBC ever since: that though Parliament must have the right of ultimate control, and the Postmaster-General be the Parliamentary spokesman on broad questions of policy, the governors of the BBC should have the maximum of freedom within this framework. The result has been a typically British compromise, which has sometimes made the BBC's position difficult, both in spite of and because of its status as a public corporation with a monopoly. (The start of commercial television in 1955 broke the monopoly but has done nothing to impair the BBC's prestige as a public service.) The governors are formally responsible to the Government, but the director-general (Mr. Reith, later Sir John, was the first) has great executive powers. If the BBC has been accused, from time to time, of being a Government organ, its reputation at home, and even more abroad, for objectivity and truth has never been tarnished. Advertising has always been forbidden.

The British Broadcasting Company with its contracts and staff, became the British Broadcasting Corporation on January 1, 1927. The general policy laid down by the Crawford Committee has remained the guiding principle ever since. A power in reserve in one clause of the licence let Parliament have the last word on an issue where the views of the governors may be in conflict with those of the Government or Parliament.

The BBC has up to now had four charters. They are the keystones of a structure which is now not only a

national but an international influence, since it radiates all over the world. The first charter (1927–36) was granted after Parliament had considered the Crawford Report, which followed an earlier report of the Sykes Committee (1923).

The second charter (1937–46) was granted after Parliamentary consideration of Lord Ullswater's Committee of 1935. This charter authorized the BBC to carry on the service 'for the benefit of Our Dominions beyond the seas and territories under Our protection'. (Broadcasting to the Empire had begun in 1932, on the BBC's own initiative.) The charter also entrusted the BBC with television broadcasting, as recommended by Lord Selsdon's Television Committee of 1934, which was endorsed by the Ullswater Committee. (The BBC television service started in 1936.) The British method of committees and long consideration makes an interesting contrast with the American private enterprise system.

The third charter (1947–51) came after Parliamentary consideration of the Government's White Paper on Broadcasting Policy (1946). Now the BBC was authorized to provide services for countries outside the Commonwealth. This reflected the importance of the world service in many languages which had developed tremendously during the war of 1939–45. One other addition was that the Corporation was required to establish machinery for joint consultation with its staff. This charter was later extended to June, 1952.

The fourth charter (1952–62) is that now in force, and under it the licence from the Postmaster-General

is for the first time described as a non-exclusive licence. This was because it had then been decided by the Government that some form of competition would be allowed in television, although the licence for this was not granted till 1954. The fourth charter followed Parliamentary consideration of the report by Lord Beveridge's Committee of 1949 and of the White Papers of 1951 (Mr. Attlee's Administration) and of 1952 (Mr. Churchill's Administration). The Beveridge Report was the most thorough inquiry into the working of the BBC since it began, and though the Corporation's position as a monopoly under charter has always made it the object of criticism, from many angles, this voluminous report found little radically wrong. A minority report signed by Mr. Selwyn Lloyd recommended the breaking of the BBC's monopoly and that any other body or bodies set up in competition should accept advertisements. In the second White Paper the Government said that they had 'come to the conclusion that in the expanding field of television provision should be made to permit some element of competition'. The Independent Television Authority was accordingly set up by the Television Act of 1954, but in a White Paper on Television Policy (1953) the Government said that the proposal that there should be competition was in no way a criticism of the BBC. It had been made clear throughout that the BBC would continue to be the main instrument for broadcasting in the United Kingdom.

The current licence provided, for the first time, Broadcasting Councils for Scotland and Wales, the

chairmen of which are governors of the BBC, since the distinctive culture, interests and tastes of these countries place them somewhat apart from the normal English 'regions' of the BBC. If the Government of Northern Ireland wished, there could also be a Broadcasting Council for that country; it has at present, like all the English regions, an advisory council, whose chairman in Northern Ireland is also a BBC governor.

The BBC has now been established for just thirty years—a short time if one considers how far it has come. To-day it is the most powerful public service broadcasting organization in the world. It is responsible for the whole of its engineering operations, and frequently lends technical and programme advisers to other countries who are developing their own systems. It is free in the day-to-day operations of broadcasting, though there are, as the successive charters have made clear, certain obligations or restrictions in the larger field of policy. These apply particularly to questions of political broadcasting, which call for more careful examination elsewhere; to religion, since the view is taken that the BBC represents a Christian country, and to broadcasting overseas, in which the BBC as the 'voice of Britain' has a connection with departments such as the Foreign Office and the Commonwealth Relations Office, though it is at the same time not merely the servant of the Government. The Government may 'from time to time by notice in writing require the Corporation to refrain at any specified time or at all times from sending any matter or matter of any class specified in such notice', and thus has an absolute

power of veto, but makes little use of it. On the question of 'controversial' broadcasting successive charters have become more liberal. In 1927 the BBC was under this 'veto' asked to refrain from broadcasting 'speeches or lectures containing statements of political, religious or industrial controversy'. This ban was withdrawn in 1928 and it was left to the governors to use their discretionary powers. In later years there were specific arrangements for broadcasting 'controversial' talks; for instance, getting speakers to put the case for atheism or agnosticism, which represented an attempt to give unorthodox views.

The main restrictions on the BBC's output are now three. The BBC must not express its own opinions on current affairs or public policy; this has been so since the first charter in 1927. The other two are more recent. The increasing amount of discussion about politics gave rise in 1955 to the much criticized, so-called 'Fourteen Day Rule' by which the Government told the BBC that it must not arrange discussions or *ex parte* statements on any issue due to be debated in the House within a fortnight, and when legislation is introduced, the Corporation must not allow M.P.s to broadcast between the introduction of a bill and its receiving the Royal Assent or being withdrawn or dropped. This rule made binding what had previously been an agreement between the BBC and leaders of the parties, from which the BBC had wanted to withdraw. It has now been modified. It has caused much controversy and in practice has led to some ridiculous situations, as in the Middle East crisis of the autumn of 1956, when it inhibited dis-

cussion in sound radio or television of the one topic about which everyone felt keenly.

The third restriction is a minor one, though to call it relatively unimportant is to risk the anger of the more militant Welsh and Scots. The Broadcasting Council for Wales, which under the charter of 1952 is responsible for the policy and content of programmes in the Welsh Home Service, proposed a series of party political broadcasts within that service. The Postmaster-General in reply required the BBC to refrain from any but the party political broadcasts arranged with the leading parties and broadcast throughout the United Kingdom. The Welsh proposal, and therefore any chance of similar broadcasts in Scotland, was thus refused. The nationalist parties in these countries naturally have a grievance against a system which does not allow them to voice their aspirations. It will be interesting to see whether commercial television in Wales and Scotland affords them an outlet, for the Independent Television Authority is also strictly confined by the Government on political issues.

There are, besides these limitations, some positive obligations on the BBC to do certain things. It must broadcast such announcements as the Government requires. These may range from police messages to grave announcements in time of emergency, and form part of the BBC's work as a general service to the nation. It is also required to broadcast daily when Parliament is in session a brief, impartial report of the proceedings in both Houses. This was actually being done before it was officially required of the BBC. The

importance of broadcasting on these lines is acutely felt when any unusual stoppage—such as the newspaper strike in 1955—checks the normal flow of information. Indeed it was in the general strike of 1926 that the BBC was first felt as a vital agency, and it was and is because of this function of broadcasting that such care was taken in the 1939–45 war to protect the BBC physically. Experience in more unstable countries, or in invaded countries, has shown that he who holds the radio stations holds a priceless weapon for misleading the public.

The BBC to-day has nine governors, a director-general who is the chief executive officer, and a staff of over 14,000. Its general purpose is defined as the broadcasting of 'information, entertainment and education'. Under the director-general, forming the board of management, are the directors of sound broadcasting, television, external broadcasting, engineering, administration, and the chief assistant to the director-general. The three domestic programmes—Home, Light and Third—have their own controllers, as also have the separate regions—North, Midland, West, and Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales; under them are the programme staffs responsible for all broadcasting. The structure of the BBC also operates in what may be called a horizontal as opposed to a vertical direction; the departments for music, drama, talks, news and so on, produce the material, so that the result is a combination of executive planning and direction with the production of programmes by staff trained in specific departments of the work. The many activities of the

BBC, apart from entertainment in the broadest sense, including as they do sport, religion, innumerable 'outside' events, farming, schools broadcasting and features for women and children—all of which are now penetrating the television service—form together a carefully built many-voiced organ for satisfying every taste. This service is probably more comprehensive than any other national system in the world. Both before and after the war—which had a marked effect on it—the BBC has interpreted the duty to provide information, education and entertainment by means of a graded system of programmes which are not mutually exclusive.

Early in 1957, however, a decision was taken to rearrange the sound broadcasting services in view of the growing popularity of television, which was attracting a wider public than sound and was a very expensive service to maintain. Plans which were expected to save about £1 million by 1960 were made; they showed that the Third Programme, with its more serious and interesting broadcasts, would be reduced from 5½ to 3 hours a night, that the Home and Light Programmes would be combined at certain periods, and that there would be a longer continuous service of light 'background' music and entertainment, while certain talks and specialized interests would be dealt with in a new *Network Three* on part of the Third Programme's original time and wave length.

While it was understood that television had become the BBC's major commitment, and that competition with commercial television had made the cost higher and so forced economies in sound radio, there was

considerable criticism of the BBC's decision to whittle down the one programme which appealed to a minority. There was also some suspicion that there would in future be fewer musical broadcasts of good quality (though the BBC denied this) and that the general trend of the Home and Light services, whether combined or separate, would be to a more amorphous and 'popular' mixture.

The two strongest influences on the character of the BBC have been the characters of two men: Lord Reith, who as Mr. John Reith was the first director-general, and whose insistence on the responsibility of the BBC was sometimes thought rather grim (the 'Reith Sunday' with its lack of entertainment was said to drive listeners to the bright commercial programmes from across the Channel), but who set for the future the BBC's standard of values; and Sir William Haley (now editor of *The Times*), director-general from 1944 to 1952, a journalist who, with the same care for the BBC's integrity, used a more flexible and innovating mind to guide the BBC's output into far wider channels. To him was due the three-fold structure: the Light Programme, which describes itself, but in fact had many features on current affairs and induced millions of people to listen to good plays; the Home Service, complete in itself and drawing life from the regions; and the Third Programme—Sir William's own project—which he started in September, 1946, and which, for a minority audience, brought a constant flow of all that is best, new and old, in music, literature, drama and talks to those (and they were many thousands) who could appreciate it. To Sir

William's foresight also must be credited much of the gathering strength of the television service, which reopened after the war in 1946 and now deals efficiently not only with entertainment but with sport, news, national occasions and television from and to Europe. The difficulty here is to satisfy many kinds of people with one programme, which is bound to be a patchwork. Another 'channel' for television is available but the Government has so far put off deciding whether this should go to the BBC or to commercial television. The best argument for the BBC lies in its obligations under the charter, which could be better fulfilled if it had an alternative service, especially as the regions now contribute a great deal that is valuable, showing the life of different parts of the country.

The BBC's staff are not all busy with producing programmes, planning them or engineering their transmission. Like an iceberg, a lot gleams above water, but there is much more to it than that. The business is huge; there are all the questions of copyright to be settled, the booking of artists, the administration of staff. There are training departments for sound and television producers and for engineers, and there is an audience research unit which makes constant estimates of the numbers and reactions of listeners and viewers. Then there are the BBC's publications, including the *Radio Times* with a sale of over 9 millions, the largest of any paper in the world, and the *Listener* which reprints many of the best talks and some new poetry. *London Calling* is the equivalent of the *Radio Times* for overseas listeners. The *BBC Quarterly*, an excellent

magazine of considered articles on the deeper implications of broadcasting, came to an end some time ago on grounds of economy; a great loss which nothing has replaced. The BBC, however, faces a period of rising costs and financial stringency. The licence fee is now £1 for sound, and £4 for combined sound and television, of which £1 is an excise tax imposed in the 1957 Budget. Early in 1957 the Government also decided that the Treasury should keep a percentage instead of a fixed amount of the licence revenue. The BBC's licensed public of 580,380 in 1923 had grown to over 14 millions in 1956.

An extremely important part of the work of British broadcasting is that of the 'external' services. These have grown naturally as an extension of the BBC's home activities, and as a summary of the successive charters has shown, they have become part of what the Government requires the BBC to do. These broadcasts from Britain in English and in a number of foreign languages received a great impulse from the war and their vital importance has been recognized in the uneasy years since 1945, though the BBC has had to fight, and still fights, a tendency on the part of the Government to economize by cutting them down.

The Drogheda Committee of 1954, on our information services abroad, noted that the broadcasts 'must to-day be regarded as part of the normal apparatus of diplomacy of a Great Power'. At the end of the second world war, the output of the BBC to countries overseas was more than that of any two nations in the world added together. The external services at

present broadcast in English and other languages for a total of about 80 hours a day; this includes 48,000 news bulletins a year and 50,000 talks including press reviews. Recorded programmes are also sent to many parts of the world for transmission over local networks. One of the greatest achievements was the world-wide broadcast of the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953.

How did all this start? Plans for overseas broadcasts were discussed at a Colonial Conference in 1927, the year of the BBC's first charter, and an experimental short-wave transmitter was set up at Chelmsford. In 1932 Sir John Reith opened the new Empire Service, speaking to Australia and New Zealand. The programme allowance was then £10 a week. Only a few days later this new departure in British broadcasting was known throughout the Empire, for the service gave the Christmas Day programme linking the Commonwealth and including the first message from King George V. It was soon clear not only that the service made for a feeling of unity on great occasions at home or abroad—the interest in national ceremonies, and in the Derby, Wimbledon and Test matches shows this—but that more broadcasting time was needed. The gathering war clouds of the 1930s emphasized the value of this link between Crown and Commonwealth. There was a famous broadcast by General Smuts from South Africa which was heard throughout the Dominions and Colonies. The Coronation of King George VI was sent out not only 'live' but on recordings all round the twenty-four hours and was heard by more people in the

world than any event before in the history of radio. Fourteen foreign observers also gave commentaries on lines to points abroad; a foreshadowing of the European service to come.

Meanwhile the voice of Hitler orating on the short waves was heard with foreboding; it gave people in more pacific countries some idea of what was afoot in Germany. In the fateful summer of 1939 King George VI, on a visit to Canada, made a speech which was broadcast to the whole Empire after it had been 'beamed' to Britain. By this time Empire broadcasting had risen to a total of 19½ hours daily, and from the start of the war in 1939 it increased steadily; by 1942 it was 71 hours daily, the broadcasts being divided into four main streams: North American, Pacific, Eastern and African. In the years between 1932 and the outbreak of war in 1939 the main Commonwealth broadcasting organizations had settled into shape in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and Newfoundland. These years were thus a vitally formative period in the radio system which now firmly ties together the home country and the Commonwealth, for all these countries pick up and re-broadcast the Empire programmes, now called the General Overseas Service, and we in turn can share in theirs. In Malta, for instance, the rediffusion system made British programmes available against the Fascist blast from Italian stations. In the war the overseas service kept Dominion troops in touch with their home countries and families; the United States, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the BBC collaborated constantly, and America, in 'London Carries On' and

in 'London After Dark', actually heard the sounds of an air raid in progress.

To-day the General Overseas Service broadcasts for 21 hours every day (mainly in English, though the Colonial section uses some other languages) complete programmes with some of our domestic features and much specially written for overseas. The BBC is in close touch with some forty-five organizations in the Colonies. The Far Eastern and Eastern Services use many foreign languages and are particularly useful in giving Asian countries and people and those of the Middle East a view of British opinion and the climate of thought. The BBC made its first foreign language broadcast in Arabic in 1938 at the request of the Government. There is some irony in the circumstances that during troubles in the Middle East over the Suez Canal and Arab aspirations, there was criticism of Britain's failure to counter the stream of propaganda from the Cairo radio. British broadcasting policy, however, has never been to pour out propaganda, but rather to let the objective presenting of news build up its own reputation for reliability.

Broadcasts in Spanish and Portuguese also started in 1938 for Latin America, where it was useful to counteract Axis propaganda. This was a period when many countries started short-wave broadcasting in foreign languages; the USSR, always quick off the mark in spreading her gospel, was one of the first; France, Holland, Germany, Italy, Japan and the USA followed soon after. Britain's foreign broadcasts grew apace. By 1942 she was giving in the European service alone 120

news bulletins in 25 languages every 24 hours. The war enormously increased the prestige of our broadcasts. In many countries the BBC news was regarded as the sole source of truth, for this was the first war in which radio propaganda was widely used. Great risks were run by listeners in occupied countries determined to hear the BBC. Our European services now have six branches: Scandinavian, West European, South European, Central European, German and East European. The last—which in effect is speaking to people behind the Iron Curtain—is inevitably a part of the cold war. Russia's satellites are in the position of our wartime listeners, and 'jamming' by the Communist authorities is kept up energetically. The purpose of the broadcasts to Western Europe is rather different, and was thought less important by the Drogheda Committee of 1954 which recommended some cuts in the output to Europe, and the restoration of some services to Latin America and English-speaking countries. All these are financed by Treasury grant and not by the BBC's revenue. This tendency appeared again in the suggestion for further economy, made late in 1956, that the external services grant might be cut by £1,000,000; early in 1957 this threat was reduced by half; then an increase of £209,000 was granted. The external broadcasts were then under review as part of Britain's information services as a whole.

Apart from all these broadcasts in nearly fifty languages, the BBC now gives its 'English By Radio' lessons in thirty-five languages, reaching an audience of millions by direct transmission from London, by

relays and by transcription recordings. The languages range from European to Asiatic and some stations overseas add explanations locally in further languages (for example, Amharic, Hausa, and Greenlandic). These lessons have done much to make English a lingua franca; a BBC producer collecting material in the Far East for the Christmas Commonwealth programme of 1956 noticed how many people spoke excellent English; the BBC itself must have been partly responsible.

How does the BBC judge the effect of its overseas broadcasts? It uses a number of research methods. More than twenty 'panels' are set up in different parts of the world. Questionnaires are sent out, listener competitions are held which invite criticism, and there are many unsolicited letters. Then there are the offices of the BBC staff abroad and the connections with local stations. For listening to the output of the rest of the world, the BBC keeps its own extensive monitoring service, which is useful not only for its own news bulletins but for general information, especially about Communist countries, of interest to the Foreign Office and the news agencies.

In all its external broadcasts the BBC is supposed to have a somewhat closer connection with the Government than in its domestic output, though this is more a matter of consultation than direction. The languages and hours are prescribed by the Government, but the programme content is the responsibility of the BBC. The policy is that the Corporation should remain independent, but should obtain from the Government department concerned such information about conditions

in these countries and the policies of the Government towards them as will 'permit it to plan the programme in the national interest'. The exact effect of this relationship was a matter of concern when the BBC was accused by some M.P.s of bias in its overseas reporting at the time of the Anglo-French intervention in Egypt in November, 1956. This is a difficult question which calls for fuller treatment in its political aspect.

Chapter Four

COMMONWEALTH AND COLONIES

THE radio communications between Britain and the Commonwealth are a strong, if invisible web. In the Commonwealth countries there are national services, set up largely on the model of the BBC in its early years, and there is a constant interchange of programmes and news with Great Britain. There is also in the Commonwealth a considerable amount of commercial radio, generally combined with the public service rather than in competition. This web of Commonwealth broadcasting, with its mutual exchange and its strong base in each country, is one of the most powerful influences in a world in which news and propaganda are daily spread more swiftly, and in which the free world is inescapably set in spiritual opposition to the totalitarian. The best function of such broadcasting is simply to show a way of life, and the Commonwealth countries have a united voice in that it is based on the fundamental values of free and democratic peoples.

The importance of this conception is marked by the Commonwealth Broadcasting Conferences which have been held; in London in 1945 and 1952, and in Sydney in the winter of 1956. The BBC delegation to the Sydney conference, which was to exchange information, particularly on the technique of radio, and views on the future, and to discuss the exchange of staff and programmes, was led by the director-general, Sir Ian

Jacob. The increasing amount of television, well established in Canada and just started in Australia, was another subject for discussion. One of the best ways for the Commonwealth countries to get to know one another is by the exchange of their own home programmes, and television films (including newsreels) can do much to make such an exchange lively and effective. The 1956 conference was the first to be held outside London. It could be a healthy precedent; Canada, South Africa, India and Pakistan might well be the seat of these conferences in years to come. The part of broadcasting in the world of to-day is anything but academic. The British people themselves, always slow to acquire a knowledge of the great Dominions, have learnt much from broadcasting; the Commonwealth countries have never failed, in their own systems, to value the tie with Britain.

Canada's place in broadcasting is of especial interest, for she combines in a unique way the features of the old world as seen in Britain and of the new as seen in the United States, which as her neighbour naturally has an influence upon both sound radio and television. It is partly this influence which has helped to make Canada's progress both in sound and television quick and efficient. She has also two languages to deal with, so that she has a dual service, in English and in French; she is, too, a country with great centres of population and vast open spaces with remote groups of listeners. A typical problem which arose during the sitting of the Royal Commission on Broadcasting in 1956 was an appeal by representatives of the Yukon and North-West

territories for a more adequate Canadian service to the Arctic regions, where Soviet broadcasts beamed to the Arctic would become increasingly effective unless countered by adequate and regular Canadian news broadcasts. It was said that 'Radio Moscow may think that it has found its most exposed, and therefore receptive audience, in the Canadian North.' Such are the problems with which any responsible broadcasting organization has to contend, and they are political problems which grow more complex with the very growth and speed of radio communication.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation was set up in 1936 and the Broadcasting Corporation of Newfoundland in 1937. The CBC was a public service body like the BBC, with a board of governors independent of the Government of the day, and thus neither Government owned nor Government controlled, but responsible to Parliament as a whole. At the start the view was taken that there must be a national radio service, and the special circumstances of Canadian life and geography helped to determine this preference. In a thinly populated country radio, if left to purely commercial enterprise, would obviously serve only the biggest audiences, and in Canada broadcasting might thus have become a mere extension of American radio. On the other hand the Canadian system is 'mixed' in that some stations are privately owned; these are commercial, provide a 'community' service, and also take many of the national network programmes from the CBC.

Early in 1957 there were 189 radio stations—22 CBC and 167 privately owned, and 38 television stations, of

which 9 were CBC and 29 private. The Fowler Royal Commission on Broadcasting, which reported in 1957, made a recommendation, to be considered by the Canadian House of Commons, that private television companies should be licensed and allowed to build stations and compete with the CBC (where before only one station had been allowed in a city or area). It was also suggested that private television stations should be allowed to link themselves into national networks. An important recommended change in the structure of broadcasting administration was that the CBC should become a crown company with a president and general manager but no board of directors, and that above it should be a Board of Broadcast Governors which would have regulatory powers over both the CBC and the private stations, and would act as a buffer between the CBC and Parliament.

The principles of free speech, the right to controversy, the balance of political opinion, and the general safeguarding of the freedom of the air, are recognizably the same under the CBC as in Britain. The Canadian Corporation at present runs three networks: the Trans-Canada and the Dominion in English, and the French network. Each of these has some privately owned 'affiliates' as they are known; the Dominion service has the largest number. Most of the French stations are in Quebec. The CBC also operates an International Service (corresponding to the BBC's external services) on behalf of the Canadian Government, with a separate Parliamentary appropriation. Policy for these broadcasts, which go to Europe, Latin America and Australasia, is

determined broadly by the Government's Department of External Affairs.

Canadian sound programmes, apart from including a regular proportion of the British Overseas Service, show much the same variety, with the insistence upon worthwhile features even if they do not get 'mass' listening figures, that British listeners are used to at home. 'CBC Wednesday Night' gives an element of our home Third Programme. There are special farming programmes—a subject so important that CBC gives it a whole programme department; a 'farm family' serial daily, schools broadcasts for which the demand grows every year, and on the French network, 'Radio College', which has been running since 1950 and in 1955 was given the Henry Marshall Tory award by the Canadian Association for Adult Education. A measure of the interest in this programme is that while there were 5,000 demands for its syllabus in 1950, there were 40,000 in 1955. The CBC is particularly keen in promoting discussion and knowledge of world affairs. Here its Commonwealth connections, its French-speaking population, and its nearness to the United States give it a unique position. It draws programmes not only from the BBC but from the United Nations Radio, the four American networks, and Radio France; for its many newscasts it uses British, Canadian and French agencies. In politics it ensures discussion and an opportunity to hear opposing parties by a system much the same as the British, allowing time to established parties and some time also to smaller groups, and giving the right of reply to 'controversial' broadcasts.

Although of course there are many programmes of entertainment, the most common criticism of CBC policy is that there are too many 'unpopular' or 'high-brow' programmes. But for consolation the Canadians have their private stations, which in every country tend to promote the lighter kind of entertainment. Many listeners can also easily hear American stations.

In television Canada has made big strides quickly, again probably influenced by her rich and energetic neighbour. Only three and a half years after she started television in 1952, more than half the families in Canada had television sets. Canadian television tastes 'tend to be lavish' said the governors of the CBC in a report to the Royal Commission on Broadcasting early in 1956. There were then 40 to 45 hours a week in English and 35 to 40 hours a week in French—on two separate networks. The private stations are important in the television system, both for commercial revenue and since they distribute the national programme in many areas. The linking of all Canada by television from coast to coast by a direct relay network should be completed by 1958. The first stage was the linking of Quebec City and Winnipeg (1,680 miles) by a microwave network. The stations outside the network are fed largely by recordings of television programmes; 16 mm. tele-recordings have proved specially successful. This recorded and filmed television service is one of the biggest in the world. News on television is part of the service; but though radio listening has, just as in Britain, dropped somewhat where people have television, the radio news and its daytime programmes stil

keep big audiences. Canada has been particularly enterprising in experiments with television for schools, and a series of lessons in 1954 was watched by 17,000 children and followed by a detailed report; the National Advisory Council on School Broadcasting then asked for a further experiment to be undertaken, including additional types and ages of student.

Colour television, which already operates in America, has not yet come to Canada but the report of the Royal Commission in 1957 said that the first colour transmissions should start in 1959, and forecast that by 1963 half of all the CBC television programmes would be in colour. The report also proposed that the system of annual parliamentary grants should be replaced by a system of firm five-year grants which would permit forward planning. Up to this point the CBC's income had been derived from three sources: an annual statutory grant (for sound radio), an excise tax on receivers, and commercial business. Canada in 1946 had an estimated number of 4,000,000 receivers.

In Australia also broadcasting follows the British model, and the Australian Broadcasting Commission, which was set up in 1932, is responsible to Parliament through the Postmaster-General and makes an annual report. But, as in Canada, there is a considerable amount of commercial radio also. The Commission therefore recognizes a particular responsibility for providing educational services, news, music (in which Australia is very strong) and short-wave broadcasts to countries abroad. Here again is the pattern of Commonwealth broadcasting; the inclusion of British news and

overseas programmes in the Australian service; the output of her own features, with attention to schools, current affairs and the best kinds of entertainment; and the sending out of broadcasts in other languages which give Australia's own point of view and, like the external services of other countries, are to some extent guided by Government policy. 'Radio Australia' is conducted in consultation with the Department of External Affairs, and reflects Australia's special interest in South-East Asia. She does one thing, in her home services, which has never been allowed in Britain; she broadcasts directly the proceedings of Parliament. The British Parliament has always jealously guarded its privilege and takes the view that its members must feel that they are speaking only to the House and not to a nation-wide audience, which, it is felt, would effectively alter the whole atmosphere and standing of the House. But Australia is a much younger country and had no such long tradition to break with.

The Australian Broadcasting Commission's chief concern is how, in a country of such great distances with comparatively few large towns, to provide an adequate service complete in itself, and how far to overlap with or to complement the work of the commercial stations, which are licensed under a careful system and which provide not only much light entertainment but very useful services for rural communities. The public service system, which allows of two programmes in the metropolitan centres, includes four kinds of news: national, state, regional and BBC. An aspect worth note is Australia's interest in Unesco; an Australian Unesco

committee in 1954 thought that the less technically advanced member states—for instance, in South-East Asia—should be helped to develop their radio facilities, and a series of Unesco Radio recordings in 1955 was offered to all the Australian commercial stations. Like most broadcasting systems in recent years the Australian has had to meet rising costs and has required a Parliamentary appropriation. There are over 2,000,000 licensed receivers in the country.

Television came to Australia later than to Canada, and started just before the Olympic Games were held in Melbourne at the end of 1956. The Government in 1954, acting under the Television Act of 1953, appointed the Australian Broadcasting Commission as the authority to produce the national programmes, and plans made both for programmes and technical equipment reflected a long experience of sound broadcasting and consultation with Great Britain and Canada. In all three countries the newcomer was fitted into the existing radio system. Where commercial radio already operates, caution is necessary when television with its potent influence comes on the scene, and at one stage in the debate on the television bill, Dr. Evatt pointed out the danger of licensing certain corporations in some states, which would in effect mean a monopoly of communications to the people. The Minister grants licences under strict conditions to the commercial stations as recommended by the Australian Broadcasting Control Board. The first national television station was opened by the Prime Minister in Sydney on November 5, 1956, and one in Melbourne opened

later in the month. The first occasion coincided with the visit of the BBC delegation to the Commonwealth Broadcasting Conference. The Commonwealth exchange in television, as in radio, began immediately to take shape. Before the service started, the Australian Broadcasting Commission had already ordered from the BBC many of its films and telerecordings—ranging from the series, 'War in the Air', to children's programmes, the archaeological series, 'Buried Treasure', a one-hour version of the Coronation and the occasion of the eightieth birthday presentation to Sir Winston Churchill in Westminster Hall. Colour television has not yet been started in Australia, though the Control Board has suggested that the ultra-high frequency channels might be the best for colour television to operate in.

New Zealand's National Broadcasting Service was set up by the Broadcasting Act of 1936, which transferred all the properties, rights, liabilities and engagements of the already existing authority (the New Zealand Broadcasting Board) to the Crown, and vested its control in a Minister. Its constitution differs somewhat from that of the BBC; the director of broadcasting is appointed by the Governor-General in Council to hold office for not more than three years. The permanent officers in the employ of the board became officers of the public service from 1936. The Governor-General has power to appoint an advisory council on the recommendation of the Minister. The act of 1936 empowered the Minister to establish and operate commercial stations, and advertising is forbidden except from these,

but for every locality served by a commercial station the Minister is required to provide an alternative public service. An act of 1937 provided for the setting up of a National Commercial Broadcasting Service, under a controller. In 1943 this position was abolished and both services were combined under a director of broadcasting. In 1946 the title was changed to the New Zealand Broadcasting Service and there was complete amalgamation of the two authorities, including their technical resources under a chief engineer. The position was therefore much as if in Britain, when commercial broadcasting started, it had done so as a separate wing of the BBC. The Minister has power to prohibit the broadcasting of any programme that he thinks unsuitable. The combination of national and commercial stations is arranged in a variety of ways; and the national stations send out from four main centres programmes to suit the major divisions of public taste. The commercial stations differ in that some provide alternative programmes with no advertising for the whole country, some give such alternatives for a smaller area, and some in the smaller towns or cities give both 'straight' and advertisement programmes in specified time bands.

The national service bears the family resemblance to Canada and Australia. Like them it takes much of the BBC overseas service and its news. A typical day's programme in New Zealand would include as a minimum three or four broadcasts of 'London News', and an edition of the BBC 'Radio Newsreel'. Much music, light and serious, is broadcast; New Zealand artists are encouraged, sport, as everywhere in the Common-

wealth, is a main interest, and schools broadcasts (in which regional broadcasts began in 1931) are now linked with the curriculum and broadcast from all the main national stations. New Zealand, like Australia, relays some of the proceedings of the House of Representatives so that people may learn the provisions of various bills and hear the views of their members. Whenever the House is being broadcast, another station takes over the scheduled programme.

For television a departmental committee was set up as early as 1949 to watch developments overseas and plan for starting it in New Zealand. The broadcasting service has studied the technique and programmes of other countries and makes reports at intervals. New Zealand has a short-wave service of overseas broadcasts, which finds a wide audience in Australia, and the Pacific Islands, and reaches Western Europe, the United States and Japan. The licence fees are credited to the national stations, while the main revenue of the commercial stations is their sale of station time. New Zealand in 1956 had over 500,000 licensed listeners.

Broadcasting in South Africa has developed on lines adapted to its own racial and geographical conditions, which are different again from those of Australia, New Zealand and Canada, but within the same general framework of a public corporation diversified by private stations. The South African Broadcasting Corporation, set up in 1936 with a board of governors responsible to the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs, broadcasts in two languages, English and Afrikaans. There are several advisory councils, and the Corporation ex-

changes programme material and technical information with organizations overseas so that important events in Europe and elsewhere may be enjoyed by its listeners. The English and Afrikaans services reflect the life of South Africa, world affairs, literature and music. Direct relays from abroad are used when the language is suitable; also transcriptions (such as those from the Radio Section of UNO at Lake Success).

Radio has been used to launch national campaigns, such as the fight against cancer, the advancement of soil preservation, the work of nursery schools, and family management. The news service is both regional and national, and increasingly makes use of world news in collaboration with the press agencies. During Parliamentary sessions, there are several special daily bulletins of the proceedings. Among the programmes drama has been very popular, and in the Afrikaans service the demand for plays has been so great that African writers could not meet it. Schools broadcasting is now guided by a National Advisory Council for Film and Radio Services to Schools, and there are several programmes a day in both English and Afrikaans.

The commercial service of the Corporation is Springbok Radio, which began in 1950; its programmes have to comply with the regulations and programme code of the Corporation, which puts a production unit at the disposal of the sponsors and hires out studio, recording and other facilities. There has also been a rediffusion service in Bantu since 1952, with programmes on health, hospital services, careers, social activities, youth and sport, for certain Native townships. There are, too,

Indian programmes in Durban. South Africa also has an international service. The number of licensed listeners in 1956 was estimated at something over 700,000.

Both India and Pakistan have Government broadcasting services: All India Radio, and Radio Pakistan, with directors and heads of departments on the model of most public service radio. The variety of tongues is striking; India puts out numerous programmes for different regions on medium and short waves in English and various Indian languages, as well as external services to Asia and Africa and some to the West, including Portugal. Pakistan also has many stations broadcasting in English and languages such as Arabic, Urdu, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Sindhi, Pushto and Baluchi, and external services to Asia, the Middle East, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

It is clear that broadcasting in the great Commonwealth countries has developed, in the last twenty-five years, a definite form. Television, where it is not already at work, will be fitted into the existing system, and there is no reason to suppose that these solid broadcasting organizations will change greatly, as they develop. In the Colonial territories, however, the picture is rather different; broadcasting in these many lands, some of them small and very remote, is still expanding, and we get a picture of a numerous and most diverse array of stations and services spread all over the world. Naturally it is difficult to estimate the number of people who hear them, but the Colonial Office reckoned the number at over 5,000,000 in 1956, whereas there were

only something over 1,000,000 in 1949. For some territories it is possible to know the number of licences or subscriptions to 'wired' broadcasting, but for others there is no reliable way of knowing the numbers.

In the beginning many Colonial stations were started by the initiative of individuals. Experimental broadcasts went out from Georgetown, British Guiana, in 1926; but the earliest Colonial service was that from Kenya in 1928, when the Kenya Government made an agreement with the British East African Broadcasting Company. 'Radio Hong Kong' was the next, and then in 1929 the first wired broadcasting service was started in the Falkland Islands. It was typical of those early days that the late Sir Arthur Hodson, governor at that time, often announced and produced the local programmes himself, and they were carried by telephone lines to the outlying sheep farms. Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast started wired services in 1934 and 1935; then commercial radio started in Gibraltar, Barbados and Malta. Fiji began broadcasting in 1935.

These were the years when the BBC itself and its overseas services were rapidly expanding and the Commonwealth systems were established. In 1936 the Colonial Secretary appointed the Plymouth Committee to consider steps towards increasing broadcasting services in the Colonies and to co-ordinate them with the BBC's work. The recommendations of this committee have largely guided Colonial broadcasting since. The fundamental conception was that of broadcasting as a means of enlightenment and education, and to this end the idea of public service was to be developed by

the respective Governments, while the BBC's overseas service was to be widely used. The second world war interrupted the plans for development on these lines, but at the same time it underlined the power of radio and in effect brought new stations into existence and many of them grew at that time from small local services into public service stations.

After the war the British Government felt it just as urgent to increase and improve Colonial broadcasting. The Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1948 asked all Colonial Governments to consider and take action on the lines suggested by the Plymouth Committee. In the next year the British Government made £1,000,000 available under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act to pay for studios, transmitting stations and listening facilities. £250,000 was allowed in 1952, and a further £500,000 in 1955. So there has been in recent years a rapid advance in the amount and quality of Colonial broadcasting; for instance, it was proposed in the Bahamas and Tanganyika that their services should be transferred to public commissions. The Nigerian Broadcasting Service became the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation, on the lines of the BBC, on April 1, 1957. Since 1949 more than forty broadcasting schemes in twenty-eight Colonial territories have been completed or had got under way. Over thirty wireless and thirteen broadcasting wired services were operating. The British Government has been at the back of all this with much of the finance and the suggestions for development; the planning and operating has been done largely by Colonial officers, generally with the help and advice of

the BBC. It takes about two years to start and complete a broadcasting service, and BBC engineers have done much of the preliminary surveying of territories. In 1953 a senior BBC engineer toured all the Colonial territories and advised their Governments on technical improvements; he had visited nearly every Colonial service in just over two years. When the equipment is ready, experienced programme staff help to organize the service in its early stages. Thus there were sixteen BBC men in Nigeria early in 1956. Staff from the Colonies are trained by the BBC in London. The General Overseas Service supplements the local programmes. (There are now, for instance, regular programmes in Hausa.) It is re-broadcast by 22 stations for over 300 hours a week, and BBC transcription records are used by 27 stations for over 160 hours a week. The BBC has a special department preparing weekly programmes on records for schools and teachers in training.

The 'wired' broadcasting which plays a part in the Colonial services is a system by which programmes are relayed by wire to subscribers. This is operated in many territories by the Rediffusion Group of Broadcast Relay Services Ltd., which had established a system in Malta in 1935 and in Trinidad in 1941. (It is also used to a limited extent in Great Britain.) 'Wired' wireless is governed in most countries by legislation; the Government's permission is required to install equipment and the period and terms of the permission must be agreed with the Government concerned. This system has been found very useful in some territories.

Though the war held it up, it has since 1947 spread quickly, and there are now services in Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaya, the British West Indies, Western Nigeria and West Africa. In some places the local governments provide their own programmes over the group's transmitting system, and in some advertisements are allowed.

This sketch of how broadcasting has grown up in the countries of the Commonwealth and Colonies has described only the structure, which like the framework of any building, remains unseen. To anyone who examines it in closer detail the most interesting thing is that these many systems, nearly all starting in the 1930s and 1940s, are based on a parent idea. The Commonwealth organizations obviously breathed the same climate as that in which the BBC had spent its childhood and the idea of the public corporation, working with a sense of responsibility towards its listeners, catering for minorities, and putting the importance of free and objective news reporting before anything else, developed naturally in these countries. From the BBC's own readiness to promote the English-speaking overseas broadcasts and to exchange programmes with the Dominions came an added strength. It is this two-way traffic, repeated between all the countries, which makes the whole body of broadcasting in the Commonwealth and Colonies an important force. No doubt this is felt most when there is some occasion of tremendous impact such as the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Not only did broadcasts and recordings go out literally all over the world, but for those countries which had television,

like Canada, arrangements were made to fly recordings of the television pictures almost immediately across the Atlantic. The difference in time meant that in fact Canadian viewers were able to see the Coronation almost as soon as the 'live' broadcast here had finished.

But life is not made up of great occasions like this, and it is in the daily broadcasting, too, that the underlying unity can be found. News, current affairs and sport rank high among the programmes—a fair index to common interests. In Jamaica when some research into listening was being done in 1954, it was found that news bulletins and sports news were not thought of as 'programmes' by the public, because they were regarded as part of daily existence. The attitude was 'News isn't a programme. Everybody listens to the news!' It is typical, too, that it was a group of enthusiasts in British Guiana who decided in 1925 to broadcast commentaries of that year's MCC matches; from this grew the company that went on operating throughout the war. If one day all the world were to be linked by television, the whole of the Commonwealth would no doubt be found watching a Test match at Lord's. But at the same time the broadcasting systems would think it just as important that children in the backwoods should get their lessons by radio, or native townships have their plays in local dialect. This diversity is no bad guide to the convictions of those responsible for the 'voices out of the air' which circulate round the Commonwealth and Colonies.

Chapter Five

FROM CHINA TO PERU

BROADCASTING and television have all over the world the same double purpose of giving entertainment and information at home, and trying to impress the guiding ideas of its origin on people abroad. Everyone is a foreigner to someone else. The United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics represent opposite extremes, the American system having grown up solely on private enterprise, the Soviet system completely State-controlled. Other countries run the gamut between, from the small one-man station in some backward country to the highly civilized broadcasting of France or Italy. Round the USSR are the Soviet satellites with their voices falling into line with the master design. This makes broadcasting a war of words between East and West, both in Europe and in Asia. Then there is Communist China, with its millions outstripping even the Soviet—an enormous field for radio propaganda, for that teaching of the people which has become, for good or ill, the most powerful function of wireless. As there is still more of the world uncivilized than mature, this means that more people are spoken to than speak. Broadcasting has rapidly come to be a weapon of warfare and of diplomacy, giving people whether they be villagers or townsmen, jokes, plays, music, and help about health and education, and also

filling their ears with doctrine. This is a process that can never stop; can indeed only increase, as television is added to sound, as technical improvements are made, more transmitters are built, more sets are produced and more remote peoples are reached.

Every figure for the number of people in the world who can hear radio or watch television is exceeded as that figure is written down. The one thing certain is that it will not stop growing. In 1956 some estimated figures (based where possible on the number of licences) were: Great Britain, 14 million; the USSR, 18 million; the United States, 127 million; China, 15 million; Japan, 11½ million; Brazil, over 3 million; Colombia, 2 million, and so on, down to the 1,000 odd of Western Samoa and the 226 of the Solomon Islands. And every set means at least several listeners.

Recently television has brought a new element into broadcasting; its impact is more forceful than that of sound radio, but that force has so far been felt more domestically than as an international communication. It is by no means so easy to send a picture abroad as to send voices. A Unesco survey reported that in 1953, fifty-two countries were already doing television regularly, experimentally, or were studying it. In 1956 there were thirty-five countries doing public television programmes. In the forefront were the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Japan and some of the European countries; among the others were Thailand, the Philippines and the Dominican Republic. There was already a European exchange system; and since West and East Germany both had television, the day when

Soviet Russian programmes might be seen in free Europe could be envisaged.

From the start broadcasting had flourished more rapidly in the United States than any other country. The first commercial long wave station was KDKA of Pittsburgh which opened in 1920 with the results of the presidential election, and was probably heard by only a few people. Yet by 1922 the demand for sets was greater than production. By 1929 the sales of radio equipment were worth $42 million. By 1927 there were a thousand private stations, with music as the main entertainment and popular programmes (America has remained faithful to the 'soap opera' ever since) which, as one historian of radio said, 'were aimed at people of moderate or lower taste or education'. At this stage in American broadcasting there were no regulations, and little sense of responsibility beyond what was dictated by obvious caution in not offending political or racial groups. Where the advertiser pays the programme must be careful with its tune.

There was thus from the beginning a natural tendency to play to a common denominator, and radio in America (television also, later) has not been so ready to consider minorities or to do educational programmes as the public service systems of the world. Some organizations and universities in America have taken up educational broadcasting, but only a pure idealist could think that education is widely popular, and commercial radio mainly has to think of popularity. The first network, however, which was the National Broadcasting Company under David Sarnoff, did envisage a

non-profit public service policy, which it was able to maintain for some years. Sponsored programmes, in which the advertiser is responsible for the programmes, had started in 1922, and had also developed rapidly. Yet while in the 1920s there was this enormous spread of broadcasting, the number of stations, the confusion of wave lengths, and the lack of any systematic principle about advertising and sponsoring, led to demands for some sort of regulation of the air, and in 1927 Congress passed the Radio Act of 1927; some years later most of its provisions were embodied in the Communications Act. The Federal Radio Commission, which later became the Federal Communications Commission, was set up, and has ever since then remained the effective instrument of control. As early as 1929 it had established a general definition of the content of what it thought a well balanced radio programme, and it has the power to license stations and to take away or refuse licences.

In this same period of the late 1920s and early 1930s there were formed three of the great networks; the National Broadcasting Company, the Columbia Broadcasting System, and the Mutual Broadcasting System. To-day there are also the American Broadcasting Company and the Keystone Broadcasting System. The establishment of these networks has meant that many small private stations have given up part of their independence in favour of affiliation, which has allowed them to share in national programmes and thus to put out programmes of higher quality and wider interest. In this combination of private and network broadcasts

there is a resemblance to the methods followed in Canada. A parallel in Britain would be if towns such as Manchester or Birmingham had private commercial stations but took a number of programmes from the BBC, with the difference that the big American networks have not the BBC's peculiar public status under Government charter.

In spite of the early establishment of the networks, American radio programmes were largely light and in the early years informative broadcasts were rare, though 'newscasters' and commentators were many. 'Town Meeting of the Air' and 'University of Chicago Round Table' were among the intelligent discussions; the New York Philharmonic Concerts, and Toscanini's Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra (NBC) were put on in the 1930s. American stations increased from 765 to 2,336 in the ten years from 1940 to 1950; part of this was the spread of television, which had started in 1939. News reports and commentaries were the most popular; then plays (with Lux Radio Theater at the top) and comedy shows.

In America as in other countries the approach of war and the war itself led to an extension of broadcasting and to its use as a deliberate instrument of policy. In the late 1930s Government surveys suggested the need for something more efficient than the experimental services which had been going out to Europe and South America, where America, like Britain, was conscious of rival and sinister voices. So, although the radio industry disliked the idea of Government activity, a Co-ordinator of Information and one of Inter-American

Affairs were appointed in 1941 to work with the private stations to expand their short-wave services. When the United States entered the war all the overseas information services were absorbed in two Government agencies which took over the private transmitters and carried the 'Voice of America' round the world. After the war, as in Britain and the Soviet, there could be no return to a world in which radio only mattered domestically, and by an Act of 1945 a permanent broadcasting information service was set up. This has played a powerful part in the cold war against Communism, both in the West and in the East. Russia admits its influence by 'jamming' the broadcasts as she does those of Britain. America also has an Armed Forces Radio and Television Service.

Television in the United States was first publicly transmitted in 1939; since the war it has made rapid strides comparable to the early growth of broadcasting; it has flourished under the same freely competitive system, with the same merits and drawbacks. Nobody in America has ever thought it a bad thing for the public to be able to see television all day and most of the night. In 1941 there were 5,000 sets in use; in 1950 nearly 4 million; in 1953 over 21 million. In 1955 there were 440 commercial television stations operating, with an estimated audience of 34,000,000 families. A report in 1952 on the final allocation of television channels foresaw a possible establishment of 2,053 stations, of which 240 were to be reserved for non-commercial educational use. Before that only one educational body, the University of Iowa, had received

a licence for television. The reservation of these special channels was a result of the efforts of the Joint Committee on Educational Television. This report of 1952 lifted the 'freeze' on new television stations, which had been imposed by the FCC in 1948, because of the confusion caused by the signals of large numbers of stations. The FCC had also in 1950 approved the colour television system of the CBS. One of the first uses made of colour television was by universities for regular medical instruction and demonstration of operations on a closed circuit. Colour television is now transmitted widely in America, although the costs are high.

Most of the 'viewers' in the world are used to one, or at the most, two programmes. Not so in America, where the New Yorker can turn to more than seven stations and has a choice of more than 600 hours of programmes every week. Much of the material is again, the 'soap opera', the filmed series, and 'packaged' entertainment. We began to see it in Britain when commercial television started here. On the other hand American industrial resources have produced some famous programmes like the Ed Murrow 'See It Now' series which were a clever sort of composite reporting. The American approach is free and audacious. Ed Murrow showed how he could 'interview' famous people at the other side of the continent. Their television is less reticent than ours in plunging into affairs; they have done actual murder trials, Congressional investigations, and political events. They start early with 'Breakfast with Music' and are estimated to

spend more time each day watching television than in any other activity except sleeping or working. Their children are said to spend more time watching it than in school activities, and these children are believed to see an unprecedented amount of crime and violence on the screen. Yet, although 71 per cent of the nation have television sets, sound radio remains a prime source of news and information, and since even in America television is not yet handy enough to be carried about there are, apart from sets in cars, 8 million portable radio sets and 10 million sets in public places. Listening actually increased, according to one survey, during the two weeks of the Democratic and Republican Conventions in 1956, though these were covered by three television networks; a hint that politicians are not a great draw on the screen? This tendency has been noted in Britain, and in France, it is said, the independent-minded French do not want to see their politicians at all.

It is inevitable that in the babel of voices reaching out from country to country Soviet Russia should appear as the third great bloc, opposed in its fundamental conception as well as in its policy to the systems of the United States, of Britain and of the Commonwealth. Broadcasting in Russia and from Russia is post-Revolutionary, and it has therefore always been Soviet broadcasting and as such Government-controlled. It is more difficult to know what goes on there for three reasons: the language barrier, the lack of free exchange of visitors, and the greater reserve of all totalitarian countries about their projects and statistics.

Nevertheless a good deal can be learned about Soviet broadcasting, if not in great detail; the USSR is a member of the International Broadcasting Organization (OIR) which, with its headquarters at Prague, publishes regular bulletins about the progress of radio in most of the Communist countries. And there are more direct contacts. A BBC delegation went to Moscow in 1956, and a Soviet delegation had visited Britain the year before.

Russia was not slower than other countries to develop her domestic broadcasting system in the formative years before the second world war, nor slow to see the opportunities of broadcasting as a potent force outside her own borders in the years since. At home it was estimated that she had 18 million radio sets in 1956. There are a first, second and third programme on the Home Service in Russian from Moscow, and any number of other short, long and medium wave stations. Her foreign service is divided into European, Near East, Far East, North American and Latin American, and the broadcasts go out in thirty-eight languages, including Korean and Mongolian.

The influence and counter-influence of this overseas broadcasting is as important a part of broadcasting to-day as anything that is done on any country's home ground. The free world, for instance, counters Soviet voices by putting its own point of view into the same areas, such as the Near East and more especially Eastern Europe. Russia, on the other hand, counters that influence by 'jamming', and the business of increasing power or starting new transmitters to overcome the

'jamming' is a heavy expense and a steady commitment. Britain regards jamming, by which the reception of radio is effectively blocked, as undesirable, but she herself has experimented with it during the troubles in Cyprus. There have been debates about it—when we were concerned about anti-British propaganda in the Near East—but Britain's policy generally is to enable all voices to be heard, and surely this, even if it seems quixotic, is right policy in the long run.

Television in Russia started at about the same time as in America and Britain, and its swift progress recently is in keeping with the Soviet's technological advance; also with her recognition that the impact of pictures is much greater than that of the spoken word, and that television programmes can play a great part in educating people in a country where there are still many immature communities. In the early days viewing was mostly done in groups, in clubs or halls. Theatre, opera, sports, music, many films, and children's programmes are shown. Russia has made a point of social and political programmes introducing shock-workers, scientists, writers and so on, as the élite of the State who may induce a spirit of emulation in others. But she brings her athletes and her artists to the screen also, and a good deal of light-hearted entertainment and more 'live' theatre than we get in the West. As television has spread it has been noticed recently that there is a move towards decentralization which is somewhat surprising, and a tendency to be guided by viewers' preferences even if the final arrangement of programmes comes under the eye of the

Ministry of Culture. One is tempted to hope that in Russia perhaps technical advance has outrun doctrinal supervision, and that the fascination of television has meant a rush of programmes to the screen without undue care about their making better citizens.

The spread of television in the Soviet Union can be judged from the estimated figure of about 80,000 sets in Moscow alone early in 1953; wired television reception was used, and the industry was making four types of receiver. Experiments were even then being made in colour television. By 1956 there were at least a million sets, and it was thought that by 1960 there would be 12 million, and 75 stations operating. In Moscow plans are under way for building a huge television transmitting tower able to broadcast three programmes at the same time, including colour, to be completed by 1958. Under the sixth Five Year Plan all capitals of the Soviet Republics will also have their own television stations by then, and relay links will operate between Moscow, Leningrad and these towns so that a complete, unified network should cover the Soviet Union. So far even the large cities have not been linked. The industry's target, under the plan, is for an output five times that of 1955, with a yearly production of 10·2 million sound and television sets. Eurovision (which includes Western Germany) should be able before long to show some Russian programmes (via Eastern Germany), but the BBC delegation's visit in 1956 did not bring back much positive hope.

The broadcasting systems of the satellite and other countries under Communist influence form an exten-

sion of her practice. In their own ways they reflect the bent of totalitarian doctrines to making radio teach, and inspire effort, more deliberately than in the West. This is insidious; the political angle dominates everything and one gets the impression of a huge, ordered galaxy of broadcasting stations all sending out an earnest and purposeful cheerfulness. But if this seems deathly to the Western mind, its listeners almost certainly believe that the people of the West are fed with wicked capitalist tales by their home radio. At any rate the Eastern zones of Europe, where the voices of Russia and her satellites mingle and fight with the voices of Britain and America, form one of the most crucial and interesting sectors in the world map of broadcasting and its influence. The other sector—over which a large question mark must still hang—is the yet incalculable influence of radio upon those living in undeveloped countries whom it has not yet reached. Who will get there first, and what will be the outcome?

In the broadcasting of the satellite countries the International Broadcasting Organization, which is concerned with technical affairs as well as with information, plays a considerable part. It has, for instance, helped in the exchange of television programmes in a multiplex broadcast from three large works in Warsaw, Prague and East Berlin, and in joint international variety concerts between East Germany, the USSR, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland. The broadcasting and television of these countries ranges from the more highly industrialized and those with long traditions, such as Germany, Poland, Hungary and

Czechoslovakia, to the 'beginners' such as Albania, which had but one transmitter before the war, and now has nine; four in Tirana and five in the provinces, with seven times as many sets as before the war. Radio Tirana is a very interesting example of the quick growth of broadcasting in a Communist country and the businesslike and intelligent use that is made of it. There are scores of wired broadcasting centres—'exclusively the work of the people's regime'. In the Stalin Textile Works in Albania and in the tobacco fermentation works in Skodra there are wired networks on the Soviet system. Radio Tirana started a second programme in 1956, of a cultural and artistic character; there are direct relays from theatres, operas and concerts; also children's programmes. The workers take a part in preparing broadcasts, and shockworkers appear in them; writers as well. Radio Tirana broadcasts in seven languages and co-operates with the radio organizations of all the Communist countries including China, Korea and Mongolia; it has exchanged music with Vietnam and Belgrade. It also has contacts with France and Italy. It is entrusted by the Albanian Party of Labour with its share of responsibilitity for the 'common education of the masses of the working people and the satisfaction of their political, cultural and artistic demands'.

Broadcasting in Byelorussia started in 1925; in Estonia, at Talin, in 1926; these are now alike part of the enormous system whose resemblances outweigh the differences. Lithuania, Latvia, Moldavia and the Ukraine all have their voices; so too has Vietnam.

So the Soviet conception of what broadcasting can do links West and East, for Hungary and Czechoslovakia are countries which are much more part of Europe, but there is no less deliberate use of the radio in accordance with the regime. Hungarian Radio in 1955 celebrated its thirtieth anniversary and tenth anniversary of 'liberation'. The Hungarian Radio has a long and dramatic history. It was the first station, at Csepel, that kept up the liaison with Moscow at the time of the proclamation of the Hungarian Soviet Republic in 1919. The Budapest Museum of Communications still has the telegram in which Lenin and the Russian Communist party sent congratulations to the new republic.

In Czechoslovakia 'broadcasting belongs to the people'. The networks are extensive, both in the Czech and Slovak languages, and the whole of broadcasting and television is in the hands of the State, according to an article of the Constitution (1948). An interesting part of this system is the efficient structure of specialized 'editorials' dealing with information and politics, which takes the place of a news bulletin. Literature, drama, music and films are all important; but 'decadent tendencies' have had to be eliminated, and 'tasteless foreign commercial hits' ousted. Television has developed quickly here, and children are specially catered for, with fairy tales as well as more serious programmes for the 'Pioneers' and for instilling the usual values of the 'democratic' regime. The Broadcasting Service takes great care of its employees with welfare, holiday and nursery schemes.

Broadcasting in Free Europe is infinitely more varied, though of course every country has some guiding principle behind its output, even if it is implicit rather than explicit, and even if it proceeds on an unspoken idea of what values are essential. It is here that the great divide occurs; the quarrel of the mid-twentieth century, in which radio has grown so powerful, and in which the word 'democracy' means two different things according to which side of the Iron Curtain it is used. The radio systems of most of the Western European countries are not run by private enterprise. Nor do they work on a plan of training their listeners from childhood up, or of instilling the virtues of hard work, healthy sport and untainted music. They allow that the listener has a mind of his own and may dare to use it. All these countries have long established broadcasting systems, and most of them now have television. A curious situation arises in Western Germany where the television from the Democratic Republic (East) can be received on suitable sets, and it has been reported that propaganda as well as plays and opera will cross the frontier. Who can say whether this point of collision might bring bad or good results?

No country in free Europe has anything approaching the number of receiving sets in Britain except the German Federal Republic, which in 1956 had over 13 million. This density of sets, both for sound and television, is of course variable with the population and the amount of industry in a country. The extent to which people have radio and television is a clue to industrial prosperity. European systems have developed their

own characteristics; broadcasting is mainly carried out by organizations with responsibility to the Government even if not controlled by it. In France where broadcasting is controlled by the Minister of Information, a charter is under consideration, but political obstacles are many. More freedom from Government control is predicted. In Ireland recently it was decided that Radio Eireann should become a statutory public service organization instead of being operated by the Civil Service under the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs. Italy, whose radio and television are run by a State service, is a particularly enterprising country; she recently added a third programme resembling that of the BBC, for giving music, talks, plays and literary broadcasts of high quality; she also has a television service which has produced some programmes—including a famous *Romeo and Juliet*—which have been recognized as productions of great artistry. Bavaria was to start a new programme—like that of the BBC's 'Third'—late in 1957. In the European countries listening to broadcasting is still taken for granted, for all those normal functions that are expected of radio in every country. Nowhere yet do television sets outnumber those for sound.

In Austria where there are 2 million sets altogether, there are only about 3,000 television sets. Nevertheless the Austrian television system enabled people in Britain to see very dramatic and moving pictures directly from the transit camps for refugees on the borders of Hungary at the time of the rising there in 1956. In France, where there were 9 million licences for

sets in 1956, there were only about 400,000 television sets. France is a country of marked independence; her people will not, as in some other countries, watch any sort of programme uncritically; then, too, they very sensibly spend a greater proportion of their pay on good food. However, despite the comparatively small number of television sets in countries other than Britain and Germany, the coming of television must be looked upon as the most remarkable event since the start of broadcasting itself, and one with great possibilities.

Broadcasting in the European countries, which since the war we call 'free', also puts out foreign services. The few countries which have private systems (as Luxembourg and Monaco) are not essentially apart from these general concepts of broadcasting. Now in television, thanks to the initiative first of Britain and France, who made the first exchange in 1952, and the co-operation of many other countries and the European Broadcasting Union, the exchange of European television is a triumphant reality. This has brought to people in as many as seven or eight countries such occasions as the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, the sight of the Pope in the Vatican speaking and giving his blessing in several different languages at the official opening of Eurovision in 1954, and the wedding of Grace Kelly, the film star, and Prince Rainier of Monaco. When people see pictures of what is actually happening in another country, the barriers of nationality are crossed in a unique way and knowledge becomes experience.

Within separate countries television is also taking many enterprising forms. In France there is a system of rural adult education, with communal viewing on co-operatively owned sets; in Denmark and the Netherlands Parliament is televised, as it is also in Japan and Canada. In Sweden and Holland the introduction of commercial television has been considered. In the Saar the troubled question of ownership of the radio and television stations has been solved by giving Germany the German-speaking 'Tele-Saar' while France retains the French-speaking 'Europe No. 1'.

In the rest of the world even when the great blocs of the USA, the USSR, the British Commonwealth and Europe have been considered, there are vast countries which all the time are rapidly bringing more and more people within range of broadcasting. Japan in 1956 had 11½ million sets and 150,000 television sets. Both commercial broadcasting and television have increased quickly there; because of this and because the current broadcasting law was made while Japan was under occupation, the Government has made proposals for revision and these have been held by the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) to threaten its independence. The appointment of a new president of NHK underlined what is an interesting struggle between Government influence and the independence of radio. Television in Japan has got to the stage of experiments in colour.

China has 15 million licences for sound broadcasting; the big development did not come till after 'liberation'. Since then it has spread to towns and villages every-

where, factories have been built for radio equipment, and the First Five Year Plan (started in 1953) provides for steady development. The two home services' main aim is to stimulate socialism and the defence of peace; this does not exclude literature and a great deal of music. But programmes on economic construction, talks on marxism-leninism, broadcasts for agricultural co-operatives, with a special daily chronicle for newspapers of co-operative farms (read at dictation speed) or about the achievements of outstanding factory workers, must give the Chinese people a fairly stiff diet. Local and central stations in cities and provinces are closely linked, and there is a plan for a receiving network in the country areas by 1960. There is no tax on radio in China. Television stations are under way in Peking and Shanghai and sets have already been tested. China exchanges programmes and information with twenty-seven other countries.

Central and South America present some curious contrasts; Mexico has the biggest radio public with over 2 million sets in 1956, and Cuba, with 1 million, had as early as 1954 (according to a Unesco survey) one television set for every fifty-five people, although she does not herself produce any equipment. In South America, Brazil has the biggest radio public, and in Brazil, Colombia and the Argentine there have been experiments in fundamental education in undeveloped areas. Brazil has long had an Educational Broadcasting Service under the Ministry of Education and Health. She has 3½ million sets; Colombia, Argentina, Peru and Venezuela all number their listeners in

millions, and Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, Venezuela, Cuba, Mexico, and Puerto Rica all have television. In parts of South America the BBC, though its expenditure is limited, has long found a ready welcome for its 'transcription' programmes, which are recorded and sent out to many parts of the world and include not only English broadcasts but some programmes specially prepared in the language of the country where they are to be used.

Against the big battalions one may contrast the comparatively tiny numbers in places where broadcasting must be a proportionately greater wonder; the Ivory Coast with 1,500 sets, the Seychelles with 113, Andorra with 450, or Ellice Island with 110. Size and position are not necessarily an index to the use that is made of radio. There are many organizations which do not fall into any category, and an unexpectedly advanced position may be found in isolation. Thus in the summer of 1956 King Feisal of Iraq opened the new television station in Baghdad, which was the first in the world planned primarily for child and adult education, though its programmes were also to include entertainment and some explanation of political developments. The director-general of broadcasting said at the opening that Iraq had been the first Middle East country to recognize the importance of television as a means of spreading education. The official opening was seen on receivers throughout the city, many in coffee houses and in wireless dealers' windows. This station was built by a British firm which also trained the Iraqi engineers. A television station is being built

in Cyprus, for which the BBC is training programme producers.

No picture of world broadcasting is complete without some mention of the various bodies which are not strictly national, some of them producing broadcasts and some giving information and acting as a link between the work of different countries. Thus there are broadcasts from the United Nations in New York, and there are Unesco broadcasts and publications. There are the International Broadcasting Organization (OIR), the European Broadcasting Union (Geneva), an association of the broadcasting corporations of the American countries (AIR), and 'Radio Free Europe'.

It is tempting to imagine the whole world now alive with voices, and in parts with pictures, all bringing joy and enlightenment to their own people and to the others messages of freedom, peace and goodwill. 'Nation shall speak peace unto nation' said the BBC in its first and lasting motto, adopted in hope. Certainly that is an ideal of the aims of broadcasting. But such a picture would be too optimistic. The international effect of broadcasting has been as bad as it has been good. If it has educated people, it has also taught them mistrust, which has sometimes been salutary and sometimes not. Churchill in an early war speech in 1939 put German 'leather-lunged' propaganda in its place. 'If words could kill', he said, 'we should all be dead.' But broadcasting propaganda has had dire effects both before and since the war, and the power of the spoken word to misrepresent truth with deliberate

purpose can be used on a large scale to foment unrest in areas such as South-east Asia and the Middle East.

Television, which has much more force than sound, though less subtlety, has not yet become a significant instrument of propaganda. Broadcasting strikes through the air directly, but television requires technical co-operation in translating one system of definition into another. The Eurovision link is the first such achievement and from that we can judge a little whether glimpses of other countries can help to make their people familiar and real. This may be only a pious wish, for how far in fact will people ever become internationally minded? Do they even want to? And is such an idea possible or even desirable? The danger of the speed and directness of radio communication is that it can expose people, whether mature or backward, to influences which they might be better without, to fears without which they would be happier, and suggestions designed for mischief. If broadcasting were merely to affirm a common humanity and a diversity of cultures, it would be beneficent but, in the world as it is, unnatural. On the whole it has brought great good to people—entertainment, education, knowledge of things, relief of loneliness, and a message of hope to people under oppression. We cannot therefore condemn it because it has a malign side.

Chapter Six

TELEVISION ARRIVES

TELEVISION, which cannot yet conquer space as completely as sound, has other compensating qualities. If a television system were in combat with a radio system, one would notice that the sound broadcasting was more pervasive and the television more forceful. A picture registers more acutely than a sound, and for most people in the world disbelief tends to be suspended before a television screen. If either broadcasting or television were lethal to the mind, as indeed some think they may be, broadcasting would kill by a diffusion of tiny germs, television by a knock-out. Television so far operates only in rather more than forty countries in the world, and is on the way in at least ten more, but this is considerable, including as it does the United States, Britain and Soviet Russia, and most of the European countries. It means that the further spread of television will be to the less highly industrialized countries, where it can be relied upon to prove no less gripping. Television is a thing to be reckoned with seriously, whether as entertainment or as education, as an aid to governments, or as an extra platform for politicians. It is probably a greater revolution even than radio and this is because it really is bigger 'magic' than unseen voices. Television knocks down all barriers; it makes things hundreds of miles away enfold the viewer at the fireside, draws him into distant events,

overlooks the unwitting diner at the banquet, the boy at the cricket match, the truant at the football ground, and threatens to put an end to private life.

This new form of communication spreads its tentacles and can easily have propaganda at their tips. Who is to say how it will be used? For good according to the governments behind it, for bad according to those who take the other view? In the Middle East there is a station at Baghdad; there is to be one at Beirut; Egypt has invited tenders for a station. The power of the screen to influence opinion in such countries must be enormous; much more so than, say, in Britain, where television seems to have a social effect on people rather than a political influence. Television is everywhere in a state of growth and experiment. Because it is a very expensive method of flashing entertainment, news and events through space, the advantages of commercial support have struck even countries that began without it. In Britain, commercial television started not because the BBC was short of money, which would have been at least a logical cause, but from other and mixed motives, ranging from business interests to a desire for 'freedom' as against monopoly. Italy has now allowed taxes on the manufacture of television sets and the sale of commercial time; the German Federal Republic is turning to advertising for extra revenue and this has provoked the newspaper proprietors into bringing a lawsuit; American educational stations now use group and community support rather than funds from single institutions. But nobody thinks of doing without television; it quickly turns from a

luxury to a necessity. Even if it is not a necessity for any one individual, its use quickly becomes a matter of national policy. Hence the pleas that have been made in Britain, when the BBC's external services were debated in the House of Lords, for the making of more films showing the British way of life (which might possibly be 'dubbed' in Arabic) because of the coming of television stations in the Middle East. No country can be blind to the effect of television on people in the mass.

In Britain half the population now have television sets in their homes and the BBC has recognized this by giving the television programmes pride of place in the *Radio Times* which has a circulation of about 9 millions. They began inconspicuously at the end of the paper, they graduated to a separate page for each day; in February, 1957, they jumped to the front. This was when the BBC (and independent television also) was allowed to lengthen the hours of television, which had always been carefully controlled. Gone was the 'silent hour' from 6 to 7 in the evening, which was supposed to allow mothers to detach their children from the screen and get them to bed; this 'Toddlers' Truce', as it was known, might also have been called the critics' delight, when the journalists knew that absolutely nothing could happen on the screen. Programmes, which had also for years catered specially for women and children in the afternoon, were now almost continuous up to 11 o'clock, apart from special events of importance which might come in at other times. So all the time television spreads to more people

and, hydra-headed, multiplies its own fire-power. Colour is on the way; this will be still more expensive and that is said to be why, though some networks operate widely in colour in America, there is difficulty about costs, and especially the cost of sets. The BBC goes cautiously about colour, but has demonstrated it inside the Houses of Parliament to an audience of M.P.s and peers, who were said to have been much impressed by it. The *Manchester Guardian* said at the time:

> To judge from the muttered remarks made as the programme began impressions were very good. . . . A series of flower pictures showed every imaginable species in every imaginable colour;

though it also reported that one M.P. snorted 'empty rubbish!' about a 'leg-show' in colour.

Colour may add to the pleasure of watching television, but will not alter greatly its effect on other kinds of entertainment, which is making itself felt. To the cinema, for instance, it has become a serious rival; people will not go out so readily when they can have hours of entertainment at home for the cost of a licence. On the other hand there is evidence that after the first spell has worn off, in a year or so, younger people like to go out because they get away from the home circle, and because the feeling of 'going out' to see something in company with an audience gives a different kind of sensation. The interaction of television and the cinema, the question of how far films can be shown on television without loss to the cinema producers, is a constant preoccupation. The theatre would appear to have less

to lose. Theatre box offices have not taken the set-back that was expected. Although it is still difficult for the BBC to get the rights for performance of many new plays, the theatres have found, as others have found before them, that if a performance of a play is given 'live' on the screen, it brings people in to see the production on the stage. The interest that has been aroused in drama generally can do the theatre, in the long run, nothing but good. Actors and actresses, though in Britain they get comparatively modest pay, may realize that one successful appearance before an audience of millions, is worth a good deal in publicity. Equally, of course, a poor performance will pull them down before a much bigger audience than will ever see them even in weeks of a theatre run. This is both the benefit and the danger of television to the artist. It is also its threat to the comedian. One act, one clever catchword, could go all round the music halls for months; even in radio it had a fair life; on television it erupts before a vast audience and next time they may expect something different. The serious theatre has much less to fear from television than has the music hall, the revue, or the cinema.

There are other kinds of interests and recreation which television affects, often first hitting them, as new centres of population and fresh classes of people are brought within the orbit and then, when an equilibrium has been set up, perhaps profiting them because these very activities have been brought to the notice of new viewers for the first time. Sport particularly is affected in this way, and hence the difficulties about

copyright in sporting broadcasts, where the promoters must balance seriously the advantages against the effect on the gates.

Television has not had a fatal effect in Britain on the love of gardening, which goes to show that this is a fundamental passion and that compared to it television is a passing plaything, unable to corrode the rock-bottom sense of what matters. The most the true gardener might admit is that he is occasionally torn between his work outside and some exciting crisis in a Test match on the screen inside. On drinking in the public-house television has apparently had a slightly depressing effect. More bottled beer is taken home to drink while watching; if public-houses put in television sets, people drink more slowly while watching. But for the true English country public-house, which is the forum and the club and the place where class, though recognized, does not matter, the roots probably go too deep, again, to be permanently withered.

Whether we think of television as a first class method of propaganda, whether it is used more in some countries for national education at all ages than in others, whether it pours out a non-stop or a controlled stream of entertainment, whether it brings plays, films, documentaries, all opening a new world of ideas, or those 'give-away' shows which award huge prizes for ridiculous antics, it is first and all the time something that affects the individual. We talk of audiences in millions, percentages and averages, but each programme is seen by separate people; by the miners who asked for a shift to be changed so that they could see

television; the mysterious 'housewife' who may not correspond at all to the housewife of the survey; the 'tired business man' who may be an explorer *manqué*; the teen-ager in the grip of enthusiasms; the child to whom everything is new and to whom the little figures moving on the lighted screen are really magic, as if the picture in a story book had come to life; the elderly man whose arthritis or genteel poverty meant that he would never again see a Rugby international or a Boat-race until one day he found, sitting by the fire, that they were wonderfully brought to him. It is, therefore, on individuals that television has its effect, and as they make up the family and the families compose the nation and the national ethos, they are much more important than any columns of figures.

What does television do to all these different people? Does it, as is often suggested, dim and dull their faculties? Is it a 'family drug'? Are we becoming, as Lord Lucas of Chilworth once said, 'a glassy-eyed community of crystal gazers'? Are we sitting in a cave, as Plato suggested in a different context, seeing only a procession of shadows, instead of life? Will children not read, because they can see pictures? Do we give up activity and sit spellbound by the screen? And does television so infect everybody that the 'star' personality and the popular programme become the common talking point and reduce conversation to last night's 'telly' while stifling all other ideas that might enter people's heads? Much thought is given to this in Britain and in America. Headmasters and librarians, social workers and researchers look into it and draw

conclusions. One interesting find is that on the whole in Britain television has not put an end to reading. It is significant that while new reading of fiction has gone down, perhaps because the home screen fills this need, the borrowing of serious books—biography, history, exploration, archaeology and so on—has increased. Television may therefore have a killing touch but it also has the power to give new life.

The charges against it are serious, and behind them lies the question that underlies this whole examination of broadcasting and television in the world to-day. For good or for bad, it is with us and will be more so. How it is used depends very much on how each country or group of countries sees its responsibilities; for even in free enterprise systems like that of America, the State has considerable powers to forbid, if not to promote. But the question that one must ask, seeing or hearing the flow of voices and pictures, is whether, even if the intention is good, the effect is not somehow belittling and dimming to the experience of life itself. This is the most difficult question about which the critic or observer has to make up his mind. The effects of television in Britain can be as useful to examine as any, for here there is undoubtedly responsible direction by the BBC, if less so by independent television. The BBC has no more set out to stupefy people and titillate the worst appetites and tastes in television than in its sound broadcasting, and so if television here does seem to make people at large less active, less thoughtful, and less independent, it is because of something inherent in the medium.

First there is one general effect of television; that while the stimulus of many programmes—international affairs, national events, nature magazines, features about art, books and archaeology—should be good in itself, the very plenitude of all this stream, so freely available on the screen, may tend to diminish its reality. The most wonderful thing about television is that it can bring real life on to the screen; this is much more its essence than any amount of prepared entertainment. But even as it pleases us by showing us for the first time, or even the tenth time, a picture of a Test match, of the Trooping the Colour, of horses at show jumping, or a documentary about homeless children, a moving play, a talk by a statesman, or an interview with a famous opera singer, does it not merely by the facility with which this kaleidoscope is presented, remove the apprehension of reality? This is the paradox; television is best when it is 'life', and by flashing 'life' to us in such variety it eventually removes the sense of wonder, of experience, and reduces all this richness to a passing pageant in which it is as normal to see a solemn ceremony as to see a comedian in a studio. And so, in a sense, all life becomes a 'show', and from one end of the scale to the other the figures and events on our screens are all judged from the point of view of 'performance', and the most innocent or uneducated of viewers becomes blasé. The professional critic watches some important banquet with significant speeches and knows that only the collapse of the chief guest could really impress him. No doubt the BBC's long reluctance to have many continuous hours of television was due

to its fear of this satiety, rather than to a puritanical desire to withhold from people what they wanted; but the pass has been sold, partly because of the competition of the commercial companies, and with it the reliance of people upon the almost ever present activity on the screen must grow greater.

The surprise and delight with which we first saw programmes from Europe was a mark of their scarcity value. The 'Eurovision' opening with the Pope speaking from the Vatican, the first view of the Alps, the sight of the Rhine with its crags and castles—these were the real wonder of television. We still do not see such things often. But if we did see them often, might we come to think no more of them than of seeing our own Town Hall or the hills of the Lake District? Of course the pictures might make us want to travel; then we should get the curious, reversed shock which is a symptom of the television age; a cricket ground is a miracle of colour—grass and sun and sky—to anyone who has been used to the black and white of cricket on the screen. And everyone notices how, after the close-up of the telescopic lens, which lets one see the spin on the ball and the batsman's idiosyncrasies from apparently a few yards away, the eye has to get used to distances and the perspective of the real cricket ground. It is quite a different experience and really much more fun. So too the real 'abroad' will be different from what we see on Eurovision, and if television has been a 'trailer' it is all to the good. Now that agreement has been reached between the European Broadcasting Union and the International Federation of Musicians

there can be more exchange of music, opera, drama and light entertainment. Again, this will be stimulating if each exchange is an occasion to wait for; it could, however, make people feel that Amsterdam is no further off than Accrington. The distant hills are always green, but if no hills are distant, what becomes of that desire that feeds the imagination? If we get transatlantic television, and add another continent to the peep-show, shall we simply regard it as a piece of scene changing? What shall it profit us if wonders increase so much that we lose all sense of wonder?

At home the BBC's programmes share with all television programmes everywhere the responsibility for making national 'personalities' out of persons without any other claim to be the admired of millions and the models of the mass. The 'panel' game has been the source of an extraordinary inflation of 'personality'. A flair for asking and answering questions, no greater than that of a reasonably intelligent uncle at a Christmas party, a good television appearance, and a quickly acquired knack of playing to the unseen gallery, can make a 'star' of a man or woman who before the television age would have dwelt at least in modest obscurity. Now these kings and queens of our day, who weekly guess people's occupations, or something else, in various panel games, are talking points for millions next morning. The jewellery of the women is noted and copied; the whole country is agog if one of the men was rude to a challenger; all successful panellists are in demand and can tour the country opening bazaars,

besides lending their name to advertisements and writing their autobiographies, which sometimes sadly show how empty are the heads which have swum into eminence on our screens.

Another peculiar growth of television is the programme that exploits emotion and sentiment. This is done more lushly in America, but it has got a firm hold here, though the BBC handles it with slightly more reserve. Strange requests are granted—for a school girl to meet a kangaroo, or an old age pensioner to perform a trumpet solo. Harmless laughter, and tears sometimes, yes; but also the confronting of human beings with situations that make an enjoyable lump in the throat for the audience and a welter of sickly sentimentalism. Some programmes make a definite attempt to play upon personal feeling for the delight of an audience; the subject whose past life is unfolded (always for laudable and excellent activities—so different from Ibsen's characters!) is taken by surprise and confronted with relations and old friends, while a stream of adulation is poured upon him; or people's personal problems ('Shall I have my illegitimate child adopted?' or 'Shall I tell my husband that I have overdrawn our joint account?') are examined and advised upon seriously, but it is difficult to think that this is meant for anything but public entertainment. Even if such programmes are attractive, and the great mass of viewers find them so, there is some ground for thinking that they are debasing, in a general way; the exhibition is voluntary and presumably desired, but even if it is to 'help' the participants, that help could obviously be

given in less public ways. Private worries for public exhibition is a new conception of entertainment.

Such programmes, however, are in a minority on the BBC, which provides for all grades of intellect, though least for those who have most. Many of its programmes are informative but not dull; there have been series on international affairs, on our industries, on education, on mental health, on many topics both domestic and international. Most of these are on an 'average' intellectual level, which is to say that they have little or nothing to tell informed people, but a great deal to introduce to the others, who are after all by far the most. This general educational trend, without tears, is conducted efficiently and with a strong sense of responsibility like a huge further education class for everybody above school age whose education stopped with school. But those programmes which are least elementary, such as the museum 'quiz' called 'Animal, Vegetable, Mineral?' and the splendid archaeological series called 'Buried Treasure' have aroused most interest. A new passion for Roman Britain and buried cities grew in Britain under the wise and witty provocations of Sir Mortimer Wheeler and Dr. Glyn Daniel, which suggests that people respond better to being talked to on the level than talked down to. Though phrases like the 'idiot's lantern' and talk about measuring television programmes by a 'cretinometer' are fair enough for some aspects, the BBC's sustained efforts to provide intelligent and stimulating programmes for different kinds of audience deserve credit. Their 'Brains Trust' shows men and

women eminent in the arts and sciences discussing viewers' questions; this cannot impress other people of the same calibre and status as the Brains Trust, because they can discuss such things privately if they want to with equal intelligence and point. But the thing does appeal greatly to viewers to whom the arguing of questions about art, literature, morality or philosophy is a novelty, and who probably look up to the speakers. The demonstration of rational debate is a great gift of BBC television, even if it is not always as searchingly conducted as by Socrates; while the appearance of some outstanding poet, novelist, painter or philosopher, whether in discussion or alone, is an experience of unquestioned pleasure and interest even to those who normally find most programmes rather jejune. In such ways, and in many features about painting, sculpture, history and music, the BBC has used television as a positive and creative medium. In drama it has a splendid record. Its light entertainment is lavish, though 'variety' in this medium, like comedy, works at a disadvantage, because the isolated viewer lacks the warmth of company.

In all countries with television it is realized that its effect upon children must be carefully watched. We should consider that American children see far too much of it; so do some Americans. It is not only a question of children seeing films and plays with 'violence' in them, or of the terrific impact of what is seen upon the child's mind, but also of whether the young spend their time, and if so, how much of it, in sitting 'glued to the set'. While nobody can prevent

children watching television at all hours, apart from school time, if their parents have not enough control to prevent them, the BBC has at least spent infinite care on the broadcasts designed for them. The youngest children have special, short programmes. Older children have an hour each day which includes plays, serials from many of the classics of literature, music, hobbies, sport and every kind of art and craft. The dreaded 'passivity' is not encouraged. There are programmes for schools which are part of the special educational work of radio.

British television also provides regular programmes for women covering all domestic interests, fashions, decoration and handicrafts, with emphasis on family affairs and the care of children in infancy and school years. All such programmes devised for and directed to a specific audience, though they are apt to be criticized just because they have a narrower field, are less likely to be guilty of that diffuse, spread-over, average approach which gives the most ground for accusing television of having a softening effect on the mind. They are not merely a flow of easy entertainment and are more likely to be definitely chosen or rejected by their audience.

The introduction of religion into television is one of its most interesting aspects. It would not be surprising if the Churches found—as indeed they showed early signs of realizing—that this is a most effective way of telling audiences in a land now largely only nominally Christian, just what their message is.

News becomes an increasingly important part of

every television system as it grows up, and it presents the typical problems and possibilities of the medium in the most concentrated form. The BBC for some years after the war did not develop a 'visual' news bulletin, but by 1957 it had six every night, and these are a composite, built up around the news reader, of films, 'live' interviews or scenes, sometimes telephone conversations with correspondents in distant places, maps, charts and occasional 'still' pictures. Thus mounting a visual news report is a major operation, and one which may cost as much in time, effort and organization as many more elaborate productions. The careful control that is kept in British broadcasting, both in sound and vision, on the representation of political parties, extends to the news, so that there can be no casual introduction of politicians here or there, as the rules that ensure a fair balance must be kept. A great deal of use is made of television newsreel cameras so that normally the viewer can expect to see any important event of the day on film the same night: Ministers coming to Downing Street, members arriving for a new session of Parliament, the Queen at some big ceremony, a bad railway accident or a big fire. Films of events abroad are also now quickly available for insertion into the news bulletins. On the style in which a news reader should read the news there are two schools of thought; the BBC formerly kept to the purely official and objective style, without any personal expression or colloquialisms, while commercial television favours the 'newscaster' who sheds an air of bonhomie and cheer around his bulletin. Neither is allowed to have

editorial opinions. Latterly the BBC, in face of this rival, has encouraged its news readers to thaw a little, but the compromise is not altogether happy, and there remain viewers who like the news presented without personal expression. After all, your newspaper does not actually smile at you, and the 'matey' style of news reading does imply that the audience is rather less than adult. However, the idea most people have that the news should be conveyed to them in a wrapping of friendliness is the dominant one, and may have interesting causes. Does it imply that feeling, which may be one of the questionable influences of television, that the face on your screen is indeed a 'big brother', not in the sinister sense, but a benevolent, chatty brother, someone who is one of 'us', and not superior? And in this may there not lie the lurking suspicion and dislike of anyone who seems aloof and disinterested, in an age when anyone being 'different' is an unintentional offence to ideas of equality?

That is the picture of television. Is it drug or stimulus? The answer must surely be that, just as its use for good or bad ends, doctrinally, will depend on the fundamental philosophy, democratic or totalitarian, religious or atheistic, of the State controlling the system, so its tactical direction will help to determine its effect as a soporific or an awakener. There is a great waste land, a border country, of people who through no fault of their own, have not had much formal education, even in the highly industrialized countries; who never did and do not have their minds open to literature, painting and music, interesting leisure and lively talk.

It is easy for those who have always had this happiness to criticize addiction to television as a drug, an easy way of filling in time, and in the nature of things it is this minority whose business it is, in the press, in Parliament, in the churches and in teaching quarters, to observe and try to estimate the effect of television. A thought which should make this criticism realistic, and it can be a humbling thought, is that though much nonsense and dreary stuff may reel by on the screen, no one can tell when some spark of interest, some new idea, some inkling of a wider world, may not be struck in the mind of some unknown, insignificant one among the millions. A glance at education statistics shows what a tiny proportion of children ever go on to higher education; who is to say that among the great mass audience there would ever be very many who would have spent their spare time in creative pursuits, or that watching variety on television, intermingled with some more serious programmes, is much worse than what they would have been doing anyway?

But where television actually encourages an appetite for the debasing enjoyment of stupidity or cupidity, as in the fantastic and fatuous 'give-away' shows which put people (voluntarily) on the rack in order to win or lose large sums of money, it can be held to be really bad, and this is the gravest charge against commercial television, that in this it affronts human dignity, both in the persons of its audiences and of its participants.

Chapter Seven

COMMERCIAL TELEVISION

As public service broadcasting does not usually give away money prizes or allow advertising, it is to a certain extent shielded from the strange excesses which can afflict both people and programmes when the business is commercial. Here, since the revenue must mainly come from advertising, or 'sponsoring', it follows that the more people hear a programme, the more hear the advertisements. Such broadcasting is likely to adopt on the biggest scale all the devices for appealing to people in the mass. A steadying influence may be that of some big networks and of stations specifically doing educational and serious broadcasts. The 'sponsored' programme, too, with which in America some great businesses have been responsible for certain outstanding series of broadcasts, can produce better quality than those in which programme contractors produce the features, and advertisers buy the 'spots' before, after and in the programmes. The latter method means that the advertisers will not look favourably on any broadcast that is too serious or 'cultural' for the majority of people, and most audiences do only want the lightest of programmes, making no demands upon their minds. Countries which, like Canada, Australia, and South Africa, run a mixture of public service and commercial broadcasting, probably have the best of both worlds, for

the commercial networks can and do take many of the public service programmes, while the private stations with their additional revenue ensure that a better coverage of the country is achieved without the whole cost falling on the national service. Certain rules have generally, in most countries, been imposed upon commercial broadcasting and upon advertising.

While those most critical of the commercial system have never liked it, they would be hard put to it to find any positive harm beyond a general tendency to appeal to the most immature tastes, simply in order to reach the biggest audience, and to implant there a happy reaction to the advertiser's goods and so gain better profits for him. To those who think this is a bad basis for broadcasting, the standard reply is that the theatre, the cinema and the press, to mention only three forms of entertainment or information, are commercial and competitive propositions, and that (except in Communist countries) there would be strong objections if all or any of these were run by a monopoly. So there would. What then is the difference? What makes private enterprise seem all right in the theatre, the cinema and the press, but objectionable in broadcasting? (some critics of the press, especially those with a violent objection to 'press lords', do say that this sort of private enterprise is dangerous). The difference must be that these three are not so omnipresent and not so insidious as radio. For all three some effort is needed on the part of the audience or the reader, and in all three there is no such immediate and repeated association of the matter offered with the goods advertised. The theatre

and the cinema are in a different category, for they do not depend on advertisement revenue. The press is different again, because whatever advertising it takes can be much more clearly differentiated from news and opinion than can screened advertisements which come directly to the ears and eyes of the listener or viewer along with certain programmes. There is also the temptation, which does not apply to newspapers, to save costs by running cheap, 'canned' programmes at minimum cost.

The coming of television brought a new urgency to this question of commercial or public service broadcasting, for television is a very expensive business to put on, and it is also totally different in kind from sound broadcasting, more intrusive, more powerful and more difficult to resist. In America television followed the private enterprise system and grew rapidly, though it did not start a regular output till some years later than in Britain. Those who fear and dislike commercial television for its tendency to pander to the lowest, see all its faults exemplified in America, where continuous programmes fill the screen day and night. Americans watch more than any other people on earth; murder trials, Congressional investigations, political conventions, sports and an infinite number of serials, light shows, films and 'give-away' shows, of which the '64,000 Dollar Question' is the most famous. The programme that puts people in ridiculous or humiliating positions was born in America, along with the offering of fabulous prizes and rewards. So, too, was the occasional striking 'documentary'. The fame enjoyed by

these 'serious' efforts, however, does point to the low level of the terrain around.

American television is extremely efficient, lively and lavish. No doubt compared to it the BBC, at any rate in the early years, had a careful, plodding avuncular look. But it was not until some years after the war that it was seriously suggested that in Britain, the home of monopoly broadcasting, the commercial system should get a foothold. The results were most interesting, for here was the monster, commercial television, with all that it implies, being beckoned on to ground where the public service system, under charter, had held sway for thirty years; moreover, the path had not been pioneered by any commercial sound broadcasting system. The British might listen to Radio Luxembourg from across the Channel if they liked, but nobody in all those years had seriously suggested that commercial radio should be given a footing in the island. How it came about that in 1954 commercial or as it was called 'Independent' television was established by Act of Parliament is a strange story, a tale of battles before the newcomer was admitted, and of a curiously mixed campaign of lofty calls for 'freedom' and hard-headed promotion of business interests. This break with the BBC monopoly was a far-reaching decision whose full consequences have not yet been seen.

The BBC was never legally established as a monopoly under its successive charters, although the Crawford Committee of 1926 recommended a monopoly on the ground (still held to-day by the opponents of commercial television) that competition in broadcasting would

force down programme standards. The general consensus of opinion at that time was in favour of monopoly and the Crawford Committee said, 'It is agreed that the United States system, of free and uncontrolled transmission and reception, is unsuited to this country, and that Broadcasting must accordingly remain a monopoly.' When the first Licence was renewed, the question was not discussed. The Ullswater Committee of 1935 took for granted 'the principle that there should be a Government monopoly'. It was not till after this that criticism began to be heard of the BBC's monopoly, based as much on ideas of the value of competition as on any shortcomings of the BBC. After the war, some Gallup Polls (for what that was worth) indicated a measure of public support for competition. The investigation of the 1949 Committee under Lord Beveridge, which published its voluminous report in 1951, went thoroughly into the question of the drawbacks and dangers of monopoly and the possible advantages of competition; Scotland and Wales put in a plea for independent broadcasting agencies; there were proposals to separate television from radio under a different organization, and Mr. Selwyn Lloyd signed a minority report advocating that the BBC's monopoly should be broken. Despite all this, most of the evidence supported the BBC's position, as did the committee's recommendations, again on the ground that programmes would deteriorate if there were competition for audiences. However, though the Beveridge Committee's report, in January, 1951, recommended that the BBC's Charter and Licence be extended on the same terms as before, the political

situation and a series of unexpected happenings delayed this, and when eventually a new charter was granted, the BBC for the first time was no longer the sole holder of the right to send out television, though sound radio remained in its hands. The path was being smoothed for a legitimate but faintly disreputable brother to enter the ancestral home.

The standing charter did not expire till the end of 1951, and it was supposed that the Labour party (in office at the beginning of the year) would act on the Beveridge Committee's suggestions. But a Conservative Government came into office in October, 1951, and the Charter was extended for six months while broadcasting policy was considered. Meanwhile, a campaign for promoting commercial television had been growing stronger. In such matters it is difficult to say what part is played by 'public opinion'. British listeners and viewers as a whole had always seemed well content with the BBC, even if inclined to regard it as a useful companion whose many services are not appreciated until illness or death removes them. Some perhaps did want a second service, and felt it could only be afforded if it were commercially run. Some, no doubt, felt it a matter of principle that a monopoly of anything so influential as television was wrong, and that some great benefit might emerge from competition. Some merely thought that an alternative programme would bring them more plentiful entertainment. On the whole there was little sign of spontaneous public feeling on this issue; the interested parties went to some trouble to whip up feeling (urging people to write to newspapers,

and so on); the campaigning was well done by organized groups, and resisted, though unsuccessfully, by many responsible leaders of opinion. A group of Conservative back-benchers in Parliament, some of whom had interests in the radio industry and in advertising, was the spear-head of the campaign in the Commons; a good many peers, also, were strongly in favour of the ethical advantages of free competition, though others, like Lord Simon of Wythenshawe, were trenchant and unrelenting in their opposition.

An impetus was probably given to the prospects of commercial television when it was turned into a party issue in 1952 with the Labour party's declaration that if returned to power they would, if commercial television had been established, put an end to it. More Conservatives than might otherwise have supported it thus became champions of the cause. It may be doubted whether if Labour were again in office, it would dare to remove this source of cheap and popular entertainment.

In the two years before the Television Act of 1954 made commercial television a reality, there was repeated discussion in Parliament and in the press. The *Manchester Guardian* and *The Times* both opposed it on the ground of the lowering of standards that it would mean. The Government issued a White Paper in 1952 saying that there must be 'some element of competition' in television. The BBC was to have the only claim on licence revenue and its services were to remain intact. In 1953 another White Paper gave more detailed proposals, for a public corporation which would licence

and operate transmitters, while the programmes would be provided by privately financed companies and advertisers would not be allowed to sponsor or control the programmes. The Government put three main aims: to introduce an element of competition; to reduce to a minimum the financial commitments of the State; to safeguard television (in this new aspect) from abuse or lowering of standards. The new corporation to be set up was to be responsible to Parliament through the Postmaster-General. This combination of 'effective control on the one hand and greater freedom on the other' the Government felt to be a 'typically British approach' to this new problem.

There were stormy debates in the House before the Television Act of 1954 was drawn up and passed; peers voted in unusually large numbers after debates; the Commons was once at least a scene of noise and confusion. The arguments for and against were repeatedly put in considered letters to the newspapers; the worst (and the best) points of the American system were stressed by both sides; the vice-chancellors of many universities opposed the idea, as did many church leaders. Some newspapers were against it, though when independent television started, there were other newspaper interests among the contracting companies.

When the bill setting up an Independent Television Authority was passed in July, 1954, many amendments had been introduced, but its basic provisions were for a corporation subject to controls much like those of the BBC, with stringent Government regulations about advertising. So far as 'selling' time went, the ITA had

no more and no less power than the BBC to let politicians or religious bodies use the screen, and no chance of outbidding the BBC on 'national' events, whether royal or sporting. Content and advertising were sharply divided, though this could not affect the advertiser's natural liking for 'peak time' popular programmes and so his power, by withholding custom, to make it uneconomic to put on 'minority' features.

On this outcome of the Act, which was rigid with safeguards and riddled with loopholes, has centred most of the controversy about and criticism of commercial television since it started in September, 1955. The Independent Television Authority is itself permitted to produce, or at any rate is made responsible for seeing that there are some more serious programmes to balance the more trivial matters. After two years of life the commercial programmes showed rather more of a backbone of current affairs and drama than had seemed likely. The usual features are provided by the programme contractors, of whom there were four at first. Associated Television Ltd., and Associated-Rediffusion Ltd., who share the London and Southern area between weekdays and weekends; ABC Television which shares the Midlands with Associated Television, and Granada which shares the North with ABC Television. Theatre, film and newspaper interests are among these companies. Other contractors have been appointed for Wales and Scotland. The Independent Television Authority itself is much in the position of the BBC board of governors, and is composed like them of people some of whom at least have never had any con-

tact with the world of popular entertainment. The first chairman was Sir Kenneth Clark, a former director of the National Gallery. The second was Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick, formerly Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office. The first director-general of independent television, Sir Robert Brown Fraser, was formerly director-general of the Central Office of Information. The members of the ITA are appointed for not more than five years and can be dismissed by the Postmaster-General. Three of them are chosen to represent Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The parallel with the BBC is obvious, but one great difference is that whereas the BBC is a homogeneous body which both produces and controls its own broadcasts, the ITA is more like a governess in charge of some children in whose upbringing she had no previous hand. The Act lays much responsibility on the ITA for what the programme contractors provide and for filling in what they do not provide. One of its most insistent notes is the call for 'quality'. The ITA is to provide (for ten years) additional services to those of the BBC, and they are to be 'of high quality'. The ITA can originate programmes necessary to secure a proper balance of subject matter, particularly if they cannot be provided by the contractors. The Act forbids the broadcasting of anything offending good taste or decency or likely to encourage to crime or disorder or be offensive to public feeling. The Authority is excluded from sound broadcasting though it can carry sound relays (like the BBC) of party political broadcasts. The Act is full of suggestions to ensure good programmes, though this anxiety has not,

in the opinion of most critics and observers, achieved much. The provisions about accuracy and impartiality in news and in politics have been carried out. (News is looked after by a special division called Independent Television News; the companies share costs and direction.)

The danger that commercial television might be loaded with American films and 'packaged' programmes was supposedly dealt with in the Act's vague demands for 'proper proportions' of programmes of British origin and performance. Special committees were also to be appointed for advice on religious and children's features. The former are noticeably good, while the children's programmes are on the whole poor, with a steady supply of American film serials. Though 'quiz' features and contests are allowed, the Act expressly forbids the offering of gifts and prizes available only to people watching the programmes. This is an obstacle to one effective way of gathering huge audiences. The contestants have to take part in the show, and their rewards are generally based upon some slight trial of knowledge or achievement rather than on pure chance.

The Act also lays down definite rules about advertising. No advertisement agencies, for instance, may be programme contractors. The ITA can examine all advertisements in advance, as it can all programmes, which it has power to veto. There is a full set of 'Rules as to Advertisements' and there has to be an advisory committee on advertising standards (including experts on medical advertising). The Act makes express provisions about the separation of responsibility for

programme content and advertisements, and about the timing and placing of the latter. This includes the 'natural break' definition which in practice often means that in television drama action is held up at some point of suspense and into this most unnatural break flashes an advertisement for soap or fish or tea.

Apart from all these regulations the ITA has to make an annual report to Parliament, to open its accounts to Government examination and to maintain specified technical standards as well as its control over the programme companies. Commercial television in Britain has therefore started on a much tighter leash than any commercial network in the United States; also the terms of its ten-year licence contain the clause 'unless previously revoked by the Postmaster-General'. It is, in this sense, on approval. Even though the Government control in the background, the hedging about with restrictions, the talk about 'high quality' and 'responsibility' would all make it seem very respectable and more like a commercial BBC than an American cousin, the fact remains that there is a sharp contrast between the main output of commercial television and that of the public service system. It is as though the Government had thought that by making a lot of rules one could disguise that the child was slightly deficient. The real weakness of commercial television is not that it sets out to do people harm or to show them violence or crime, but simply that most of what comes from it is a vapid and immature stream which assumes that the audience has no mental capacity beyond the elementary, and little interest in anything that touches on the 'serious'.

Independent television is, of course, right in assuming that many people prefer such programmes, but the question is whether they should be given such a monotonous diet and whether it is not corrosive to the mental teeth. Nobody sensible lets children eat sweets all day.

The position of commercial television in Britain at this stage offers a peculiarly interesting problem, in which five different parties are involved; the ITA, with its powers over the programme companies; the Government, with its powers over the ITA; the companies and the advertisers, of whom the first are not supposed to be influenced by the second, and lastly the public. Independent television has now spread to the whole country, and in the South, Midlands and North it claims, not larger total audiences than the BBC (since not all sets will get both channels) but the majority of the audience able to choose. Regular statistics from various research organizations tend to put the commercial programmes among the 'top ten'; these are generally serials, 'give-away' shows, and variety. If the advertisers prefer to buy their 'spots' in and around such programmes then the companies can ill afford to put on the 'sustaining' programmes which could be a liability.

This situation was foreseen in the Television Act, but the way in which it has been dealt with by the Government is mysterious. There is provision in the Act for a grant of £750,000 to be made by the Postmaster-General to the Authority; the specific purpose of this was not stated, but it was assumed with good

reason by the ITA that it would be available for help to get the 'balance' of informative and high quality programmes demanded by the Act, if the contractors did not or could not put them on. But in August, 1956, the ITA's application for this money was turned down by the Government, and the ITA in a statement regretting this refusal admitted that the programmes were not properly 'balanced'. Here was an odd situation, which looked as though the Government was now unwilling to help its own offspring to grow up properly. Then in October, 1956, the chairman of the Authority suggested that the companies were heading for prosperity and in a few years might not care about the grant. Audiences were expanding and the companies had cut their costs by largely sharing their programmes in one 'network'. In November, 1956, the Postmaster-General offered the ITA a grant-in-aid of £100,000 to help during the next year to ensure a 'proper balance' in the programmes as a 'temporary measure' with the implication that it would come from licence fees (most of which go to the BBC). It is recognized that the ITA would like to see a first-class programme. But the contractors then announced that for their part they did not want the £100,000. Perhaps it seemed to them paltry, but it could help the ITA with some unspectacular but more intellectual items and it was definitely granted early in 1957, though not then drawn upon.

What of the general run of the programmes that commercial television puts on the screen? Why is it that they are popular with the mass audience and meet with such severe criticism from some of the press and

from the minority of viewers who find them monotonous, silly and even nauseating? It is that they are what the opponents of commercial television feared so much and protested so fiercely about before it was introduced. They play to a lowest common denominator and, assuming that anything above that is too 'highbrow', they set their sights so low as to distress people with minds that want anything to bite on. Hence the preposterous spectacle of contestants in 'give-away' shows being treated as wonders if they can spell simple words or answer the most elementary questions; hence the inducement to challengers to offer themselves to be put through revolting, if harmless, procedures—like being covered in paint or custard, or attempting ludicrous physical feats, while audiences both on the spot and watching on their screens, delight in these pathetic exhibitions—voluntary though they are—in quest of cash. One cannot blame people for wanting to make money, but there is something unpleasant about this way of doing it, never more felt than when one sees the gloating or cupidity of the faces in the studio audience. The worst example, in which there was some distasteful exploitation of human indignity, was promptly put a stop to by the ITA. There is nothing cruel going on now in commercial television except the cruelty to the intelligent or sensitive viewer (who need not watch). The demoralizing thing is the implicit suggestion that mere literacy is remarkable, while what one would call a generally educated person is unthinkable. A good example was the recent '64,000' question, in which a young man answering geography questions

finally lost because he did not know whether Petra was built of marble or sandstone. He claimed (unsuccessfully) that this was a geology question, but if he had ever heard of 'a rose red city half as old as time' he would have known the answer. In the United States the 'quiz wizard' who wrestles with questions needing an 'encyclopaedic knowledge', and is watched spellbound by millions across the continent, is considered a super-brain because he knows that caries is dental decay, a cummerbund is worn around the waist, the French for Shrove Tuesday is Mardi Gras, and that Ash Wednesday follows Shrove Tuesday. What standards do such things reveal? And if commercial television's main diet is almost unlimited half-hours of gun serials, detective thrillers, comedy films, quizzes and 'give-aways', with an occasional 'spectacular', is it not proving the theory that television is indeed a drug?

There are some few exceptions for which commercial television in Britain should get credit. It has had a discussion feature which virtually took over one of the BBC's most lively teams. It has had one satirical comedy series, which really used the medium constructively. It has done a few 'documentaries', has instituted a weekly review of the press, and has encouraged spontaneous debate by political commentators. The Granada network which operates in Lancashire and Yorkshire has been the most enterprising in starting discussion and debates. It has arranged to let sixth formers question eminent men on important topics; encouraged an uninhibited Northern audience to question experts in London, and has, in many outside broadcasts of

Northern life, done something to fulfil the requirements of the Television Act about 'regional interests'.

Granada has made plans to institute a university chair or lectureship in television, an annual research scholarship, and a series of lectures by people who have a contribution to make to the creative and artistic development of television.

The whole commercial network sometimes shows, through one or another company, a new or old play worth seeing, John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* and Ibsen's *The Wild Duck* for example, in spite of the danger that if, at that time, the BBC has one of its lighter shows, the audience may veer over to the rival. Speaking on the third Annual Report of the ITA in November, 1957, the Director-General said that the programmes were serious, balanced and popular, and that anyone who thought otherwise was a 'bonehead'.

The existence of commercial television in Britain does not altogether settle the question of whether there is a satisfactory alternative to the BBC, which was one of the claims made for it by its supporters during the long period of controversy before the Act was passed. Commercial television has certainly meant that there is an alternative market for actors, producers, and technicians. At the beginning the BBC lost many of its technical staff and producers to its competitor, and had to recruit and train more in their place. But that sort of situation reaches a point of satiety, when the demands of the newcomer are satisfied and the recruitment rate is normal for both. Some producers who went over to the ITA came back to the BBC before long.

But the competition sent up the costs of the BBC's television service very quickly, because they had to put on more programmes and bid for performers against the ITA. It could be said that this rather more free market was healthy, as promoting more energy and enterprise. But nobody could say that the commercial programmes offered a full alternative to the BBC. They have offered a steady stream of the sillier side of entertainment, and the effect has been to attach people either to one or to the other service. The BBC presents by far the more varied stream, yet if it is doing music hall, the viewer is only rarely able to find some more serious type of programme on the ITA.

There remains the possibility of yet a third television service, for a channel is still available and the Government has so far refused a decision about whether the BBC or the ITA shall have it. If it fell to the BBC, then we should expect a genuinely alternative programme, and there would be time for more good plays, more music, more of the 'documentaries' at which the BBC is so adept, and more of the life of the regions. If the ITA had it, what could we expect? Is it likely that commercial television, with its dependence on programmes to attract the biggest audiences, could put on a service that would be a genuine alternative to its present style? Would it even wish to? For the expense would be double, but the audience would either be split (which would distress the advertisers) or it would neglect one commercial wave length for the other (which would distress them too). The question of Band III and the new television programme is not

settled yet, and the Government might even wonder whether it is necessary to have three television programmes running together in a country which is always being told about the need for economy. If there is an extra one, then on past performance the BBC deserves it, and if television, with its attendant dangers, is to be used in Britain for waking people up rather than putting them to sleep, its claim seems stronger than that of the ITA.

The friends of commercial television could point out that criticism may not always be impartial because advertising on television may draw away advertising from the press, and that newspapers unconnected with the programme contractors (the majority) are likely to be more critical than those with an interest. But there is much opinion other than that of the press to go by, and in most papers a division between the news angle and the critical opinion means that commercial television is not neglected, and credit is usually given for its more sensible efforts. Despite such occasional merits, the trend of commercial programmes is to increase the 'current cult of facile mediocrity in everything, and the mental deliquescence from which the British public is suffering as a result' (letter in *The Times*, February 19, 1957, about the value of the Third Programme). The same point was suggested in a *Manchester Guardian* leading article which said on September 22, 1956, 'If it (commercial television) were openly to show cruelty or immorality, there would be immediate protests. But what it does may be even more demoralizing, for it presupposes a contempt for the mind itself.'

Chapter Eight

ALL ROUND THE CLOCK

FROM the early days, with the first brief news readings, broadcasting has provided an essential service, different from both government and press, different again from all our other sources of information, and showing a greater power of growth and scope than has ever lain in entertainment. The possibilities of entertainment, while there is always room for more quantity, for better quality and for variation and refinement within the framework, were obvious from the beginning, but radio as an essential 'service' has never stopped taking on new functions. We should be surprised if we could go back to the world before wireless, to find how much we rely upon it nowadays for this daily and hourly service. We may not even turn on the wireless set for quite long periods, but for most people the set is there and the turn of the knob will, if not at the moment, at some fixed and reliable time within the next few hours, bring the latest news bulletin. The importance of this can be gauged in various ways; in Great Britain perhaps by the number of people who own television sets but who keep a wireless set as a matter of course because from it they get the service—the round-the-clock, regular, reliable, news, time and weather. They can of course get news from television also, but not with the same ease and regularity. All the evidence from other countries goes to show the importance of

this fundamental service; it has become a stable element in the normal life of people both highly civilized and less mature, and must certainly have contributed to making them better informed about national and world affairs.

Has this been a good thing? It should be so; though against that view could be put that when news flies so fast and can be heard so often, it may create for itself a climate in which events—especially in international politics—rank larger than they might have done if they were known only to a few. Thus a frontier incident where trouble is latent, as on the borders of the Iron Curtain countries or in Sudeten Germany before the last war, might be thought, with worldwide reporting that all can hear, to be more explosive because it is world news immediately. On balance, however, the bringing of world news to every home must be a development for good, rather than bad. All that is to be known, should be known, and if we accept the free world's conception of democracy, then the better informed the people are the better they should be able to judge and to act. This is to look at the news services provided by radio in their ultimate aspect. The maltreatment of those services for particular purposes, whether in war or peace, is a matter of propaganda or politics.

In Great Britain the framework of broadcasting with its news bulletins, time signals, weather and announcements suits a people who are on the whole quiet and busy. Anybody who is reminded to-day that before the war (1939–45) we only had evening news bulletins is

surprised; just as they are surprised if reminded of the pre-war number of daily posts and the evening deliveries. (News bulletins have increased as postal deliveries have decreased.) From house to house the cheerful early morning music, the time signals and the early news can be heard as workers in every profession get up and dress, get breakfast and set off to work, rather by the BBC than by the clock. What does anyone do who mistrusts his clock? He puts it right by the next BBC time signal. We simply expect broadcasting to 'be there'; the invisible regulator, guide and news sheet; something that is completely part of people's lives.

News has come to mean far more than mere reading of summaries. In all countries, in differing degrees, it includes comment by experts on the spot or correspondents abroad—as in the BBC's current affairs programme 'At Home and Abroad'. It may include recordings of events and reporting by observers, as in the BBC's extraordinarily successful and long established 'Radio Newsreel', which goes all over the English-speaking world in successive editions throughout the twenty-four hours. News may be enlarged to deal with crises, as in the Middle East crisis of 1956; the public reacts promptly by listening in far greater numbers. In the week of the height of that crisis (the Anglo-French intervention in the Egypt-Israeli trouble) the BBC's fifteen daily bulletins (Home and Light Services and television) had an audience of more than 50 per cent above normal; the 6 o'clock news was heard by nearly 10 million; the 8 a.m. news by nearly 8 million. One should never

underestimate the power of broadcasting simply to establish a climate in which it flourishes as the reflection of events. The stage has now been reached when its absence merely as an agency providing a check upon the outside world can cause alarm. Thus any regular broadcasting system must keep itself in being—must provide an explanation—if its regular proceedings are not carried out. An example of the dismay that can be caused by unexplained silence is what happened after the sudden death of King George VI was announced in February, 1952. The first announcement was made at mid-morning and was therefore missed by many people. The 1 o'clock news contained a fuller announcement and thereafter the BBC closed down for several hours while rumour flew around, listeners who had not heard the news thought their sets had broken down, or that the BBC had broken down; for some few hours people were reduced to the old-fashioned method of running into each other's houses to find out what was the matter, or waiting for the evening paper editions and passing on the news. But in remote country districts, on isolated farms and villages, where evening papers do not penetrate, at any rate so early, and it may be miles even to the nearest small town, those who had missed the lunch-time announcement were left with silent sets and a vast speculation. The moral was that the BBC (and any other broadcasting organization) should put out brief announcements, in a situation like this, regularly and often. The wireless set is the fount of information, and its silence is looked upon as a convulsion of nature, inevitably sinister.

So in national events and in emergencies, broadcasting must now be regarded as the immediate source of news. It has a definite part to play as an agency, not of the Government but of public service, in case of strikes and dislocation of the national economy. In Great Britain this was first established in the general strike of 1926. It is at such times most important that people can turn to a reliable source of news which may help to replace missing services. In less stable countries this function can be mischievously directed, and hence the significance of the control of the radio station. In a railway strike in 1955 British listeners could be found anxiously attending to regional broadcasts, to hear whether long distance or local trains, upon which their plans depended, would or would not run. In the newspaper strike of the same year, affecting the national newspapers in London and the provinces, the BBC had a great gap to step into, and though it stepped in rather gingerly at first, it gave as comprehensive an account of all important news as it could. In such a state of affairs broadcasting can also open a channel for editorial opinion by allowing journalists to speak about what they would have written. (The journalists themselves, in this instance, were not on strike.)

In all these news services, television, in the countries where it is established, has worked out its own method. The advantage of television for news is simply that it presents moving pictures, than which there is nothing more fascinating, whether they are 'live' or on film. The disadvantage is that the preparation of such news —needing maps, charts, some 'still' pictures, films and

often several people to be seen in interviews or reports —is very much more laborious than the preparing of spoken news. Because of this complicated process, it is not so easy to get a bulletin completely up to date at the last minute. A news service by television can provide such films, interviews and outside broadcasts (some by direct link with Europe) as the BBC, for instance, was putting on through the weeks of the Hungarian revolt against Soviet Russia in the autumn of 1956. The public expect not merely a skeleton but a full and informed service which shall be rapidly expanded and elaborated with all possible resources according to the gravity of events. The amount of actual (so-called 'live') events that are screened on television will differ from country to country, and they cannot all be thought of as part of the essential news service. Thus in the United States television cameras rove far more freely than in Britain and have even looked in on trials taking place in court. They also do far more of what we should call 'political' outside broadcasts simply as news, and though these are certainly information they would not be looked on here as that basic news about events that the public expects.

The relaying of all national events, both in sound and vision, is another aspect of broadcasting as a service which is entirely taken for granted in Britain, the Commonwealth and other countries according to the range and authority of their broadcasting systems. Almost all major occasions involving royalty, ceremonies such as the Trooping the Colour, the arrivals and departures of our own royal family on foreign

tours, the arrivals and engagements of foreign royalty and heads of countries on State visits, important university celebrations, and innumerable other happenings are regularly brought either direct or in edited and recorded versions to listeners and viewers in all parts of the country. These again go out, if important enough, to countries overseas. Such occasions are not mere formalities but are often significant in that they tell people at large of important progress in the sciences and industry; such an event was the official opening of the Calder Hall atomic power station in Cumberland. This may not have had the drawing power of a Cup Final, but it must have brought to many people, to whom Calder Hall was hitherto only a name, some idea that atomic power for industrial use was now a reality. The same is true of the relaying of many public events with their accompanying speeches; what they give to those who are interested is a chance of taking part, of hearing some news and some views about places, things and personalities which may be either familiar or strange to them, but which they will be hearing directly. It is as much a service of broadcasting to let us hear the sparks fly when some pugnacious President of the Royal Academy lets off steam against modern art, as to let us hear the opening of a new textile institute or the speech of a new Lord Mayor of London. These are all part of life, and it has steadily become more the function of broadcasting to bring them direct to the fireside.

The part played by the Government in broadcasting varies greatly from one country and system to another;

in Britain, as we have seen, there is a subtle constitutional position accorded to the BBC in which there is no Government control, but, on the other hand, political broadcasting, which will be examined later, is very carefully controlled. Broadcasting itself can be and is used as an essential service, not at the disposal of the Government as a party, but for carrying necessary Government pronouncements and for certain Ministerial broadcasts. A statement by the Prime Minister on some grave matter, will naturally be carried by the radio services just as much as by the press; and radio in Britain (though again much less than in the United States) is used for the direct talk to the public on occasion. Whether a Ministerial broadcast (let us say by the Prime Minister in an emergency) stands by itself or calls for a counter broadcast by the Opposition can be an extremely delicate question and nobody would envy those who have to decide this issue. But the use of radio for objective guidance, information and exhortation—whether it is a fuel crisis or a foreign crisis —is part of its work as a public service. Again, the influential part played by broadcasting in the second world war, as a means of information and an upholder of morale, has set a pattern compared to which prewar broadcasting looks casual. Probably the speeches of Winston Churchill in the darkest days of the war did more than any one single thing to harden and fire the people's native determination.

Overseas, apart from all the normal news bulletins, broadcasting works also in special fields for certain audiences; thus when there were charges of mutiny

against men in the army during the troubles in Cyprus in 1956, it was said that one of the causes of unrest was complaints about lack of a wireless (also, it is true, about the provision of only one brand of beer). For the British forces in Germany since the war there has been a special programme—the British Forces Network in Germany. There is a parallel instance in the American world-wide radio networks for American forces serving abroad.

To what other programmes do people turn normally, knowing that they will get a steady service from their radio? Parliamentary proceedings are reported regularly and faithfully; this is a most valuable function of broadcasting. In Britain there is a nightly report when the House is in session; once a week there is a commentary, which in a newspaper would be called a 'sketch', of the highlights of the week. Members of different parties supply this according to the established political balance so that there can be no charge of bias or disproportion. In Britain there are also in addition Parliamentary reports of what will interest the different regions. The news itself on sound and television also, of course, includes news of Parliament, placed according to its importance and commented upon by the BBC's own reporters in the press gallery. Independent Television also has its own Parliamentary reports and commentators. There is thus no excuse for any member of the public not knowing what has happened at Westminster unless he cares to shut himself off from both press and broadcasting. Just as the part played by radio in giving a service of events, announcements,

and news is often not realized until a time of emergency, so its full scope in this field is not readily realized as long as people are out and about, and can get newspapers, talk to other people, and hear what is going on. It is when people are cut off, for one reason or another, from many normal lines of communication that the real value of broadcasting as a carrier of information even more than entertainment is felt. The old, the lonely, the sick and the blind could tell about this; and it is not necessary to be in a permanent state of isolation to appreciate the value of such a service. The anxiety to hear the football results on a Saturday evening in order to check the pools coupon is one thing, though most people can find an alternative way if they have to. But the cutting off from the world, which even the healthy person can feel if temporarily laid up in a house alone, or the ordinary family can feel in remote places isolated by snow or storm, is mitigated by the certain knowledge that what is happening outside will be told to them. So, too, the seafarer will get his news and his weather forecasts with certainty on the oceans. A great organization like the Red Cross has its own broadcasts from Geneva. The farmer on the smallest farm in the hills gets the broadcasts designed for his needs, and is now to have regular agricultural programmes on television.

The broadcasting of sport must certainly be held, at least in Britain and the Commonwealth, to be an essential service and not mere entertainment. It was one of the earliest ventures of broadcasting and the extent, variety and competence of sports reporting on

radio reflects the essential part it plays in national life. There are some who, when discussing the different types of newspapers and dividing their contents into 'serious' news and 'frivolous' topics, are inclined to write off all sport along with other light-weight subjects as not worth notice. There could not be a greater mistake. It is significant that the 'quality' press devotes a good proportion of its space to sport of every kind. The broadcasting not only in summary but by direct relay of football (Rugby Union, Rugby League, and Association), cricket (county and Test matches, university and League matches), tennis (with the Wimbledon fortnight supreme), racing all the year round, boxing and athletics, is shared by sound and television and any failure to keep this enormous panoply of sporting events under full survey would be regarded by the public as a complete failure to fulfil one of the most serious commitments of any broadcasting service that called itself truly national. Indeed, the great sporting events of the English year, the Derby, the Grand National, the Boat Race, the Cup Final, Test matches and Wimbledon, are so much part of the ordinary man's consciousness, coming in due order and season, that they must be taken as being as much part of the island character as our love of the sea or our bent for parliamentary democracy. The love of sport keeps the British happily occupied where people with a different culture would be talking politics or cherishing discontent. The paradox is that the British are politically mature—with a massive common sense—but will spend their spare time considering the form of bloodstock or the strokes

of cricketers. Though apparently cautious and mild, they have a passion for gambling and are formidable enemies when roused. Their broadcasting service therefore rightly tells them everything that is happening in the world of sport. Television has added great excitement to this. It is now possible, though one cannot, alas, yet see the racing colours, to watch the horse of one's fancy winning or losing on the screen. A subtle pleasure is derived by those who have chosen to back a grey—the only colour that can be distinguished from the ruck of other horses in dark monotone—pounding along beneath the eye of the telescopic lens. Because of copyright difficulties, it has never been possible to see on television a Derby or a Grand National since the war, though in the very early pre-war years of television experiments, the Derby was once dimly seen.

Sports reporting has also had a regular series of triumphs in dealing with the Olympic Games, though in 1956, owing to the failure of the Olympic Games Organizing Committee to agree with the world's television and newsreel companies, the events at Melbourne were not presented on television newsreels. An interesting auxiliary which has grown up in some places to the broadcasting of sport is the local service for hospital commentaries, whereby facilities have been arranged for weekly match reports specially for patients in hospitals; to this have been added gramophone records and quiz programmes.

In the more advanced countries broadcasting, though it includes educational programmes for schools, and helpful programmes on home and family matters for

women, is less deliberately used as a means of general enlightenment and teaching than it is in what are known as 'backward' countries. On the methods by which radio instruction is thus used in countries of huge distances and remote communities, the reports of Unesco (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) show conclusively how necessary and how helpful such broadcasts are in teaching the most elementary facts about health and hygiene.

Among other aspects of broadcasting as a service should be included United Nations and Unesco broadcasting, but these are not quite in the same category as the more regular features. In most countries all this useful mass of information and announcements and relays from events, is what the listener depends upon, apart from or in conjunction with newspapers, to tell him what is happening, and sometimes what he is expected to do. In the countries where radio is most highly developed, he will feel the system has failed if it does not work infallibly, and in the countries where it is least developed, he has actually the most to gain from it. It is possible to say that people are 'spoonfed' and once managed without this aid to living; but then they once lived without sanitation or printing. The clock cannot be turned back. Minds which are going to be made spineless by being offered a stream of communication, would probably be feeble without it, while minds which work independently will not be harmed.

The question of harm is real, though, when we consider the designs of those who put out the broadcasts. In totalitarian countries the service side of broadcasting

will obviously be used with more authority than in democracies, and the cheerful music which the worker is offered to help him make a start in the early morning in the lands of the free, will probably be provided with more definite purpose under sterner régimes. Indeed the combination of drab, grey workers and blaring loud speakers has come to represent, as in George Orwell's not so fantastic *1984*, one face of the twentieth century. Music, music everywhere, and not a stop to think. The really sinister combination of music with Government radio was vividly described by Victor Zorza in the *Manchester Guardian* of December 10, 1956, where, describing Hungary's continued fight for freedom, he wrote:

> Last night Budapest was noisy with the words and music that were pouring out over the city's official radio with doctored news bulletins that told listeners what was happening in the world and at home, with cheerful folk-songs and the strains of a czardas, Budapest, the silent city of noise. How well one remembers the feelings, the atmosphere when, during a lull in the fighting, when the wounded were being tended and the dead buried, the radio was blaring forth its ceaseless, tinny, heartless cacophony.
>
> So it must have been in Budapest last night, with the dead long buried, and with the living preparing perhaps for new burials to the strains of music from Budapest radio. Not a word of real news, of the city's thoughts and feelings, did the radio utter until late last evening. Then, at last, the Government spoke. It declared martial law. It dissolved the workers' councils. And then it again began to broadcast waltzes and tangoes.

Before broadcasting set up its regular pattern, the

normal channel of daily information was the newspaper. As broadcasting was the greatest discovery in communication since the printing press, it might have been thought that its coming would have a drastic effect upon newspapers. In the event it has not had this effect; more papers are read and circulations increase. That there are now fewer independent provincial newspapers in Britain is a matter of economics and not due to the rivalry of the radio. However, when broadcasting first began in Britain, the press took a cautious if not hostile attitude to it, and not all papers would at first print the radio programmes. But since the press is also a service and gives its readers what interests them, this phase soon passed. It must have been a matter for careful consideration to newspapers, when they saw the start of a service which would bring people up-to-date news, how far they might dispense with a newspaper and rely upon their wireless set. Time has shown that the two are complementary, and that not all the news bulletins and other radio information can lessen the desire that people have to read for themselves and to see for themselves in print and in pictures what is happening in the world about them. There are also, of course, many other features in papers which could not possibly be dealt with by broadcasting or television, but even in the department of news alone, it is demonstrably true that print 'fixes it'. What the normal person does, who has used his wireless for hearing the latest news, is to turn to his paper or papers to see that news given more fully—given in print so that he can linger over it, consider it, and turn back to it; and with

comment from correspondents on the spot and leader writers in the office, all of which fill out the picture for him. He does, also, get comment from broadcast news; he does not, in Britain, get an editorial opinion from the BBC. On the overseas services, he will hear broadcast extracts from the editorial columns of the leading newspapers. In the United States he will get personal assessments of the news from radio 'columnists' who wield great influence. But it is true to say that the newspaper retains personality, and that there is nothing in broadcasting as a service which can replace the physical presence of the paper with its varying make-up and its simultaneous presentation of home and foreign news and many other features. Journalism, compared to literature, is ephemeral; how much more ephemeral is the spoken word; how fleeting a news bulletin amounting to a column or two of type read at a measured speed and gone with the wind.

The early fears of the newspapers were unfounded and it may even be that broadcasting, by fostering a more alert sense of news and a wider interest in affairs, has sent more people to newspaper reading. An advance in technique does not usually lead to fewer but to more open doors. The more people know, the more they will want to know. The broadcasting of plays and serials from books, for instance, has not meant less reading on the whole, but more. There have been waves of demand for Trollope and Dickens and the Brontës after people heard their books for the first time on the wireless. The general reaction to important news is to want more, rather than less, to read about it after

hearing it. The instinct after listening to, or seeing on television, a Test match, is to get the paper of one's choice and read a description of what has already been enjoyed. Television, which might have been expected to hit the papers hard, has again reacted in the opposite direction except that it is thought to have reduced the circulation of some picture magazines. The moving picture moves, but then it is gone. If it was of some stirring event, what more natural than to want to relive it at leisure? An amusing instance of this very human desire to combine both experiences happened at the time of the 80th birthday presentation to Sir Winston Churchill in Westminster Hall, which was shown in the morning on television and repeated again twice in the evening. In the interim one newspaper's Parliamentary correspondent, in a sharply evocative account of the ceremony, made a critical though kindly remark about the greatcoat worn by a distinguished peer who was speaking; the staff of the paper, who had all seen the early television programme, read their own correspondent's account in the early edition and then crowded along in great excitement to see the final telerecording of the evening because they wanted to see Lord X——'s coat and compare it with what had been said about it in the paper.

In many ways this sort of thing goes on all over the country all the time, and by a curious reversal—whereas television uses 'still' pictures at its peril, since it is essentially the medium of the moving picture—the newspaper with its still photograph fixes for the reader things which he saw only fleetingly on his screen.

The broadcasting of events which could be held to be a service to the public meets with little restriction; but there have been difficulties about some forms of sport, and of drama, the reason being the same—the fear that especially with television, people will not go to matches or theatres if they can see them comfortably at home. The principle at issue here is the safeguarding of the 'gates', and it is obviously one that sports promoters have to watch carefully. This difficulty has for instance stood in the way of televising much first-class boxing and it has limited the number of first-class football matches that can be televised. In balance against this can be put the interest that is awakened in many people when they see a form of sport that is new to them. But on the whole the caution of those responsible seems justified; human nature being what it is, the showing of certain matches at people's firesides on cold winter days could only be expected to keep them away from local games. The hypnotic power of a really big event is illustrated by the story that soon after television came to the North of England a lone traveller walked along a drab street of terrace houses and seeing not a soul about and all the curtains drawn, asked who was dead. There was no death; it was the afternoon of the Cup Final, which probably gets the biggest audience (barring the Coronation) of any British ceremony.

For two generations at least most of the civilized world has been used to the service brought by radio. Has it made us more passive, less accustomed to find out things for ourselves and more ready to turn on a

switch and be told all about it? The answer of common sense would be that, on the long view, there is much good and little harm in this use of broadcasting. It could be harmful if directed purposefully by those who would use it as an instrument to control the mind. Only those, and some may even envy them, whose lives are detached from the daily exigencies of living and working in communities, can now happily ignore time signals and news altogether. The general reliance on the services of broadcasting shows up a distinction between two types of mind; those who on holiday, when they could 'get away from it all', fidget unless they are within reach of a radio set, or even carry a portable set about, and those who are glad to be released from the pressure of the world.

Chapter Nine

POLITICS IN BROADCASTING

WHEREVER a radio system is established, the problem of politics in broadcasting soon arises. Anxiety is always shown about the relations between politics and broadcasting. No Government, no politician, and no minority party can ignore it; you may cut off from the average listener some of his favourite light programmes with less risk of uproar than there will be in political quarters if you give one party a fractionary advantage over another, in time or opportunity, for having its say on the wireless or the screen. Broadcasting has given politics a new look; far more people now draw their whole idea of a Minister's or member's personality and views from hearing his speeches or seeing his face, than ever see leaders or members in the flesh. Before broadcasting began, not everybody went to political meetings, or saw the party leaders; many people probably never heard a political speech in their lives, or read one reported in a paper. The average member would be known only to his constituents, and not to all of them. But on the other hand political speeches, meetings and election tours by the great men had much more life and fire. With broadcasting has come an infinitely wider dissemination of political personalities, and with it a lower temperature.

What would happen to Gladstone now, if he went on his famous Midlothian tour? Most of the people who

went to see the great man then would now sit at home with their radio or television set, and treat a speech as just one more of those things to be taken for granted. But in fact there would no longer be any need for such a tour. One speech reaches all the country. The sense of place and occasion is vanishing. It may still be true that the man with the musical voice can charm the listener, and the man with the magnetic eye can hold the viewer. It would be fascinating to know how Gladstone and Disraeli would have tackled appearances on television, and whether the hawk eye and the moral fervour of the one would have captured audiences more than the curls, the eloquence and the dramatic finish of the other. They would have seemed larger than life to us who are trained now to the popular understatement, the leader who is just 'one of us', the age in which it is fatal to be 'different'.

The chance that the whole country now has of hearing reasoned political speeches at intervals, still more of them at election times, and other programmes including political topics, should mean that there is a better informed and more responsible electorate. Yet something real and lively in politics has declined. if it has not vanished, with this change. Perhaps it is that the relish of politics is spread more evenly, but thinner, on the bread and margarine of daily life. Perhaps it is just that the sense of reality and of curiosity has been blunted and softened by the sheer ease with which political affairs are now brought to every man in his home. We have in this the fatal shadow of 'performance'. The politicians themselves know that it is

very important to get hold of everybody's eye and ear, but the audience looks upon them as part of the passing show and judges their comparative efforts from a more detached, if not critical viewpoint, than they would take if they went to a big public meeting. They are so used to hearing and seeing Prime Ministers, party leaders and ordinary members of Parliament that the zest has gone out of the game. In the British, outwardly the least political of people, but with a long inherited tradition, this coolness in the face of routine wooing by radio may partly reflect their sophistication. It does not mean that, given great occasion, the power of broadcasting or television to project a fine man or to issue a call to action is any less. Churchill's war speeches cannot be called political in the narrow sense. Their effect was immeasurable. Nobody who heard them, in the earlier and darker years of the war, can ever forget the hope and the courage that they roused; the aggressive voice, the humour, the bulldog tenacity, the noble resolve, and with all these the conviction he put into every head that here was a man who would fight as the nation wanted to fight. If ordinary politics are far removed from this, that example remains to remind people how powerful is the force that can put the voice of one man into millions of homes and make them all feel one with him.

Broadcasting systems clearly must have a policy about politics, and it is to be expected that where the system is closely controlled, as in Britain, the Commonwealth and other countries with public service radio, it will be a more carefully and deliberately formed

policy than under free enterprise. In the United States there are political commentators and 'columnists' on sound and television whose opinions hold great sway. No such thing would be allowed in Britain where not only is the BBC (and the ITA) forbidden to express any editorial opinion, but any political comments are strictly rationed and balanced according to the strength of the parties; the Government and the Opposition at present getting equal representation, and the Liberals very much less. There are also difficult questions about the representation of minority parties, such as the Communists, and the Nationalist parties in Wales and Scotland. In America President Roosevelt used to give regular 'fireside chats', and the President has been more likely to appear on television networks than our Prime Minister. In Britain the Prime Minister speaks only on major occasions (non-party) and perhaps in an occasional 'party political' broadcast. Whether he has or has not made a 'Ministerial' or a 'party' broadcast—only the latter of which justifies a reply from the Opposition—is a tricky question which caused a turmoil about the BBC's actions in the Suez crisis of 1956. Both in America and Britain party conventions and conferences are broadcast and televised. In the Communist countries the position is entirely different because the open clash of opinion does not exist.

The careful control exercised in Britain is a reflection both of the sensitivity of the parties to the use of broadcasting, and of the responsibility which the BBC has always accepted, and which was extended to the ITA in the Television Act. This control is fair, but it

encourages timidity and may have helped to flatten the life out of broadcast politics. It has certainly led to further refinements, prohibitions and entanglements, in which the natural anxiety of Parliament to keep its exclusive place as the political centre of the nation, and the anxiety of the two large parties to be represented only by their more orthodox members on the loud speaker or the screen, have led to some interesting disputes and disagreements. The method by which the BBC allocates party broadcasts ensures that in a specified period each of the two main parties (Conservative and Labour) gets an agreed number; the Liberals have proportionately very few indeed. The Communists have a grievance because they normally get none.

This raises the question which must be one of the most difficult the BBC has to decide. We are a democracy and should therefore allow everyone a free expression of opinion. How far should the BBC, a public corporation which in the largest sense must reflect the way of life and the spirit of the nation, allow time on the air for the propagation of a creed which is known to be subversive of the democratic way of life? In Britain, as it happens, the Communist party as an open political organization is so comparatively small that there is not much to be feared from open expression of its views; indeed the more is known of it, the more harm it is likely to do itself. Nevertheless the BBC has sometimes, though it does not offer Communism a regular political platform, been accused of subversive tendencies, because it has allowed speakers in other

parts of its programmes who were known to be Communists or fellow travellers to give talks in which this viewpoint was implicit. It has also come under fire for giving 'The Soviet View' a selection of news and views from Soviet sources—on the Third Programme. This, surely, is not only a defensible but an intelligent way of spreading information about just what Communism is and how it works, and thus giving many listeners who could never read Soviet publications an idea of what is in them. The BBC is used to accusations of political bias both towards the Left and the Right, but it is very difficult for any balanced person to think that it really propagates Communism.

At general election times, the rate of party broadcasting is stepped up, but at the same time the regulations ensuring absolute fairness, so that nothing can emerge from the loud speaker or the screen that could be held to give one party a moment's advantage over another, are reinforced and screwed down tighter. So the public tends to be sated with electoral broadcasts, which generally culminate in a grand, conclusive cry from the leader of each main party, while there is a virtual black-out, for a set period before the election, on any political news, views or incidental references. Thus even the radio 'families', in their incessant serials, have to live for some weeks in a no-man's-land in which the election does not exist. Such caution can lead to absurdities. In one election the news on television showed newsreel pictures of party canvassers advancing to front doors and chatting to householders (as in the old silent films) with the sound removed, except for a

cheerful trickle of music. The general embargo for some weeks on everything to do with the election, which is the main interest of the public, has a curious effect; yet, given the BBC's position and its acute sense of responsibility, what else is it to do? Newspapers may be thankful that they have a greater freedom.

Thorny little problems are always cropping up and pricking the BBC (and sometimes the ITA) on the fringe of the broad political agreement. Arrangements about the set political broadcasts are made between the BBC and the parties, subject to the rules or agreements in force at the time. When Mr. Harold Macmillan became Prime Minister in January, 1957, he made a broadcast to the nation which was one of the 'party political' series, and not a 'Ministerial' or non-party utterance. To do this the Conservatives used up two allocations, one for television and one for sound, so that it went out on the BBC sound and television and also on the ITA network. One of the ITA companies had the idea of putting on three political commentators representing different points of view immediately afterwards, in an extempore discussion of Mr. Macmillan's speech. This the ITA thought should not be allowed immediately afterwards, and so the discussion was held nearly three hours later. The postponement was due to party representations that an immediate discussion would somehow infringe the agreement about party broadcasts, though it is difficult to see how it could do so. A comic impression was created that a debate at a few hours' distance was somehow different; as though removal in time took it out of the orbit of

party politics, of which in fact it was never part. Such are the metaphysical shades of caution induced by party interests and fostered by the care that the broadcasting authorities have always shown.

The definition of what certain broadcasts are by nature is not always easy. Thus controversy arose in 1956 about the Prime Minister's broadcast to the nation on the Suez crisis. At first it was thought that a declaration of policy and a defence of it was a 'Ministerial' broadcast in a national emergency. But it was considered a 'party' matter and the leader of the Opposition broadcast a reply to it on the next night. This made clear that there was no unity in Parliament or the country over the Anglo-French action; but it also gave some cause for the suggestion that harm might have been done at a critical time by this anti-Government broadcast. The issue was still more complicated by a suggestion that the BBC had itself acted with bias (which is expressly forbidden under its charter). Other accusations made in the House of Commons were that the BBC's overseas news had also shown bias, in that its summaries of newspaper opinion had given more weight (that is, time) to the editorial opinions of papers criticizing the Government's action than to those supporting it. As these charges extended both to the reporting of news and to comment, both at home and overseas, the governors of the BBC held an immediate inquiry, and reported that they found the allegations groundless and that the BBC had fulfilled its obligations 'for impartiality, objectivity and for telling the truth'.

This fracas was significant because it raised an issue which is inevitable now that all countries broadcast so much overseas. It is easier to regulate the part of politics at home than it is to settle the course to be followed in overseas broadcasting. The BBC's policy, as we have seen in describing its 'external' services, is always to make its news reports completely objective. There is no propaganda as such. Hence the reliance that was placed upon it in the war. Clearly when Britain is opposed to other countries which have no such nice sense of honour, she may be at a disadvantage. There may be the hope that truth will ultimately prevail: there must be the conviction that, whatever the immediate effect, we do right to give the facts, and not to select or distort them for purposes of policy. In the Suez crisis this meant that we were allowing countries in the Near East—to name only those most closely involved—to hear that our Parliament was split on the Government's action, that some of our press was highly critical, and to know therefore that the nation was divided.

Was the BBC right? In its overseas services it keeps in touch with the Foreign Office, the Commonwealth Relations Office and the Colonial Office, which brief it about Government policy; the Government also indicates the languages and the amount of broadcasting it requires to go out. But the content of the programmes is the BBC's own responsibility, and no Government department is supposed to interfere in this. At the time of the trouble about our broadcasts on Suez, a Foreign Office man was attached to the BBC as 'liaison officer' so that the BBC could get all the

information it wanted, and 'to make sure that there was a correct balance and a full understanding among those responsible for the programmes'. The appointment of a Minister to be 'responsible for co-ordinating of Government information services at home and abroad', with a Cabinet seat led to speculation and discussion about relations between the Government and the BBC in overseas broadcasting. Independent opinion was critical of any hint that the BBC's external services—which have always been a reassurance and a strength to overseas listeners—should be in any way influenced.

The Government has shown itself ready in past years to cut down the external services on grounds of economy, and might do better to give the BBC more resources than to consider interfering with what it achieves. The position in the finance of the external services early in 1957 was that a threatened cut of £1,000,000 had been averted, that the services were under review, and that the treasury grant for them was increased by £109,000. While the Voice of America gives 530 hours a week to Europe, the Soviet satellites 380, and the USSR 330, Britain then only broadcast for 249 hours. Early in 1957, it was decided immediately to increase the broadcasting in Arabic to 9½ hours a day as a counter to the incessant flow of anti-British propaganda in the Near East.

The same kind of problem about our presentation of Britain, or our countering propaganda by others, arose earlier over the trouble in Cyprus, where in 1956 for the first time Britain adopted an experimental policy of 'jamming' against Athens radio, which

resulted in the Greek Government stopping the relay of BBC broadcasts to Greece. Like the taking over of the Arab broadcasting station in Cyprus later that year, to act as a British Government agency in the Suez crisis, this essentially political action roused keen criticism at home. Such issues show the far-reaching effect of broadcasting, and how inextricably politics are involved. If political affairs at home can be safely separated from the broad mass of entertainment, as soon as broadcasting goes overseas it is assumed to be the voice of the nation, and if we speak with detachment, we may be misunderstood, while if we put forward a prepared or water-tight case, we should rightly not be trusted. The totalitarian countries have never had any doubts about the right course to follow, nor should Britain have any doubt that its course must be different.

In domestic broadcasting one symptom of caution in politics, which became known as the '14-day rule', has been notorious for its tiresome and sometimes absurd consequences. Primarily it arose through the natural desire of Parliament and the parties not to let the growing popularity of broadcasting both in sound and television, and the increasing number of politicians who drew from them both publicity and profit, derogate from the standing and dignity of Parliament. From 1948 there was by agreement between the Government, the Opposition and the BBC, an understanding which precluded any broadcast or televised 'discussion or ex-parte statements' for a fortnight before an issue was to be debated in the House, or while it was being debated, or broadcasts by M.P.s on legislation between

its introduction and its approval by Royal Assent, or rejection. This agreement was not so much difficult to apply as restrictive of so many subjects in which there was public interest that it became very irritating. The BBC would sometimes find that it had, at short notice, to cancel some interesting discussion or programme about the one topic that was uppermost in people's thoughts. The difficulty was the more felt as certain television programmes—such as discussions in which M.P.s took part—had often to be confined to just those topics that were not in the news. The BBC would have liked to withdraw from the agreement but in default of this, preferred that the position should be made official, and so in 1955 the Postmaster-General issued a directive making these rules binding upon the BBC (and the ITA). Whenever there was an occasion which showed up the stupidity of the rule, the press kept up its criticism; so, too, did some politicians, both in the House and when broadcasting.

The rule was difficult to justify. Does anyone lose if the public hears the opinion of M.P.s (or of anyone else) on political matters? They could hear them in their constituency; they can read about them in their newspapers. Parliament has surely nothing to lose from an informed electorate. Then, again, can it be suggested that Parliament would suffer if its members heard such discussion? The position is not, after all, like that of a jury that must not be prejudiced in its verdict by hearing matter extraneous to the trial. Lastly, and this is perhaps the source of the trouble, was it not that the parties feared the 'prima donna'

status that their more sparkling performers might achieve, and that the member using television or radio as his forum might come to seem more important to the public than the proceedings of Parliament itself?

Apart from M.P.s, other speakers have been prevented from speaking on subjects on which they were experts. Thus Sir Alan Herbert, in a televised 'Press Conference' in November, 1956, after being prevented at short notice from speaking about the Copyright Bill, protested violently and proceeded to set light to a copy of the bill and burn it up before the camera; this was a piece of mischief which pointed the absurdity of the rule. Those who were there to ask questions begged him to stop talking about the bill before they were 'all locked up in the Tower for the night'. Meanwhile a Select Committee had been appointed in 1955, and the evidence given by the BBC was critical of the rule. The report in 1956 said that any restrictions made to ensure the primacy of Parliament should be reduced to the smallest practical extent, and that the arrangements should be flexible. There then began a trial period during which the rule was to become a '7-day' rule, or possibly even less, while the BBC (and the ITA in television) promised that they would 'continue to act in a way which does not derogate from the primacy of Parliament as the forum for debating the affairs of the nation'.

It is difficult to think that any real derogation from the primacy of Parliament could be caused by completely free broadcast and televised discussion, so long

as Parliament itself remains the body to which Ministers are responsible, where debates, divisions and legislation take place, and while Parliament does not allow broadcasting or television of its own activities. If it allowed that, then there might be a temptation for some members to build up a character both in and out of the House, and to seek to reinforce, by their performances in Parliament, their success as artists on the radio. The two capacities are best kept apart, and one can understand Parliament's jealousy of its privilege.

Something of the same fear has been at work, not in Parliament as a body, but in the parties, to prevent certain members from appearing too often in the programmes and so giving the impression that they were typical of the party. In the House this is the age of the big machine; independence is rare and is unpopular, and the party whip is supreme. So when it turned out that the most popular and lively political speakers on television were not the most orthodox and respectful party members, the BBC gradually had to bow to pressure from the parties, and use these members less often. The political 'balance' had been fairly kept, but how dangerous that the public should think that Mr. Chat or Mr. Fizz was uttering true Labour or Conservative doctrine, when Mr. Bore or Mr. Blank was much safer.

Other complications which can tease the broadcasting authorities lurk in the claims of Scottish and Welsh Nationalists, or the accusations made against them. Early in 1956 the Postmaster-General had to appoint a committee to inquire into allegations that there was

Welsh Nationalist bias in news, talks and discussions in the Welsh Home Service of the BBC; this committee reported that there was no evidence to support the charges of bias through 'corrupt and deliberate distortion, suppression and selection of the news'. In the same year the Postmaster-General saw delegates of five minority parties protesting against his ban on political broadcasts by the Welsh Nationalist Party. The minority parties suggested that parties which had contested a total of twenty-five seats and polled a total of 100,000 votes in their history should participate in the normal programme of political broadcasts.

Political decisions must be taken on whether Service chiefs can broadcast. There are many issues which are on the fringe of politics though outside the straight party fight. The effect that broadcasting makes abroad is an important matter for Governments; and whether high Service chiefs can or should or may be allowed to talk on radio or television at home is also the business of the Government. Both politicians and generals may feel that life was easier when they were not liable to be asked to this public tribunal. (But it may be good for the general public to see or hear the men who make the decisions and carry out the plans.) Such appearances are expected nowadays. Yet a Minister who does appear often cannot answer just what everyone most wants to know. And he must be careful, surely, not to say anything that the audience of millions could misinterpret. So there is more 'personality' value in such appearances than new information.

If broadcasting has put politicans on view before

the nation, and if, as individuals, they enjoy the publicity, may they not sometimes wonder just how their faces, their mannerisms and their frequent platitudes affect the watching millions? Very likely few politicians realize how platitudinous most of their sentiments are, and whether the British public is much impressed by them remains at present a mystery. One suspects that we are entering into a period when the easiness of 'mass' communication, rather than any independent or critical attitude of mind, accounts for apathy. The natural consequence of having air and screen thronged with entertainment day and night is that the more realistic features are cold-shouldered, and nobody pretends that politics—except at rare times of high crisis—are very good entertainment. It was noticed in both America and Britain in 1956 that big audiences turned away from politics—especially on television. In Britain it was the Labour and Conservative party conferences (in quite short doses) which lost audiences; in the United States it was the much fuller showing of the Republican and Democratic party conventions for two weeks on nearly all television stations, with all their pomp, pageantry, and noise. Over there it was said by one research organization that nearly 70 per cent of people who were asked preferred their regular programmes—old films, baseball games, quiz shows, 'soap operas', variety and news. At this time wireless listening reached its highest point for ten years; it carried much less about the conventions than did television.

The lack of political interest in Britain at that parti-

cular time (1956) need not be regarded as a sure pointer, for party conferences here can be dull affairs. Even so a fair conclusion was that people already interested in politics were also interested in seeing how such conferences are conducted; in watching the party leaders lined up on the platform, and delegates raising points from the floor. The people who found it dull were again those who want easy entertainment continuously. So it is precisely where one might hope to find broadcasting and television as a useful aid to democracy in stimulating knowledge and discussion of political issues, that this end may be thwarted by a neglect born rather of mental laziness than of independent thought. This could be made to fit in with the optimistic view that the British, who appear to be uninfluenced by the press at election times, simply make up their minds by some deep, hidden process, and that when the test comes, a swing of opinion reveals a massive common sense and feeling for political values. An indifference to political affairs, which affect every man's life from domestic to international events, from the price of eggs to survival in the shadow of the hydrogen bomb, would be a sad outcome of all the increased education, the cheap, plentiful supply of news and information, and easy access to the first-hand views of the people who run the country.

Politicians themselves certainly cannot afford to underestimate the effect of broadcasting. Its part in sound is accepted; it is as normal as politics in the press, with the great difference that there is no editorial opinion, but only the voices of the parties themselves.

In television it is too early yet to say what the effect will be. Everything in television is more pungent than in sound; the good seems better, the bad seems worse, the attempt that just misses the mark is dreary. The artificial and the insincere are shown up mercilessly; the too good story, the pathetic appeal, have to meet the individual viewer's eye without the warmth and company of a crowd. The negative judgment of an apathetic family who would prefer watching some variety, or who at the twitch of a knob can turn to some 'give-away' show and see the barely literate winning hundreds of pounds—for nothing, should be more daunting to political speakers than the old-fashioned hustings. The parties have tried all sorts of dodges; films showing the bad old England they are removing, films showing the brave new England they are building, and leaders answering questions most frankly, reasonably and winningly. The most interesting conclusion from television is that speakers who belabour the 'others' make a much worse impression than speakers who stick to their own party's propositions. Slanging is 'out'; the performance must be constructive; parlour politics are polite. If this makes them dull, it does at least imply a rational approach to the millions who gather around their magic screens every night.

Chapter Ten

EDUCATION AND RELIGION

BROADCASTING was quickly recognized as a new and exciting means of education—and not always or necessarily for children. In backward parts of the world it spreads instruction in the elementary stages of health, home management and knowledge; it is important where distances are great, towns few, and formal education rare or lacking. But broadcasting has also been specially directed, in many countries, to teaching children as well as giving them suitable entertainment. The more responsible the broadcasting authorities, the more likely is this entertainment to avoid the danger of being purely passive, frivolous or debasing. There is a great awareness as each country develops first broadcasting, and then television, of the strong impact of each of these on children. It is realized that their minds are more open and malleable, that what they see and hear can affect them seriously, and that radio in both forms, can be a powerful influence on young minds in the most vital period of their growth. Whatever changes, bad or good, can occur in the adult mind, and however much it may be opened in later life to new ideas or interests, there seems no doubt, without going into psychological arguments, that childhood from the earliest years is the time of the most lasting impressions. How important then are the impressions made by the radio programmes and now by television pictures? Not only parents but

educationists and Governments keep an eye on what is being offered to their children.

Perhaps a heretical word could be said here in defence of 'horror', though not of some extreme forms. One of the worst fears that careful parents have, especially about television, is that children will be frightened by unsuitable programmes. (Parents who allow their children to stay up late and see adult programmes have only themselves to blame.) It is certainly right and understandable that the television authorities should be reasonably careful not to frighten children, but should all situations with fear, mystery or even some violence be avoided? The truth is that the human being in growing from the baby to the adult goes through different mental stages and that children regard what is broadly called 'horror' differently from the grown-ups who wish to shield them from it. Most children go through a stage where they will create their own shadows, pouncing ogres, mysterious terrors, if they do not meet them face to face. To admit such things may be healthier than to pretend that life is all kisses and kindness. This does not mean that children should 'sup full of horrors' (and specially not of contemporary violence) but it does mean that the fantasies of the Brothers Grimm, the sadness of Hans Andersen, even the cruelty of our own nursery rhymes (which the 'do-gooders' occasionally try without success to emasculate) appeal to some deep instinct. The child mind can embody in stories or plays the imaginings that might otherwise be turned inward. A witch on the screen may be worth two in the mind. So, too, for the plain adventure story, with its heroes, villains, physical

prowess and inevitable fights, injuries and deaths. This is not really unhealthy if it does not take the debased form of some recent 'comics' and pseudo-scientific fiction. There is something to be said for letting children realize young that sadness and even death are part of life. They will not escape these for ever, or even for long, and may come to accept them better than if they have been reared in a hygienic, unemotional world of ever amiable puppets and pretence.

Children's radio and television entertainment is different from specifically educational broadcasting, but all that affects children is part of their education in the broadest sense. There are also many programmes for adults which are widely educational, such as those on the BBC's Third Programme, though not formally organized to that end. Series on the history of politics, on philosophy and on literature, all share in this general purpose, as do programmes about the universe, or science, or foreign countries. Sir George Barnes, now Principal of the University College of North Staffordshire and formerly director of BBC television, said in a speech in the autumn of 1956 that the BBC's combination of 'serious purpose with imaginative ideas and the faith to persist in them' held out hope that television as well as sound could become a real educational medium, and that there was a future for 'local' broadcasting—for instance, from universities. General Sir Ronald Adam said earlier that year that both radio and television were important for education, although the BBC had had to drop its post-war experiment in adult education for organized groups. One of the drawbacks

of commercial television in Britain was, in his view, that it had forced the BBC into an expensive competition which meant that it would be a long time before there could be experiments for adult education in television.

The broadcasting for schools in Britain is a model of its kind, and it is now extending to television. Educational sound broadcasting began in 1924, and was for many years directed by Mary Somerville. These lessons are now used by more than 28,000 schools in the United Kingdom. The School Broadcasting Council (with separate bodies for Wales and Scotland) was set up in 1929, and it determines the general scope and aim of the broadcasts which are produced by the BBC. Many of these programmes are recorded by the Transcription service for use overseas, and scripts are also sent out. All the school programmes are devised not as a substitute for but as complementary to the usual school curriculum, and they range from lessons for the youngest children to sixth form subjects treated at a mature level by the foremost people in science, history, languages and literature. No part of the BBC's output is prepared and produced with more care for its special audience. This means, not surprisingly, that the programmes often interest greatly those at whom they are not aimed. It is not uncommon for the housewife, or the worker kept at home for a few days, to enjoy following lessons about Chaucer's England or some great novel like *War and Peace*, or about how people live in distant lands.

The BBC's plans for television lessons for schools are

now at their second stage. There was a 'pilot' experiment in 1952 on a closed circuit in six Middlesex schools. A report on this was made by the School Broadcasting Council, and of 150 local authorities who were asked if they would like another experiment, two-thirds were in favour. So in 1954 the BBC was asked to provide an experimental service, and had arranged to start by the autumn of 1957 a larger scheme for three broadcasts a week, mainly on science and current affairs, going mostly to children of 11 to 15 years in 350 secondary modern schools. The local education authorities were to equip the schools with sets, and the lessons were, as in sound, to be complementary to the ordinary teaching. In science especially it was felt that the lessons might amplify the teaching and could be used by non-scientific teachers. This experiment was expected to continue for about three years before any decision was taken about whether a permanent service should be set up.

Meanwhile Associated-Rediffusion Ltd., one of the contractors to the Independent Television Authority, started a series of broadcasts for schools in the summer of 1957. The company appointed an advisory council and its experimental 'term' was for eight weeks with a half-hour programme on each of the five weekdays. There were lessons on current affairs, on literature, and on the change from school to a first job. Not many schools were at first equipped to take this service, which appeared to represent an effort by commercial television to introduce a more responsible note into its programmes. The BBC's slow and careful planning was

based on arrangements between the School Broadcasting Council, the Ministry of Education, and the local education authorities about the financial side of providing sets, and choosing sets suitable for school viewing. The commercial scheme was begun more hastily; and whether to provide a rival to the BBC, prestige for the ITA, or, as the cynics said, to qualify for more advertisements at night because of this advertisement-free half-hour for schools, it did represent some improvement in the standards of what was thought possible for the young on commercial television. Any comparison between children's television programmes (non-educational) from the BBC and the ITA up to then showed that the BBC's had a much wider range of interest and a higher standard, and far fewer American films and trashy serials.

School broadcasting had grown up so quickly in other countries that by 1933, according to a report published by the League of Nations International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation, there were twenty-five countries with an educational radio system: Argentine, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Roumania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States, Uruguay and Yugoslavia. This shows how widespread were lessons by radio even then. Since then many other countries have developed their systems. As a Unesco (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) report said in 1949, the programmes vary between the very flexible

arrangements (following the educational system itself) of Britain, Canada and the United States; the more rigid and centralized systems of France, Italy and Belgium; and the countries where the educational system itself is defective and teachers are scarce.

In the totalitarian countries educational broadcasting is, of course, completely controlled by the State. Czechoslovakia affords an instructive example. Here one series of programmes is called 'Youth of the Republic' and 'Its main objective is to develop a love of knowledge and truth, to compare notes on certain old-time notions inherited from the bourgeois society and new concepts characteristic of socialism.' Another use of broadcasting to the young is shown in the statement that 'the results obtained in various campaigns confirm the positive influence of broadcasting on the political formation of our children'. Even more revealing is the praise of youth campaigns, directed by radio, which had succeeded in collecting 'millions of children's signatures for peace and against bacteriological warfare'.

The United States presents a particularly flexible, varied and interesting pattern of educational broadcasting. One aim is a broad civic development, as Dr. H. Cassirer said at an international conference on educational television in Brussels in 1954. In some towns children from the schools themselves take part in producing programmes. America has innumerable methods and means. Some of the national networks did school broadcasting in the 1930s and early 1940s. But there were difficulties: four time zones and thousands of

school curricula. Now most of it is done by college and university stations. In 1949 over half of the American schools were using radio in one way or another. As the Federal Broadcasting Commission has now made many television channels available for educational use, whole communities are getting this service—possibly five to six million people seeing 'courses' ranging from 'school' subjects to handicrafts. Michigan State College gives lessons ranging from art appreciation to Greek; the University of Houston, Texas, gives lectures. Here is the 'extra-mural' idea with no bounds to the 'extra'. In 1956 an experiment was made in Maryland in school television to meet a scarcity of teachers. At the University of Kentucky they have an associate professor of radio, television and film. She teaches students who are 'majoring' in mass communications, and helps to run the university radio and television station. Altogether there are 131 radio and television stations operated and controlled either by universities or by public boards for educational purposes.

In Europe, France has a regular television school service, particularly useful in rural areas, and the 'teleclub' where school sets are used for communal viewing at night is a popular development. Some of the evening broadcasts are intended for adult education. Japan has had television for schools since 1953, and in South America there are regular weekly television programmes from Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. But if television is the exciting development, sound broadcasting is still the basic form of education. In Liberia only a few years ago there was opened a Fundamental

Education Centre which trained staff for Liberia's first general school broadcasting scheme. Unesco took part in this; it makes reports and surveys of world educational broadcasting, and is always ready to provide and exchange material for this purpose.

There are two risks in all broadcasting directed to the young. One is that it will accustom them to mental inertia, and start them early relying upon a stream of ready-made entertainment which makes no demand on their own energies. Against this it could be said that, even if it were true, it might be better for many children than life without this form of interest and amusement. Judgment is easy, but facts are hard. The minority of people with full and cultivated lives can no doubt provide, say, nursery songs, music, picture and story books and all the traditional things of a child's life that are handed down in such families. But these families really are a minority; there are far more where young children will never hear or see such things except on the wireless or television, and many homes where even 'passive' listening or looking is better than the boredom, the street corner or the delinquency that may grow from lack of any leisure occupation or any parental interest. It is one of the contradictions of television that it is often found in homes where there is enough money for a set on hire purchase, but no interest in education, hobbies or reading. Here half a loaf may be better than no bread. The danger of 'horror' for children may be considered within this problem. It is not a grave one in Britain, where most broadcasting for children shows a sense of responsibility. It certainly

encourages activity rather than inertia, introduces books and stimulates interests. The specifically educational broadcasting is very good indeed and, again, may do more for children who have no cultural background than for those who have books and educated parents. The worst danger to children is not from their own programmes but from the flow of entertainment at other times, which keeps them from their homework, draws them away from reading, and swamps them with a flood of sounds and pictures destroying thought or concentration. Headmasters who deplore this have good reason.

The other risk is that children's minds will be moulded by the general conceptions underlying the strictly educational broadcasts. Can it be said that such broadcasts stifle the freedom that everyone should enjoy to consider fundamental ideas of philosophy and religion and make a choice? In Britain broadcasting follows the line that we are a free and Christian country; therefore militant atheists, agnostics or humanists could object to orthodoxy in our educational broadcasts. There are, for instance, parents who feel difficulties about differences between school and home teaching, if children ask questions about Christianity in which the parents themselves do not believe. But this is surely the parents' own responsibility; if they are confident in their own (non-Christian) belief, can they not explain why to their children? There is nothing in British schools broadcasting that prevents children learning to think for themselves, even if that broadcasting is influenced by the general spirit of the society it springs

from, and is not completely open to all the winds that blow.

In adult education broadcasting has still untried possibilities. If Britain, for instance, were ever to allow independent (VHF) stations to operate from the universities, as in America, it would be a much more valuable precedent than was the introduction of commercial television. With two television programmes already and the possibility of a third, with a majority audience for television, and the decision that the BBC, in face of rising costs, must cut down its sound services, local broadcasting from university centres might do much to redress the balance. Traditionalists might gasp at the prospect of Oxford or Cambridge on the air, but there is nothing inherently improbable in the most ancient centres of learning using the newest means of communication. The Roman Catholic Church is, for instance, the oldest Christian church, but the Vatican has welcomed broadcasting and television and used them without hesitation.

The use of broadcasting for religion is as interesting as its educational possibilities, for it can mean not only teaching but in the most literal sense, evangelism, the spreading of the good message (evangelion) of the Gospel. Both radio and television have many ways of presenting religion, and the end of this has not yet been seen. Television has been a powerful new instrument, most of all in the outside broadcast direct from a place of worship—the heart of the matter. This new device in sound and pictures, able to bring to people at home the services of the churches, or services

arranged in the studio, talks and discussions and programmes on religious themes, has been fashioned precisely during the half-century in which we have seen the most inhuman creeds for many centuries hold sway; in which the atrocities of Nazi and Communist prison camps have shown up phrases like 'the cruelty of the Middle Ages' as thoughtless or ignorant nonsense. This is the century in which the world has become divided into two armed camps—the atheistic and materialistic army of the Communists, the free world with its inherited European and Christian traditions. The Far and Near East, though with non-Christian faiths, stand outside this conflict but perilously near to it. In the Communist world religious broadcasting as such does not exist. Children are allowed fairy tales, but even if the ideology counts Christianity as a fairy tale, they would not be allowed to hear that one, lest they might come to think it true. In the Western world religion takes its place naturally as part of the complete service which not only entertains people, but keeps them in touch with every aspect of life and ministers to all needs.

In this the churches, through broadcasting, are playing an active part in reaching out to people. One Easter programme some years ago by a body of Roman Catholic players, in which the trial and crucifixion of Jesus Christ were mimed, was a reminder that the Church itself produced the first theatre with its medieval morality plays. There is not such a great difference between those players of the Middle Ages acting the drama of our salvation, and the public

broadcasting on television of the Church's message. But then the players spoke to comparatively few, in whom faith was strong and belief fresh as that of children, while today the message goes out to millions living upon an inheritance of faith which has shaped their civilization and customs, yet of which many are quite ignorant and more are vaguely contemptuous. So the churches in their broadcasting and television are not always appealing to the converted; these, indeed, will appreciate what they do, but they will have their own active life as Christians, in the Western world, and will not regard broadcasting as a substitute, great though its comfort may be to those who are ill, or for any other reason laid aside. It is in its effect on people in countries like Britain, which are nominally Christian, though only a small proportion are active Christians, that broadcasting is most interesting. Is it a waste of time and effort? Is it an awakener, or does it merely encourage people to take for granted that Christianity goes on somehow outside their lives, while they themselves always pass by on the other side? What would the millions of good, ordinary people, who have not much use for any 'organized' religion, think if one Christmas the BBC suddenly left them without any church bells, any carols, any familiar sound of the Christmas service from some country church which makes a background to their morning? They would probably be much annoyed, while disclaiming any serious interest in religion. Even for them the Christian associations of the year's round have a value, if not a meaning, and broadcasting does as much to foster this vague but by

no means worthless sense of religion as it does in definite teaching.

The BBC's position on religious broadcasting is clear; Britain is regarded as a Christian country and broadcasting has sought to safeguard Christian values and has never suggested that any others should be accepted in their place. This policy has been unchanged, though there have naturally been developments in its execution. The principle has been that broadcasts of religious services were confined to churches 'in the main stream of historic Christianity'; these were the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Free Churches associated in the Free Church Federal Council. The department for all religious broadcasts is staffed mainly by clergy of the various denominations, and the head of it is an Anglican. There are regular and frequent outside broadcasts from churches, and a fair 'balance' is kept. There are also many more religious programmes, from the early morning 'Lift Up Your Hearts' to studio services, discussions and talks. There is a Central Religious Advisory Committee, representing all the denominations, which advises the BBC. Many religious broadcasts, however, come under the Talks department, and here are arranged non-Christian and ethical broadcasts, such as those by Unitarians, Jews, Christian Scientists, Moslems, Buddhists and others, and also controversial discussions on religion, philosophy and science.

The Beveridge Committee of 1949, after its exhaustive survey, suggested that the system of religious

broadcasting should continue, but that its objects should be to maintain Christian and liberal values, 'not to seek converts to one particular church, but to maintain the common elements of all religious bodies'. The last sentence would in fact have meant a new policy for the BBC. Admirable though the desire to propagate a common denominator in religion may be, it can only result in practice in straining away everything of significance, and leaving an amorphous body without any doctrine. The Religious Advisory Council very properly turned down the idea, and each denomination has continued to broadcast according to its faith. There has never been, in this broadcasting, any condemnation of one church by another nor any overt angling for converts. Listeners are left to judge for themselves from what they hear and see. But the reality of the broadcasts would certainly have been dimmed if they had been reduced to 'common elements', for it is vague generalization that destroys conviction.

At the same time, though, it was decided that there should be rather more time given to ethical talks, to controversial discussion and to some of the religions not included in the main stream of historic Christianity. Any change here has been towards a freer expression of views by the advocates of non-Christian philosophies—rationalism, atheism, and so on. Some talks on humanism some years ago roused wide protests because of their anti-Christian tone. In the nature of things these speakers have a less positive creed to explain. It is well that they should be heard; well that

listeners should hear in reasoned argument how the non-believer challenges the believer, and how the Christian defends his faith. One of the most thought-provoking broadcasts, which those who heard it would never forget, was a brilliant debate between Bertrand Russell and Father F. C. Copleston, S.J. on the existence of God. The striking series of talks on the universe by Fred Hoyle, which ended with his abrupt dismissal of Christianity, brought an outburst of criticism and argument. The 'medieval disputations' of the Dominican fathers have revived for a new public the strictly logical arguments of the scholastics of the Middle Ages. The spirit of Aquinas, the 'angelic doctor', returns 'on the air'—a method which he would surely have approved.

Religious broadcasting in Britain offers not only the major church services direct—either by sound or television—but a regular framework to the day for the listener who wants to take part in it, with a short programme early in the morning, and a daily service later, as well as all the discussions and talks. What is the effect upon the audience; what do they think of it? First, it is probably true that no religious broadcast is more impressive than one coming straight from a church, although there is great strength in a plain talk which makes the listener feel that someone is 'talking to me' (Newman's 'cor ad cor loquitur'). The church service is a vital part in presenting Christianity for radio; it tells people at home what is actually happening. The effect of television is immeasurably greater, and from this it seems possible that there could be a new

stirring of interest in religion. For here into millions of families, many of whom have never been to church at all and have the strangest ideas of what it is all about, have come in the last few years pictures of the ritual and ceremonies of the church; from the little country church, from the ancient college chapel, from the great cathedral (an ordination service at Exeter, or the first Communion of Christmas at York Minster); Midnight Mass from a Roman Catholic abbey, or the enthronement of the new Archbishop at Westminster. If these things have roused curiosity and interest, it is because they are real. Coming to a generation which has lost its birthright, they may restore a sense of something known long since and lost awhile. Then, too, this televising of services shows that religion is not a 'private' thing. In Britain particularly ignorance and lethargy have helped to foster the idea of religion as something 'secret' and individual. Television has shown many who do not belong to any church, that as well as each man's relationship to God, the 'organized' church is there for all to see and hear; that even its most solemn moments are meant for all to share.

The BBC found in 1956 that the audiences for religious broadcasting were far more than ever go to church; nearly 14 million adults in the United Kingdom are frequent listeners. Of these, some $3\frac{1}{2}$ million do not go to church. Church-goers listen most, but the others do listen, and some of those under 30 made the interesting admission that the broadcasts 'help me to understand what Christianity means'. Among the non-church-goers about a quarter said that religious teaching

influenced their everyday behaviour. The Rev. George Reindorp, in a lecture on 'Religion on the Air' in St. Paul's Crypt chapel at the end of 1955, said 'the little brown box is the greatest evangelistic medium of our time'.

On television there has lately developed a regular religious feature, in which both the BBC and the ITA put on, at the same time on Sunday evenings, a discussion or topical programme which rapidly gained audiences of several million people. If radio and television awake an interest in religion, do they at the same time affect the churches adversely by keeping people away? Apparently not. The Methodist Church reported in 1957 that there was no drop in attendances directly traceable to television. It looks as if the general pattern were that the active church member does not neglect the church for radio and television, the uncommitted (apart from the sick, the old, and those who cannot get out) are those most attracted by the television service or programmes, and so far the response of these has been more noticeable in the inquiries made and discussion aroused than in bigger church congregations. This is both natural and hopeful.

What the churches should be careful about in presenting religious programmes, especially on television, is not to overload them with topics or 'panels' that may come to carry no more conviction than the normal 'Any Questions' or 'Brains Trust', which have accustomed people to a general, wide, informed but not very profound chatter about everything. 'Christian Forum' is one religious programme which has not

fallen into this habit. There should never be any doubt that the ministers of religion think that what they have to say matters literally more than anything on earth. If this is not clear, then discussions of Christianity could be reduced to amiable bouts of shadow-boxing. Christianity is strange, paradoxical (it always has been), hard and exciting; it is not obvious or comfortable, and the questions of the doubter or the unbeliever will have to be answered with doctrine. For this reason the ceremonies of the Church, and the language of the liturgy and of the Bible, are the strongest witness, or the backbone upon which all other presentations depend. Even viewers of a commercial television programme, a 'Christian Cabaret' devised by a Congregational church, which showed the Prodigal Son 'retrieved from the whirling skirts of a rock 'n' roll session', and the Good Samaritan represented 'in an ingenious puppet play by a skunk', would need some idea of who these characters were in the original version. With these enterprising ideas goes the curious but perhaps not surprising fact that to people sated with 'performers' and 'artists' on television it is often the sincere and unself-conscious appearance of the minister or priest that makes a deep impression.

In the United States in 1956 there was a great drive to present Christianity on radio and television, in Holy Week. The Broadcasting and Film Committee of the National Council of Churches spent $1,750,000 on radio and television films and trained 1,200 people for the work. About $20 million is to be spent over the next nine years on evangelism. No other country can

Chapter Eleven

MACHINE AND POET

No broadcasting system can neglect entertainment, and no way has yet been found of forcing people to listen to radio or watch television if they do not want to. It may be only a step to George Orwell's *1984*, in which non-watching of the screen can be detected and punished, but so far listening and watching are voluntary actions, and most of the volume of sound that flows from the wireless or of pictures from the television set is meant to interest and amuse people, without any very serious purpose. It is here that broadcasting has got to find out what people like, and why they like it; and to give them the kind of thing they want, for it is no use any radio organization pouring out programmes that nobody wants to listen to. There has grown up in the rather more than thirty years of British broadcasting an enormous body—an accepted canon of broadcasting—a three-tiered, different-layered structure, with its plays, features and documentaries, variety, 'situation' comedies, panels, parlour games, quizzes, and endless 'family' serials. Along with all this has grown a curious identification of the listening public with some of the figures, real or imaginary, who have become most popular.

This is apart from the wide enjoyment of plays and of many features which have some substantial interest. In the production of a constant stream of good drama

do things on this scale, but most countries normally include religion in their broadcasting. Will it be comparable in its effect to the first translating of the Bible? What should we think of St. Paul if he were suddenly to appear on the television screen?

on all the home services, and of features of every kind, the BBC has done a tremendous job, and now has listening and viewing audiences of many millions for plays ranging from light comedy to Shakespeare or the classical Greek. To many of these millions such plays are not only an entry for a short time into a world imagined by a writer, but an illumination, as any worthwhile novel is also, of their own lives. Nothing has been more remarkable than the popularity of the serials which have gone on now for many years, made from the novels of Dickens, Thackeray and Trollope, even of Henry James; these are now penetrating television too. When a dramatization on the wireless or television sends people hunting the bookshops for *David Copperfield* or *Vanity Fair*, then broadcasting has indeed performed its most valuable function in awakening an interest in something which could last as long as life itself. For the habit of reading, with the whole world of ideas and imagination which it opens up, is perhaps the most precious in life. That was what a poor old man was thinking of when he said during the wartime blitzes, when so many nights were spent underground, that it was easier for the 'educated' to put up with it, because they had things in their mind to fall back on. (On the other hand, they certainly had no more fortitude, humour and cheerfulness than the others.)

It is not in drama, or music, or even normal variety shows that the BBC has given birth to a whole new array of gods and a new mythology, but in the strange borderland of the performers who become nationally admired figures, and the stranger wonderland of

entirely imaginary creatures who take on a monstrous reality. It was not perhaps surprising that in the war years the delightful Tommy Handley in 'ITMA' ('It's That Man Again') became the focus of the country's humour. The time finds the man, and just as Churchill embodied warlike resolve and pugnacity in the great issue of the war itself, on the domestic front Tommy Handley personified the wry, commonsensical fun that gives the British such strength in their troubles. With his sinister 'Funf', he mocked at Hitler's threats; he embodied our impatience with Ministries and forms, made coupons seem comic, and built up extravagant characters whose jests became national catchwords. Ever since then there has been a tendency in broadcasting for some one person to become a focus or epitome of the ordinary man, whose job is both to reflect the 'little man' or woman, and to 'bring them out'. There is no longer the need that there really was in the war for people to get outside themselves into a satirical world, which Tommy Handley, and his script writer Ted Kavanagh, answered so brilliantly, and the universal figures of broadcasting in recent years have therefore lacked this spring of imagination.

Tommy Handley was the nation's jester, and that was an art. The successor is the character who typically promotes, on an endless tour of the country, joviality, friendliness, and a chance for ordinary people, young and old, to come to the microphone and answer questions about their life, their loves, and their 'most embarrassing moments'. There is nothing bad in this, and it is enormously popular, but it is a strange phenom-

enon of our day that this business should apparently fill a gap in people's lives. It is the apotheosis of the little people, their chance, too, of a brief fame. In a later development on television, it was clear that we had adopted a sort of national 'uncle', willing to grant the silliest 'wishes'; also a dispenser of the tear in the eye and the lump in the throat. The schoolgirl with a stammer is allowed to sing to the millions, the old-age pensioner greets a long-lost friend; all the world's a stage and every 'grandma' can appear upon it and tell her life story. If this side of broadcasting has filled a gap it is because it gives people someone to look up to, gives them a chance of feeling important themselves, and gives all the rest an entertainment; but a gap there is. A void in ordinary lives? Just a blank feeling so that hearing or seeing all this makes life not quite so dull; or taking part in it makes the individual feel that he matters for a few magic minutes? Or a more serious gap, which makes people really need a benevolent, powerful figure dwelling in the wireless or the television set? A new oracle, and a new Delphi? Is this your problem? Uncle will solve it. If this is so we are lucky here that he is at present a harmless figure, suggesting only kindness, silliness or sentimentality, but its appeal shows that the idea of 'Big Brother' is not at all far-fetched.

The emergence of the 'family' serials has been even stranger. In the war a family called 'The Robinsons' pursued their wartime career with satisfaction to all. Theirs the day-to-day cares of rationing and blackout, women at work and children evacuated. This family clearly met a need, and the fashion for families

has never weakened since. The most famous are 'Mrs. Dale's Diary' and 'The Archers', and there was for some years a television 'family' also. Mrs. Dale is a doctor's wife, and her 'diary' is a ceaseless round of domestic trivia, excluding anything important that is happening in the world, or even in her husband's profession. Through the years the characters proliferate so that only the regular listener can keep up with them. When one of Mrs. Dale's relations was ill, listeners sent flowers to the BBC. Even the death of a dog, in one of these charmed circles, can dismay the public. Mrs. Dale has a new diary every afternoon (but week-ends off), and the old one is repeated every morning just when the housewife is supposed to be having her 'elevenses'. It has been said that Dale listeners out shopping in the afternoon will develop a glazed look, break off conversation and rush home in time for the next instalment.

'The Archers' is the most popular; this serial was started by the Midland Region of the BBC and has a firm agricultural basis. The events make sense, and the whole of its farming background is correct; its links with the Ministry of Agriculture and the young farmers' clubs make sure that it is up to date and a useful vehicle for information. It has, too, helped with the idea that the townsman in Britain is a countryman at heart, which is always a comfort to the city dweller. And by telling him useful things about the country, it has perhaps helped to lessen the amount of careless damage that he can inflict on his days out. At the same time the identification of listeners with the Archers has become fantastic; people even apply for jobs on the farm. The times

of some Women's Institute meetings had to be changed to fit in with the Archers. The death of Grace Archer some years ago caused national grief and resentment. Listeners openly wept; messages passed from house to house; the BBC was upbraided for its cruelty. More recently a favourite character was remanded on a murder charge; again there was distress and annoyance. The police in the fiction were accused of handling the case unfairly; some money was sent to the BBC to start a defence fund. Is such a state of things unhealthy? Does it not, again, point to a need for people to identify themselves with these myths, to find in figments something they lack in their own lives? It is astonishing, though, that when serials behave like life, which is full of trouble, their devoted listeners are so upset. Must these families be so ordinary that they are like life reflected back from a mirror which extracts everything unpleasant?

The television family formed another circle of endless trivial doings, with a testy 'Gran', a good-hearted 'Mum', a jovial father, some children, and a desperately dull, lower middle-class setting. No hint of ideas, of thought, or interests, ever entered the living-room, and no serial ever demonstrated so frighteningly the holding up of dead mediocrity both as a way of life and as an entertainment. Millions of people watched this weekly dose of inanity which was halted in 1957. There was one significant difference from the reaction of listeners to the serials in sound. When the television family was first introduced to 'horror', in the shape of two escaped lunatics who threatened them with a meat hatchet for two episodes, there were protests that it

was wrong to *show* such things to audiences which might include children, and to spoil the happy, uneventful course of the serial. The feeling was not one of pity for 'Gran' or 'Mum' or the children, but one of self-pity among viewers. With the Archers it was not so; the feeling for Grace's death or Tom's misfortune was of a *shared* grief. To this extent television, which has the greater impact, has proved to have less power to affect the imagination. All these interminable serials, which set up a kind of mass hypnosis, must have a strange effect upon the public. They rank with reality, but they have not the lifting power of imagination which does give some fictional characters (in Dickens, for example) an independent existence. And they accustom people more and more to a cloud cuckoo land in which grave political events, and the death of an Archer, are all the same, flattened by the steam-roller of broadcasting and television into the pattern of a life where everything matters equally, or nothing matters at all.

All this facile wonderland of the wireless and television has certainly played some part in that softening of the mind which, paradoxically, seems most obvious now, just when there are more and better opportunities for education. It is easy to condemm 'canned' or 'mass' entertainment as making a 'spoonfed' generation; it is also easy to make a case in defence of the radio, the television (and the cinema) because they offer a cheap and ready means of amusement and a possible spur to wider interests. The report of the National Association of Mixed Clubs and Girls' Clubs in 1956 took this view, saying that radio, television and

the cinema 'have seen to it that modern youth is well informed, highly critical, and impatient of the incompetent'. This is one of the most optimistic conclusions that has been reached, and it would not meet with agreement everywhere. Broadcasting and television must have some credit for the numbers of informative programmes, such as accounts of the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition, and films of geographical interest (incidentally, French adult viewers do not like this sort of thing, and as they grow older their dislike increases, which seems odd), and for 'Any Questions' with its discussion of current topics, brains trusts with their more abstract debates, and innumerable quizzes and general knowledge competitions. Sometimes such programmes introduce teams from other countries, for such broadcasts are universally popular. An Italian-speaking British team some years ago was a great success in Italy. Broadcasting has fixed firmly the habit of discussion, and with it at least some elementary knowledge of affairs.

Why is it then that there seems to be generally a weak intellectual grasp? Has this widespread offering of a superficial and easily come by knowledge helped to destroy the habit of hard work and mental discipline? Neither listening nor viewing do anything to teach logical thought or the use of English. Would it be true to say that before broadcasting flourished so abundantly there were two nations; the majority ill or little educated, and the few thoroughly educated, and that now the great majority is more knowledgeable but no better educated in any proper sense, while the minority is still

very small? It was always true, and still is true, that original minds, of whatever class, with or without formal education, are not much affected by the mass culture. But why are there so many complaints that many young men and women go up to the universities unable to write a good, plain English? Or that so many never read widely, or read at all, apart from their special subjects? Only a generation or so ago the university man or woman could normally have a background of English literature and an idea of history, even if he or she were reading classics, modern languages or economics. Now, although more of them get a university education, this seems to be unusual. It looks therefore as if we were getting more education, of a sort, but turning out fewer generally cultivated minds. Those most concerned with education do trace some of this misfortune to the ease with which a superficial smattering is acquired without any effort, to the laziness induced by so much easy, mechanical entertainment, and to the sheer waste of time.

Sir Edwin Herbert in his presidential address to the Law Society in September, 1956, mentioned the 'psychological malaise of our days', part of which was the marked fall in the esteem for the learned professions. Everyone to-day, he said, had a 'smattering of education' and this made a man believe that he was the equal of everyone else in ability and knowledge. (He was not especially blaming radio and television.) He pointed out that the intellectual man of learning is necessarily in a minority, because of the mental quality and the discipline involved, while the majority now has power

and so the standards of value of the majority prevail. 'There is abroad in society something amounting to an envy mixed with hatred of the man of intellect.' The *Manchester Guardian* at almost the same time referred in a leading article to 'the glorification of the "average" ' and said:

> The danger to-day is not from the Philistines, but from the assumption that everything must be made easy, bright and popular for a mental standard less than mature. The spread of education and the incessant stream of wireless have tended in fact to create a superficial mass culture and a suspicion of the intellect.

This was written on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the BBC's Third Programme, in September, 1956, which was praised as an example of the one stream of broadcasting which had stood apart from the conception of the 'popular educator' and presented, for its listeners, music, drama, verse and talks of high quality without any attempt to explain them to the groundlings. It has admittedly been a programme for a minority, but even so an audience of anything from 45,000 to 100,000 is pretty big. When an inquiry was made in 1952 it was found that of all those who never listened to the Third, at least half were in favour of its existence because they felt that those who enjoyed it were entitled to have it.

The Third Programme has not been, however, the sole repository of everything 'good' as opposed to everything 'popular'. One of the most important contributions of sound broadcasting was established long before the Third Programme. That is the great amount

of music, of every kind, which has been largely responsible for the growth in Britain of a new and enthusiastic public for music. Packed concert halls, a huge demand for long-playing records of classical music, and opportunities for new composers such as there have not been for many years—in all this broadcasting has played a significant part. That is one positive good to balance against the charge of 'mass' culture or superficial education. The interest in drama is another. It was the Home Service that in 1956 broadcast a series of the 'classics' of drama written for radio, such as Geoffrey Bridson's famous *The March of the '45'*.

The unique contribution of the Third Programme, which was started in 1946 by Sir William Haley, when he was director-general of the BBC, has been not only to show broadcasting as a patron of creative work in writing and music, but as an instrument for offering, without strict limits of time, without diluting, and without talking down, all that is best in the arts. At the start the BBC said:

> There are those who want things to be explained, believing that the generally cultivated person no longer exists . . . compromise on this issue antagonizes all . . . there will be few 'hearing aids' for listeners in the Third Programme.

So this programme has always been run as though the 'generally cultivated person' did still exist, and while the assumption has angered some (it always does) it has secured the Third as a bastion against the corrosive need for 'popularity'. It has also been the envy of other countries; a service of the same type was begun in

Italy in 1950, and there is something of the kind now in France, Germany, Greece and Spain. As television reaches further every day with its tentacles, which grip people and make them for a time, at any rate, oblivious of anything else, the importance of the Third Programme is underlined. For television has a bewildering effect; any medium that speaks in pictures must be more elementary and more forceful than sound, and it bombards its audience with a kaleidoscopic mixture of truth and fiction, sense and silliness, between which few discriminate. Moreover, as the viewers in Britain have overtaken the listeners, the BBC has had to plan some cutting down and concentrating of the sound broadcasts.

Is the Third Programme going to be swamped by the rising tide? In reply to the protests of the serious newspapers and of many listeners against the decision to shorten it to three hours each night, the BBC insisted that its essential qualities would not be lost. Yet it is inevitable that, with an even smaller proportion of broadcasting time than before, the programme cannot allow so much new, or little-known, music or new writing to be heard, so that young composers and authors especially will suffer from fewer opportunities to present their work. The BBC has been the modern patron of the arts in a country where the private patron no longer has the means, and the significant step taken by the BBC in 1957 towards 'stream-lining' and popularizing the broadcasts must certainly reduce its ability to encourage new talent.

The broadcasts in the Third had been far more

varied than its detractors would allow. The common sneer at the Third is that it is full of obscure talks and little known music that need not be better known. It is true that some Third Programme talks have been difficult, except for a very few listeners, and there is a case for leaving them to the learned journals. True, too, that some of the music has been esoteric, but then those who are interested could hear it nowhere else. Science and current affairs have not bulked very large, but even with the Third's tendency 'not to explain', much of modern science apparently cannot be put into intelligible English. On the other hand innumerable talks by dons on their own subjects have brought the work of the universities into touch with a wider public. If there were such a thing as a 'university of the air', the Third could make a claim, and because of its climate—rather than because it offers a chance to accumulate knowledge. It is, however, even more in its harvesting of the riches of literature from all times and all countries that the Third has been unique. In its early years there was the wonderfully successful series of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, retold by Nevill Coghill. It is no small thing to have made Chaucer a living story-teller for thousands, instead of a school book or the concern of scholars. This has happened over and over again with the great literature of the world. There have been broadcasts of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; the *Aeneid* was translated by C. Day Lewis, Dante's *Divine Comedy* was broadcast in Laurence Binyon's version.

There have been many productions of the Greek plays in new translations; the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus

by Louis MacNeice, the *Oresteia* trilogy by Philip Vellacott, Ezra Pound's version of *The Women of Trachis* by Sophocles, and a *Panorama of Aristophanic Comedy* by Louis MacNeice. Shakespeare and the whole Elizabethan theatre have been presented, and from 1956–57 there was a series, 'The First Stage', on the complete history of the English stage from its medieval beginnings. In French drama the Third has consistently introduced to English listeners the work of modern playwrights; Sartre, Cocteau, Anouilh, Ghéon, Claudel and many others, as well as Corneille, Racine and Molière. Sometimes there have been performances in French by French companies. There have also been heard parts of modern Greek productions of the ancient plays. All European drama, Ibsen, Strindberg, and Goethe's *Faust*, again in a new translation, have come within the net of the Third Programme.

The same splendid scale of production has been shown in the music broadcasts, which over the years since 1949 have taken up rather more than half the total programme time. All the classics of music, much early music, new British operas, and modern music that would be unheard elsewhere, have been done on the Third, and, too, complete performances of great works such as Wagner's 'Ring' cycle relayed from Bayreuth. In the tenth anniversary celebration programmes there were nine new works specially commissioned from contemporary composers. In music, as in literature, the BBC has been a patron where to-day no other patron exists. As for the newly written radio works (several of which have won the Italia Prize) they

include many that have become accepted and often repeated; Edward Sackville-West's *The Rescue* based on the Odyssey, with music by Benjamin Britten; Louis MacNeice's *The Dark Tower*, Laurie Lee's *The Voyage of Magellan*, Dylan Thomas's *Under Milk Wood*, and a whole series of portraits of writers such as James Joyce, George Moore, Henry James and W. B. Yeats.

The Third Programme's listeners find all these things 'entertaining', though a typical listener may only choose a few broadcasts during the week. It was not conceived as a programme for continuous listening, nor as one offering a complete service of broadcasting. It has fulfilled its purpose if the selective listener can choose what appeals to him. But it is not for that reason precious or exclusive; though that is what its enemies like to imply. In Britain there is always the tendency to resent what is thought to be 'clever'. Yet, on the other hand, there is ever increasing competition to get into Oxford and Cambridge where, if anywhere, there still persists some regard for humane studies.

It is not a fair picture to divide British broadcasting up to 1957 into clear-cut 'popular' and 'minority' blocs; but this division may now occur. It had grown up as a gradual progression; the lighter side with many intelligent things, but all short and lively, with a broad appeal; then the more serious mixture, and finally the Third. Across this carefully calculated stairway has come television, and with it, its commercial competitor. The punch of these two has pushed the sound broadcasting ladder slightly askew. They offer not more

mixed but more gaudy entertainment. They make it clear, also, that some of the pleasures of listening are not to be captured on the screen. Nearly all music, imaginative writing, the play or feature that creates a world for the mind's eye, the reading of poetry—these must remain with sound. Apart from the need for news and for regular services of that kind, the future of sound lies with programmes more subtle and speedy than television can compass. Vision limits the mind, and slows down comprehension. What can be painted in a few words, is clumsy when produced for the cameras. And sound must not remain only because it has peculiar creative possibilities, for it will always be needed for those who cannot enjoy television, because they are too poor, or are ill, or blind, or cannot be near a set. Television has done some things well, but it is never likely to provide a permanent repertory, as sound can, of drama and music. It is most itself when dealing with events as they happen, and with concrete things, and not with the world of the imagination. Will the new scheme for sound broadcasting preserve this world, or gradually lose hold of it?

If we think that broadcasting, with all its benefits, has helped to make a diffuse mass 'culture', a 'knowing' but thoughtless mentality, television must be seen as a powerful extra impulse to this tendency. And if we look for the counter-balance, wondering whether there is anything on which the mind can settle, which can provide food for thought and some lasting intellectual pleasure, it will be found where broadcasting acts as a patron of the arts, promoting drama, music, poetry and

the classics. If it is to be healthy, it must afford this, as well as light entertainment, and if it does afford this, it can help to keep the humanities alive in an increasingly technological age.

The double part thus played by broadcasting is so interesting and important that one would expect it to have attracted criticism from the start. The theatre, the ballet, music and the cinema all have their canons of criticism, but they are long established. The critics writing regularly about them have a foot on solid ground and a perspective from which to eye a new performance. The cinema was the last new art form before radio, but it has now a long enough history to afford a comparative view; and some critics who have grown up along with it are now accepted guardians and guides. Broadcasting has offered criticism a bewildering number of approaches. In its early days only a few newspapers gave any space to serious criticism of programmes. *The Times* for many years only gave occasional criticisms, but since the second world war it has published more frequent notes on both broadcasting and television. The *Manchester Guardian* has given regular critical notes on plays, talks and music from the 1920s onwards, and on television since 1949. Most of the big circulation national papers have given little space to criticism of sound radio, but more to news and 'gossip' of which, considering the number of 'stars' and personalities in the business, there is always plenty. The 'weeklies' now have a regular critical column; so do the two 'quality' Sunday papers, and many of the more important provincial dailies.

Radio and television critics have found several things peculiar to their work. Radio plays and features were a new 'art' altogether, and therefore some standards of criticism had to be evolved. A documentary about railways, or about pygmies in the jungle, an adapted novel, a crime play, a discussion about God, or a new verse drama—in all of these the critic has got to find what it is that makes them good, or bad, as broadcasts. But there was no yardstick and there were no precedents. So radio critics have had to carve out an idea of what radio is doing, how it does it, and what more it might do. It is no good talking about Henry Irving and Sarah Bernhardt in the shadowy land of sound without sight. But if broadcasting is a new art, it has already built some traditions; it has done memorable things, and each one has set a mark by which others can be measured. Memorable? Yes, but there too the critic is faced with something different from theatre, music or cinema. These three all continue; a concert may only be given once, but the same music and the same artist will be heard somewhere again. They are permanent. The critic knows that his opinion will be read by people before they see the play. In broadcasting the critic works in a void; what he is writing about has gone with the wind. He can fairly expect that his opinions will interest the producer or writer of the broadcast more than the public. Recently the Third Programme's repetition of its major plays and features, so that there are often three performances in all, has meant that the critic feels his notice has more point. The first hearing of *Under Milk Wood*, for instance,

did not seem so sadly ephemeral because it was known that it would be heard again. By now it has been repeated many times, and there are a great many more of the best works for radio which now form a permanent repertory. This good policy of giving 'repeats' will be adversely affected by the new arrangements for the sound services.

Press criticism of television, since it started again after the war, has become much more regular and vigorous than radio criticism ever was; this reflects the feeling that television is more 'real' than sound. Most newspapers now have a daily note about the programmes of the night before, and it is noticeable that readers react more positively to what the critics think. People all talk about television. Among critics it has had to come first, and most papers have even realized that watching programmes takes time and attention, which was rarely admitted about sound broadcasting. An unfortunate result of this is that few papers now notice sound radio at all, unless it becomes 'news' with some startling event like the death of an Archer. The complexity of programmes on television makes it difficult for the critics not to become 'mixed-up'. What theatre or music critic ever had to review on one and the same night a Shakespeare play, a political interview, and Lord Clodhopper showing off his castle and the family heirlooms? All different—but all television! Beyond this, there is the sudden transformation of a programme into 'news', when perhaps a trade union leader is introduced at short notice and the critic has to call to his aid a shorthand reporter who will take a

verbatim note if the big man decides to say something that matters. And all the time the critic is considering not only the success or failure of a given programme by standards which he finds for himself, but also the vast audience, and the effect of television in the home.

Naturally one sees broadcasting as something that comes to people. It has another side. For actors and actresses, singers and musicians, speakers and authors, it has given a new range of work, not always free from difficulties. It was after eighteen months of dispute that the BBC in 1956 reached a new agreement with the Musicians' Union for fees and conditions. On the whole broadcasting has been a good thing for those who do it, but this has never prevented complaints about the BBC's fees. In literature, its most valuable service may have been that, in a time when the professional writer is hard taxed and hard pressed, and the most eager reader has not the money to buy books, the one can get a hearing for his new work, and the other can hear it. Broadcasting, like Janus, has two faces; on the one side, the mechanical clown; on the other, the poet whose memories go back to the dawn of history.

Chapter Twelve

'THE COMMON MAN'

So far we have seen the extent of broadcasting in the world as a whole, and the nature of its material; and asked questions about what its effect may be on those who listen and those who look. Sheer familiarity means that broadcasting is taken for granted over most of the world, and that while its efficiency for propaganda is recognized by governments as a weapon, its influence in other directions is little questioned or examined. Surveys and investigations are carried out, from time to time, but like all surveys they tell us more about the numbers and classes of people who listen to this or watch that, than they do about the individual and the good, bad or indifferent effect that all this has on him. However much may be learned in such surveys about who and how many use radio and television, what is popular, what is disliked, and how far it fills their time, the question of the effect on the single mind, on the mass of people, and on the ideas they live by, is one that slips out of the net of questionnaires and forms. This is because it is ultimately not even a social question but one of philosophy, in that it depends on consideration of the use of the mind and therefore of behaviour.

By its very nature broadcasting has become part of the mental air we breathe, and therefore it is more per-

vasive and penetrating than books, theatre, cinema or art. It is not just an off-shoot of a 'national' culture, nor an amusement or pastime, as one might say 'I like to visit art galleries in my spare time', and another 'I like to go racing', and another 'On my days off I do woodwork', or another 'I go to the local and play darts'. It is different from all these and more insidious because it is everywhere, all about us, all the time, because it not only offers amusement and interest, which are good in themselves, but because it implies even before it comes to our ears, a certain attitude in the minds of those who send it out. Broadcasting may be run by private business, by public corporations, or by the State itself, but you cannot choose it as freely as you might choose a book, a picture or a record. You can do without it, turn off the switch, but if you use it, what you hear is dependent on the convictions which are held about human beings in the authority responsible for the programmes. So their estimate of their job is immensely important.

This is the domestic aspect of radio; there is also the international. This has become a battle ground in the cold war. The 1939–45 war, and the years immediately before it, were largely responsible for the rapid growth of international broadcasting. By then the BBC's Empire service was established, and some other countries—France, Holland, America and Germany—had started external transmissions. But it was Mussolini who led the way, and Fascism and Nazism that began to blare political propaganda across frontiers. Hence the BBC's Arabic service—the first foreign language—in

1938; hence the rapid spread of external broadcasting by all countries engaged in the war, and the reliance placed upon the BBC in the occupied Allied countries as a trusted source of objective news and truth. Hence since the war and the hardening of the struggle between the Communist world and the West, the great array of transmitters sending out programmes day and night in scores of languages, all seeking to penetrate into other countries, to tell their own tale, to cajole with reports of an ideal way of life, to give their own version of the 'truth'.

Sinister as this may seem, like a fantasy of H. G. Wells come true, in which voices from the air are fighting a battle for men's minds, it is not a situation without hope. For the voices are not all of one persuasion, and where one voice can penetrate others may slip in also. It would never have been practicable to stop international broadcasting, even if it might seem an easy way of avoiding trouble. There are other means of propaganda and they would have had to be answered in other ways. If broadcasting is now the most powerful because of its insidious mixture of doctrine and entertainment, its immediate capacity to twist and misrepresent the news, it can be used equally to send into totalitarian countries objective news that could never cross their frontiers in any other way. The most subtle weapon of this twentieth century struggle for the human mind is the 'double talk'; the exactly opposite meaning given to words like 'freedom', 'democracy' and 'liberty'; the attempt to persuade men that intellectual bondage is the highest good. In this conflict broadcasting is a

two-edged weapon; from the free world it can oppose deception and defend the idea of truth. Only those who agree with the Communist ideology would hold that the idea of truth itself is a deception. That part of the world which has not abandoned, or been forced to abandon, the concepts of liberty, of democracy and of Christianity, is still able to speak to the people who dwell in darkness, to correct lies and suppressions, and to give to those who inwardly live in hope an assurance that there is still a world where the lie has not entered the soul. We in Britain should never have any doubt that this is the right end of our international broadcasting in fields where the battle is joined or preparing, nor any doubt that the right way is to go on in the belief that there is an absolute standard of honesty which will prevail against deception.

The task of broadcasting at home is different, since it is neither countering evil designs, nor, as in our services to the English-speaking world, strengthening the ties of an underlying unity. Still, the questions to be asked about it must go back to fundamentals, just because at home, as much as in the international struggle, broadcasting is so pervasive and so powerful that no one can, or should, be uncommitted about it; least of all those who are responsible for it. We have to ask therefore what a means of communication which offers people of every age, kind and condition, a continual stream of entertainment and information which comes to them without any effort on their part, is doing to them. This cannot be answered without some idea of what people themselves exist for, what is the value of

the mind, and what is the importance of the way in which it is trained or nourished.

Broadcasting affects the mind, and a good man to look at in considering the mind is Plato, who is not only clear and logical, but takes a short cut through a good deal of psychology. Much of what Plato wrote in *The Republic* would lead to the authoritarian state, because he did not accept democracy as good, but rather proved it dangerous and undesirable. 'An agreeable, anarchic form of society, with plenty of variety, which treats all men as equal, whether they are equal or not.' But his examination of the effect that 'conditioning' has upon the mind is as relevant to-day as when he wrote it. We should not carry his conclusions to their limit, for the particular theme he pursued was the training of an élite both physically and mentally superior, who would compose the philosopher-rulers. And he can put up a good argument against poetry because it works upon the emotions. The attitude of *The Republic* is extremely severe and exclusive, and Communism could find backing in it for the idea of not letting the young hear anything that could disturb their intellectual training. But the discussion about how the mind can be accustomed either to accept the poor and second-rate without discrimination, or to think and search for itself, with an idea of the 'real' behind the passing show, would be useful to anybody responsible for broadcasting, unless there is to be offered a diffuse and chaotic supply of fortuitous material, subject to every clamour and every whim of the public.

If the broadcasters agreed with Plato, their ideas

might include this: that a thoughtful and cultivated mind will keep the character of its owner intact through life; or, as we might say, armour him against the chances and changes of life, against dependence on mere fashion and whim, and against the misery of boredom. There are some penetrating remarks about the mind which, if 'knowledge, principle and truth' are driven out, is vacant and a prey to an 'invasion of pretentious fallacies, and back he goes to live with the Lotus-eaters'. Here Plato is talking about 'desires' but this simile is very apt as a description of the television addict who neglects life and lounges before the procession on the screen. Still more apt is the simile elsewhere of the cave where men see only a shadow-show, and whose eyes, when they emerge into the world are at first unable to discriminate and recognize true objects. There are actually to-day people who do seem to think that the shadow-show of television has more reality than the world outside, like the young woman at a bus stop on a sunny evening who was heard to say that it was lucky there was nothing much on the television that night because it meant she could come out. There was still just a life-line left to the sun, a spark of recognition that there was a life outside the cave. But the shadow-show, not the girl herself, dictated her actions.

Plato was discussing the lasting values—truth, beauty and goodness—which he, in the logical Socratic question and answer, decided were what would make a man's life most complete and satisfying. That is putting it very broadly, but the contrast between the many and the one, between appearance and reality, between the

ephemeral and the eternal, is valid for all time and all people; so too is the contrast between the mind subject to every flux and enjoying no real activity, and the mind that can see for itself, think for itself and search for truth. We can reasonably agree with Plato that 'constant exposure to the second-rate does have a demoralizing effect', and also enjoy that mischievous remark of Glaucon to Socrates that he sounds 'as if he were preaching a sermon on the life of the common man'.

It does sound like that, no more and no less, when one goes behind the voice and face of broadcasting and television to ask what it does to people and what it ought to do, because there is no escaping from the conclusion that there is a responsibility, that it belongs to certain people and that how they carry it out depends on their convictions about the 'common man' and what they are going to do for him. Nobody to-day would want to suggest that the business of broadcasting should be a rigorous spiritual training! But we could recognize with Plato that the mind is what makes the man, and that the mind is very responsive to the influences which play upon it. We have millions of people, many of them crowded into ugly cities, doing monotonous jobs, lacking natural and healthy recreation, and driven by a pressure of work and many anxieties unknown to earlier ages. It is natural that broadcasting and television should answer the need for light entertainment, 'background' music, and easily absorbed information. Natural, too, that people without any living, local traditions and sense of community, should tend to find a

focus in the events and personalities they hear and see in radio. The question for those responsible for it, is how they are to meet this need without softening the sinews of the public mind. And that can only be done if what is offered has the power to awaken interest, scattering seed so that where there is a patch of good ground, it may take root.

Broadcasting in Britain has followed this idea, but in doing so it has not avoided (how could it?) its share in helping to create the 'mass' mentality which is typical of to-day; which Richard Hoggart in his book *The Uses of Literacy* noted in the increasingly ready response to 'sensation without commitment' (the cave again!). One cannot speak to people incessantly without the danger of dulling their apprehension; one cannot amuse them constantly without the appetite growing by what it feeds on; one cannot consistently hold up a mirror to the 'ordinary' without its reflecting back what it sees, and so suggesting that the ordinary, the average and the mediocre, are the image of the desirable. All this makes for dullness, safety, conventionality and the groove, and encourages a shallow habit of mind. This tendency in Britain has been more marked in television than in sound broadcasting, because of the more elementary appeal of pictures which do not call even for the concentration needed in listening, and which can be understood by those unable or unwilling to read. It is seen at its most dangerous in commercial television. Whatever the reasons for which this was introduced, it has let into this country for the first time a stream of formidably silly and even debasing entertainment. It must

be true that its audience enjoys the surfeit of crime serials and 'give-away' shows, but this is the point at which the question of responsibility arises. If popularity, and therefore revenue, matters more than any conviction about giving a balanced diet, then we get the profligate and empty spectacles of commercial television, with their crude physical jokes and barely literate assumptions, repeated till they foster a state of mind which rejects anything more mature. It is the best popular instrument yet devised for pleasing adults with child minds, but without the natural curiosity and vigour of children.

The BBC has seen its task differently. Apart from its specialized services, including its excellent educational broadcasts, its general policy was for many years to provide, in Sir William Haley's words, 'a broadly based cultural pyramid slowly aspiring upwards . . . the listener being induced through the years increasingly to discriminate in favour of the things that are more worthwhile'. If the BBC has had some share in creating 'Admass' it has had more in leavening the lump. It has led people from hearing short and easy plays to enjoying all the great drama of the world; it has made them free of all music; and it has constantly introduced features not strictly 'educational' but certainly so in the broadest sense, telling them about industry, science, citizenship, politics, literature and art. Although shaped into three programmes, this work has not so far been strictly divided into compartments. There is no doubt that in the BBC's sowing of the spoken word has been a lot of seed that could bear fruit. This conception of broad-

casting is not needlessly elevated; it is sound common sense if it is agreed that broadcasting has enormous power which must be exercised with a conviction about its aim. A common cry is that 'people don't want to be educated'. That may be; they are always free not to listen or to look. No compulsion is put upon them. But it is also a common idea that if broadcast or television programmes give offence by being too clever, or advancing unpopular ideas, or disturbing situations, they are forcing people to attend to them. Nothing is a better indication of the extent to which people think they are helpless. Those who have not even the initiative to turn off a switch if they think a programme is too low, or too high, for them, are half-way to slavery. The fact remains that the BBC has helped countless thousands, without pain or revolt, to a wider awareness of the things that can make life more interesting. In this sense, though there is no formal education except for children, a great deal of the spoken word is educational, whether it is a talk on atomic energy, the serializing of a book, a programme about travel, a composer's biography, or a discussion among critics or experts.

The habit of argument—that is one of the benefits that broadcasting should have brought in its train; the demonstration that ideas and views can be argued rationally and fairly, that convictions can be arrived at by the use of the brain and not by the emotions or by repetition of things heard but not examined. Most of the quizzes and panel games are not valuable here, and the broadcasts which award titles such as the 'Brain of

Britain' may be positively harmful, suggesting as they do that an accumulation of entirely unrelated facts is in some way significant. What matters is the ability to relate facts, to draw conclusions, to learn from the past and to use the brain on the material collected. The different discussion programmes, especially those that let people join in and ask questions, have done much good. Along with this, however, there is a tendency which has developed on television more than on sound, for discussion to become as it were the province of 'professional' arguers, chosen for dexterity and personality, as well as quickness of thought and speech. These should be regarded critically, not because one would wish their audiences to be shielded from all the winds of argument, but because they tend to become, to a rather higher mental 'age-group', what the universal uncles and aunts of popular broadcasting are in their sphere. The jollity and bonhomie of the popular entertainer give a feeling of comfort and security; he can be looked up to emotionally while he answers a child's wish for a white rabbit or, in another incarnation, solves 'your problem'. The quite distinguished literary, political, scientific, journalistic or just 'well-known' figures who have established themselves as debaters and interviewers (the 'Brains Trust' and 'Panorama' on television are examples) seem to be setting up the same kind of fiction in more rarefied air. Are they are not uncle and aunt figures, peddling their wares before an unsophisticated audience, which is perhaps flattered and thinks that this is the height of intellectual brilliance? And is this not subtly corrosive of

intellectual integrity? Undoubtedly these people believe in their own conversation; what is doubtful is whether the television audience should be encouraged to put much value upon it. The element of performance has crept in; one sometimes feels that attitudes are adopted merely for professional purposes of provocation or argument; one suspects the possible ascendancy that television fame may give to a random few who have proved good at the game. Worse, one fears that all this may be gulped down by an audience which has no standards for comparison. Back to Plato, who thought rhetoric superficial 'because it gave the means of expression without telling you what to express'. Television has offered a good many rhetoricians this opportunity. It would be a pity if the aspiring viewer took these middle-men of culture as the ideal.

Such facility can be compared usefully with the less polished appearance of those who may talk less readily, but whose unself-conscious absorption in their subject has a sincerity that makes itself felt. The same kind of difference can be heard in sound broadcasting when it is possible to distinguish between the 'show-off' and the sincere, but it is not nearly so striking, because sound has not given to even the most professional talkers the attraction of appearing visibly upon a stage before an audience of millions. The high priests and household gods of a bright, upper second-class culture have a new forum on the little screen in the sitting-room. But those who do most to make broadcasting and television a real contribution to experience and to thought are those who can talk about what they do without pretentious-

ness, guided only by their passion for the subject. The awkward-looking don in the crumpled suit who is talking about history or science, who has no camera tricks and no technique; the priest or parson who is telling the story of his church or talking about the Bible; the novelist or poet who answers questions about his writing; the painter who explains what he has been doing in his pictures and how he does it; the naturalist who is lost in wonder at his birds and bats—these are the men whose integrity comes out unspoiled. A Stanley Spencer, Peter Scott, Cecil Day Lewis, Richard Church, Father Agnellus, and many more, less well-known but no less genuine, give something to the viewer because from them he learns about art, writing, science or religion and also about how it can be followed for its own sake. This is the beginning of wisdom and makes the most hopeful because the most unadulterated of programmes. It shows life and life with a meaning; talk, but with a purpose; discussion, but no condescension; personality which is not meretricious, and ability without conceit.

Broadcasting is all around us, and in varying intensity it is so throughout the world. It is national and international, it is used by some countries to exclude everything not in their plan for training citizens, by others to reflect a free and democratic life, by others to bring elementary enlightenment to 'backward' peoples. Where, as in America, it is mainly the business of private enterprise, this means a greater competition for mass popularity and so a lower standard, but this is at least less than the evil of rigid indoctrination. The task

of broadcasting must always be formidable where its power is recognized. It is at once entertainer, teacher, mirror of the society in which it operates, and the guardian of values. So it is that broadcasting cannot be neutral. It may see all men as equal, but it must not see all things or all beliefs as equal. Behind what broadcasting offers lie decisions and policy, and the roots of decision lie in ideas. What then are the ideas, the moral philosophy if we like to put it that way, that should guide broadcasting policy in the liberal democracy?

First it is clear that while there must be an impartiality which allows people to make up their own minds in, for example, politics, there can never be absolute impartiality in some matters of conduct. We should not expect a broadcasting system to advocate crime equally with the upholding of the law, nor, in Western civilization, to propagate atheism equally with Christianity, nor to set out to undo education equally with promoting it, nor to allow blasphemy or obscenity. This would be impartiality run insane, on the assumption that all things are equal and that nothing matters. But we should expect that non-Christian viewpoints may be discussed, because such minorities are respected and allowed their beliefs. We should expect different Christian denominations to be represented; England is well supplied with these and more tolerant than many countries. We should not expect the law to be derided, but within the framework we should expect to hear discussions and opinion about, for instance, changes in the application of the law, such as

the abolition of the death penalty. In politics we should take it for granted that broadcasting accepted the constitutional system of the country and is therefore not impartial about attempts to subvert it. This involves one of the most difficult decisions that have to be made. Does a democratic broadcasting system allow a voice to a political creed which seeks to destroy that system? How far can democracy, in the name of liberty, offer its own custom of free speech to be used as a weapon by the enemy within the gates? Here in its sharpest form is the moral issue in broadcasting.

Such decisions will not exclude the expression and discussion of ideas, but will assert certain values and beliefs. Though such decisions are taken corporately, they are neither more nor less than what must be decided by every man in his dealing with life. Anyone may fail to decide privately about the purpose of life, the existence of the soul, the use of the faculties, or the aim of education, and this is to reject his own responsibility as an individual. The abrogation of this responsibility in a broadcasting system would mean chaos, as it would in a school or in a Government. Some values and standards, which are agreed by the natural law, and by the religious and political climate of a nation, the broadcasting body must uphold. If tyranny should threaten by infiltration in a country where democratic ideas have hitherto framed broadcasting policy, then the control of that policy would be one of the key points in the fight.

While this basis of conviction must support a broadcasting system, it need not necessarily mean 'stuffiness'

or narrowness. There has been criticism of the BBC on the ground that it supports, by the tenor of its interviews and discussions, the 'Establishment'; the fashionable term for the ruling caste, not only in politics and the church but in the wider social fields where certain people, products of the aristocracy, the public schools and the ancient universities, wield the power of 'privilege' in affairs. That would be possible, but it does not strike one as the worst danger arising from the BBC's opportunities of behaving as an extra and influential public forum. The mass of its viewers, if not of its listeners, may be fairly simple people, but they are to some extent armed by a natural opposition to the 'privileged', and even by a suspicion of people who talk with upper-class accents. They are not likely, if they have any urge at all to independent thought, to let it be stifled by the emergence of a number of hitherto unknown grey eminences. What might be a danger is, like the growth of the professional 'talker', the temptation for the BBC to take up, glance at and dispose of whole aspects of life, giving the impression that a subject has been finished with when it has barely been begun. As superficial investigator and teacher television has shown a ranker growth than sound broadcasting. Certain BBC and ITA programmes, because they include topical affairs, have shown this self-satisfied attitude; they will take a subject like marriage, sex, or sex education or some other social topic, review it rapidly, ask a few questions and leave the impression, with a comfortable and pompous summing-up, that television is the repository of all wisdom. That is a bad tendency, for it

encourages the superficial view and suggests that somebody else will do your thinking for you.

Do your thinking for you? That is what broadcasting must not do. While on the one hand it must start from some positive principles, some accepted values, it has on the other hand a duty and an opportunity to open up the whole of the humanities to its listeners. In this way it can counter its own tendency to create a superficial culture and a sluggish mentality. In this way, too, it can do something to avert the risk of imposing a conventional and safe climate of thought. If it offers all that can be translated into terms of broadcasting, of plays, literature, history, art and music, from all times and all countries, then it is opening the mind, furnishing it, and leaving it free to exercise itself. There is no contradiction in broadcasting which accepts the general framework of a Christian democracy, and then offers the listener a Greek tragedy, or a poem by an agnostic. Nor is there any contradiction between the need for light entertainment and light music, and the need for plays by Shakespeare or symphonies by Beethoven. The jokes of Aristophanes were as topical as any in modern comedy, though more ribald than broadcasting to-day would allow. Comedy is as important as 'culture'; it is part of it. Discussion is important too. But the cultivation of the humanities is more important still, for there is the food of the mind and the source of refreshment. Education in this sense gives a new perspective if the imagination is touched and sees a life outside the daily round. Every experience of this kind is unique, and whether it be the hearing of the classics of Greece and

Rome, or modern French drama, or a play by Synge or an orchestra playing Mozart, it gives a new impulse to the hearer and renewed life to the work.

The part of broadcasting as a storehouse of the humanities, and as a source that can spark off intellectual pleasures that will be lasting, is at least as important as any of its more obviously utilitarian functions. Perhaps it is a fortress as well as storehouse? There is certainly to-day an assault upon the lasting works of the human spirit. It is by slow erosion rather than by the complete overturning of values that we have seen in the Communist world. We do not keep writers and musicians in a strait-jacket, demanding that their inspiration should conform to a code of ideas. But we have seen a rising tide of arrogant semi-literacy and of contempt of anything better than the juke-box and the comic; a hostility to those whose interests cannot be subdued to complete equalitarianism. Against this the invitation of broadcasting to share in more permanent and satisfying values can reinforce the individual and encourage him to use his own mind.

If he thinks for himself he will not be swallowed up by the aimlessness which seems to be the disease of this time. This is not an affliction of the peasant in the valley or the shepherd on the hill who lacks a television set but loves God. Such happy men there are, perhaps, but they have a book of wisdom of their own, and they are fewer than the people who live in crowds and ask what it is all for. These are increasingly dominated by the State, even in democratic countries; they are

frightened by the headlong progress of science with its inhumanity and its promise of bigger and quicker wars; they are more subjected to technological education without a balance of humane studies than ever before. In this situation many begin to regard themselves as helpless; in the grip of forces beyond their control, an infinitesimal 'I' against a swamping grey sea of 'it'. The 'angry young men' have invented a cult of self-pity, because they want a grievance and they lack a 'cause'. Such frustration is a sign of minds not independent enough to stand on their own. It is significant that whereas the normal condition of youth is to be bold, adventurous and reforming, to have learnt little but to fear nothing, the fashion of the 1950s is to whine as though the world owed everyone a passport to comfort, and even applause for being alive at all. But that is not the way of the world. Inferiority and uncertainty, however, are poor soil in which enjoyment of life can hardly flourish. Many will not accept religion, but everything that can build up a sense of independence, of the worth of the human being, in an age of mechanization, of planning, and of dull uniformity, is valuable. Broadcasting is part of this arid new world—the voice coming out of the box all day and half the night—but it also holds the key to an entirely different world, whose pleasures can be found elsewhere, it is true, in books and travel, concerts and theatres, but not so easily and not at the turn of a switch by the fireside. Something of what he hears there may persuade a man that no material change or circumstance can make him a drab, anonymous being unless he consents; that he can still

stand up and answer the words that James Elroy Flecker wrote 'to a poet a thousand years hence':

I care not if you bridge the seas,
  Or ride secure the cruel sky,
Or build consummate palaces
  Of metal or of masonry.

But have you wine and music still,
  And statues and a bright-eyed love,
And foolish thoughts of good and ill,
  And prayers to them who sit above?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I DO NOT recommend any technical reading because this book is about what broadcasting does in society rather than how it is done from the engineering side. The general reader would not understand the technicalities, and the technical expert will not be looking for guidance here. Of books about broadcasting, either by people concerned in it or outsiders interested in it, there is now a great number, and as one would expect with something which has grown very quickly, there are few thorough reviews but many books dealing with one or another aspect. One trouble is that they quickly become out of date. Apart from books about broadcasting and television, there are also the documents; successive charters, reports of committees, annual accounts, and so on. There is also a large number of articles embedded in daily, weekly and occasional journalism and in the BBC's own publications.

The best guide to most of this is the bibliography called *British Broadcasting* which is issued by the BBC itself and covers all the books published in this country on sound and television, a select list of articles in monthly and quarterly periodicals, all official publications relating to the BBC, and the more important debates about the BBC in both Houses of Parliament. It is available at 1s. from BBC Publications, 35, Marylebone High Street, London, W.1. Additions under separate headings bringing it up to date can be got from the Librarian's Secretary.

I shall not attempt to give all the books in this extensive list but to indicate some which are of special interest. The beginning of broadcasting in Britain and its expansion through the war years are dealt with in *British Broadcasting* by T. O. Beachcroft (Longmans, Green,

one every two months in English, French, Chinese and Russian. A useful handbook giving all the stations in the world, with all the languages, wave lengths and so on, is the *World Radio Handbook* published annually by O. Lund Johansen (Lindorffsalle 1, Hellerup, Copenhagen). The *International Television Almanac* edited by Charles S. Aaronson (Quigley Publication, New York) is another great quarry of facts and figures. In Britain the annual *Commercial Television Year Book and Directory* (London Business Publications Ltd.) gives up-to-date references.

Anyone who is interested in writing for radio could not do better than read some of the advice about how to do it, and some of the published 'classics' of radio. There are *The Right Way to Radio Playwriting* by Val Gielgud (A. G. Eliot, 1948) which includes a chapter on television; *The Radio Play: its technique and possibilities* by R. F. Felton (Sylvan Press, 1949); and *British Radio Drama 1922–1956*, by Val Gielgud (Harrap, 15*s*.). Among the best works for radio that have been published are *The Rescue: a melodrama for broadcasting based on Homer's Odyssey* by Edward Sackville-West (Secker and Warburg, 1945); *Christopher Columbus* (Faber, 1944) and *The Dark Tower and other radio scripts* (Faber, 1947) both by Louis MacNeice; *The Voyage of Magellan* by Laurie Lee (Leymann, 1948); *Moby Dick* by H. Reed (Cape, 1957) and *The Christmas Child* by D. G. Bridson (Falcon Press, 1950). With these I would recommend *From The Third Programme*, an anthology for the tenth anniversary, edited by John Morris (Nonesuch Press, 1956); this is an example of the lasting values of broadcasting as I have defined them in my final chapter.

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